

Dedham Public Schools
Special Education Programs and Services
2016-2017 School Year

The Dedham Public Schools offer a range of programs and services from preschool age 22.

Each school provides special education services and supports in general education classroom settings and small group "pull-out" settings. In a general education inclusive model, a special educator, or related service provider, provides direct instruction to students in the general education environment for all or part of the school day. In a "pull-out" model, a special educator, or related service provider, provides direct teaching instruction outside the general education setting. In addition, a number of district-wide specialized programs are located at specific schools to provide services to students with moderate to severe special needs. To this end, the district has developed a continuum of services within each school and grade level in order to avoid students transferring to another school during their elementary experience.

In summary, inclusion programming, specialized programming and related services are provided to meet the needs of most students with special needs. While descriptions of all specialized programs are provided in the attached document, it must be noted that programmatic adjustments are made annually to address shifts in student need. All in-district programs provide students with opportunities for interaction with typically developing peers. All programs emphasize skill development and skill remediation along with the development of self-advocacy skills for greater independence and responsibility for learning.

General Definitions
for
Special Education Programs and Services

Inclusion Programming

Inclusion programming at both elementary and secondary levels provides special education instruction to students with mild to moderate disabilities. Primary challenges are typically identified in the areas of learning, communication, and/or executive functioning.

Inclusion programming is designed for students capable of performing grade level work with some accommodations and/or modifications. With on-going supervision and support from special education staff, students generally attend general education classes with varying amounts of assistance from a special educator or instructional aide, articulated in their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Students who participate in inclusive/supported classes often require direct instruction of strategies to access the curriculum and make educational progress. At the secondary level, this is provided through a "Strategies for Success" class, built into the broader school schedule.

Small group ("pull out") classes are also available to students who are not able to access the general curriculum at their grade level, usually 2-3 years below expected grade level skills. Classes are generally taught by one teacher, usually a special educator, with the support of one or more instructional aides, depending on the size and makeup of the class. Across settings, all instruction is based on the Common Core State Standards, with accommodations and modifications provided as needed.

Specialized Programming

In general, specialized programs have a smaller number of students as these students require additional supports within their general education classes and/or accommodations and modifications to the classroom curriculum. Students may be provided with individual and/or small group instruction as needed to meet individual needs. All specialized programs strive to offer a continuum of services across grade levels.

Related Services

The Dedham Public Schools offer a range of evaluation, identification, educational and therapeutic support services. Related services include:

- Counseling and psychological services
- Physical and occupational therapy
- Board Certified Behavioral Analysis (BCBA) consultation
- Adaptive physical education
- Vision/Orientation and mobility
- Deaf and hard of hearing
- Speech and language therapy
- Transitional planning
- Extended school year programming

Early Childhood Education Center

The Early Childhood Center offers a continuum options to address students' presenting and sometimes changing needs. Services include:

- Pre-referral observations, consultations and screenings
- Consultation with parents/guardians and staff working with children in area preschools and day care centers
- Referral and consultation with other agencies providing services to young children with special needs as necessary
- Systematic transition from Early Intervention Services
- Special Education Evaluations
- In-district preschool and kindergarten programming serving most student disabilities
- Preparation and support with transitions to Dedham Elementary Schools

At the preschool level, Dedham Public Schools offers an Integrated Preschool Program that provides services to students who are developing typically and students with delays across the developmental spectrum and an Intensive Preschool Program as well. Alongside an integrated therapy model, the curriculum follows the Massachusetts Early Childhood Learning Guidelines. In addition, Dedham Public Schools offers an Intensive Preschool Program for students whose profile requires intensive intervention across the school day.

The goals of the aforementioned preschool programs are to meet the cognitive, learning, developmental, social, emotional and behavioral goals of students, ages 3, 4 and 5, with special needs as well as those who are typically developing. In general, students with special needs range from moderate to severe and have a range of disabilities; Autism Spectrum Disorders, global developmental delays, etc.

Instructional areas within the program target language development, social development, physical development in the areas of fine and gross motor skills. Most students also receive intensive occupational and physical therapy as well as speech and language services.

Kindergarten Programming

Two programs serve kindergarten students with a wide variety of disabilities. The Kindergarten Inclusion Program serves students with mild to moderate disabilities. The Integrated Kindergarten Program serves students with intensive disabilities, impacting all aspects of language and socialization. The small group setting provides students with increased opportunities to learn skills for increased independence.

The Greenlodge School

Specialized Programming

The Specialized Teaching and Readiness Program (S.T.A.R.) at the Greenlodge School provides intensive support and instruction for students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum and related disorders. This program offers a systematic, structured behavioral teaching approach in addition to academic instruction, social pragmatics and behavioral support.

Students participating may exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

- Significant difficulties with social/peer interactions
- Hyper-focused patterns of interest
- Sensory regulation issues
- Self-regulation deficits
- Significant anxiety, distractibility, and/or focusing issues
- Significant difficulties with all aspects of organization and academic production.

Instruction provided includes a structured behavioral teaching approach, individual and/or small group counseling, small group instruction to foster social pragmatic skills, multi-sensory, research based instruction, and opportunities for peer modeling through inclusive experiences and support.

Most students in the specialized program receive reinforcement and a system of rewards and consequences to promote positive behavioral outcomes, as well as adult support for academic, social and/or emotional/behavioral needs.

Direct physical and occupational therapy services and consultation to special educators and classroom teachers is a big part of the program in order to support students with executive functioning and sensory integration issues. Speech and language services are integrated throughout the day to assist students with developing social language skills. The program is supported by a Board Certified Behavior Analysis (BCBA), available to parents/guardians, staff and students. A new outdoor classroom offers an additional learning space for all curricular activities.

Oakdale Elementary School

Specialized Programming

The Student Achievement and Individualized Learning Program (S.A.I.L.) at the Oakdale School provides appropriate functional and inclusive educational opportunities for students with moderate to intensive special needs. Small group instruction is provided with a range of interventions and support. Program components may include:

- Inclusive opportunities in general education settings
- Small group academic instruction for functional academic skills
- Social skills instruction

- Activities of Daily Living (ADL) instruction

Co-Taught Learning Center

The Oakdale School offers a co-taught Learning Center, staffed with a general education teacher, a special education teacher, and instructional aides.

Within the class, students with moderate special needs participate in a general education classroom with typically developing peers. This co-taught class fosters a deeper understanding of various learning styles, exposes students to typical role models, and an opportunity to receive diverse instructional strategies.

Disabilities in this program include mild to moderate autism spectrum disorders, typically in the areas of learning, communication, and/or executive functioning. Accommodations are also made for students to access grade level curriculum. Students receive support throughout the school day in all curriculum areas. In general, all programming is designed on an individual case-by-case basis and provided in an integrated model.

Riverdale Elementary School

Specialized Programming

Access

The Access Programs (Access 1,2 and 3) serves students with a variety of special needs, primarily in the areas of learning, attention, language and socialization. The programs are highly structured and offer a multi-sensory approach to the reading, written language and math curriculum.

Students may exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

- Difficulties with all aspects of organization and academic production
- Difficulties with oral and written expression
- Difficulties with reading acquisition and/or reading comprehension
- Difficulties with math computation and applications
- Mild to moderate anxiety (related to learning difficulties), distractibility and executive functioning and self-regulation deficits

Specific services provided in the Access Program may include small group instruction, providing intensive instruction for students who may be functioning below grade level in one or more basic academic areas. Classes concurrently foster social pragmatic skills, providing students with increased opportunities to learn organizational skills for increased independence.

- Consultation by a Board Certified Behavioral Analyst (B.C.B.A.)
- Occupational and/or physical therapy
- Individual and/or small group counseling
- Speech and language therapy

- Inclusion and small group supported classes

Avery Elementary School

Specialized Programming

The Team Based Learning Centers (T.B.L. 1-3 and T.B.L. 4-5)

The Team Based Learning Centers (T.B.L.) offer a therapeutic model to students who face social/emotional/behavioral challenges. All students placed in TBL programs may exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

- Significant difficulties with all aspects of academic production and peer interactions
- Fluctuating mood and impulsive peer interactions
- High levels of anxiety (related to social/emotional diagnosis)
- Significant attentional/focusing/distractibility issues
- Executive functioning deficits
- Difficulties with academic production

Specific services provided in the TBL program include:

- Therapeutic support throughout the school day
- Opportunities for peer modeling within inclusive experiences
- Small group academic instruction
- Integrated classes (supported regular education classes)
- Individual and small group counseling
- On-going behavioral programming on a level system (A specific behavior management system based on classroom values of safety, respect, and responsibility, designed to maintain positive behavior or to confront negative behavior)
- Social skills training

Dedham Middle School

Specialized Programming

The Adaptive Learning Center (ALC) at the Dedham Middle School provides intensive academic, social pragmatic and behavioral support for students with moderate to significant disabilities, in grades 6-8. Students in the Adaptive Learning Center have significant difficulties with:

- Executive functioning and all aspects of organization and academic production
- Social Thinking, self-awareness and self-advocacy skills
- Speech and language and social pragmatic instruction
- Significant attentional and self-regulation difficulties
- Behavioral and social regulation challenges
- Sensory regulation and integration issues

For some, the modified curriculum is taught in small groups, with an additional emphasis on daily living and self-help skills. All students participate, with support, in grade appropriate general education classrooms for all non-academic activities. This middle school program provides a continuum of services from the elementary Access program with students transitioning to the high school Bridges program.

Specific services provided in the program include but are not limited to:

- Small group academic instruction
- Peer modeling within mainstream experiences
- Occupational and physical therapy Services
- Individual and small group counseling
- Speech and language services including social pragmatics
- Social thinking curriculum
- Behavioral support and monitoring
- Functional skills for independence
- Consultation from a Board Certified Behavioral Analyst (B.C.B.A.)

The students served through this model require special education services for learning needs that significantly impact academic achievement, specifically, academics, communication, and/or social interaction.

The Team-Based Learning Center (TBL) at the Dedham Middle School offers a therapeutic model to students who face social/emotional/behavioral challenges. Students in the Team-Based Learning Center may exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

- Significant difficulties with all aspects of organization and academic production
- Significant anxiety (related to social/emotional diagnosis)
- Significant attentional and distractibility issues
- Difficulties with behavioral and social regulation

Specific services in the program may include one or more of the following:

- Therapeutic support throughout the school day
- Opportunities for peer modeling within inclusive experiences
- Small group academic instruction
- Inclusive Classes (supported age/grade appropriate regular education classes)
- Pre-teaching/Re-teaching of curriculum as needed
- Individual and small group counseling
- Social Skill Building
- Self-advocacy
- Consultation by a Board Certified Behavioral Analyst (BCBA) and/or Behavioral Psychologist

- On-going Behavioral Programming (A specific behavior management system based on classroom values of safety, respect, and responsibility, designed to maintain positive behavior or to confront negative behavior)

This middle school program provides a continuum of services from the elementary TBL Program at the Avery School. Students transitioning to the high school generally participate in the Alternative High School Program (ALT).

Language Based Learning Center (LBLC)

The Language Based Learning Center (LBLC) at the Dedham Middle School serves students who typically have moderate to severe language based learning and/or communication disabilities and who may exhibit the following characteristics:

- Difficulties with oral and written expression
- Difficulties with reading acquisition and/or reading comprehension
- Difficulties with math computation and applications
- Possible anxiety (related to learning issues), focusing/attentional issues, and distractibility
- Executive functioning deficits
- May be functioning below grade level in one or more basic academic areas

The standard district curriculum, with significant modifications, and selected supplemental and parallel curricula provide the instructional framework for these programs. Students are fully integrated in age/grade appropriate classrooms for all areas other than those which require individualized specially-designed instruction. Specific services may include one or more of the following:

- Small group grade level instruction for specific academic areas per student IEP
- Pre-teaching and re-teaching as necessary for success
- Focus on language arts/writing across all academic areas
- Instruction based on Mass State Frameworks/ Common Core State Standards modified to meet each student's individual needs

Dedham High School

The Alternative Program (ALT)

The Alternative program at Dedham High School promotes success for students with a significant history of social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties impacting their learning and progress. Students participating in the Alternative program generally exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

- Significant difficulties with academic production
- Significant difficulties sustaining motivation, attention, and focus
- Significant executive functioning difficulties
- Mental health diagnoses (including but not limited to post traumatic stress, eating disorders, depression, and anxiety)

With daily school attendance a priority, behavioral programming and reinforcements are designed to stimulate motivation and responsibility. A combination of extrinsic and intrinsic motivators are used including a behavioral level system with daily, weekly, and monthly incentives. A comprehensive communication and support system that revolves around each student emphasizes accountability and responsibility to themselves and to the community.

All students in the Alternative program are capable of performing grade level work and are capable of earning a high school diploma. To this end, small group credit bearing courses are offered within the program matched in credits and content to those offered in the general education setting (Reference: DHS Course Directory). Within these classes, students are provided with supportive and individualized student-centered instruction. As confidence develops, students may increase their participation in general education settings by participating in supported general education classes with therapeutic support provided throughout the school day.

Finally, the Alternative program provides students with specialized programming to help them make a transition into the world of work and/or to other post graduate training opportunities. Career Center offerings provide students with opportunities to explore and participate in a range of career exploration and employment opportunities, while concurrently participating in an academic program designed for independence and success.

Specific aspects of the program include the following:

- Small group credit-bearing academic classes
- Supported regular education classes
- On-going therapeutic support throughout the school day
- Social thinking, self-awareness and self-advocacy skills
- Transitional planning and skills for independence

Bridges

Students participating in Bridges have complex learning profiles, including but not limited to Autism Spectrum Disorders and Non-verbal Learning Disabilities. In general, students may exhibit any of the following characteristics:

- Significant difficulty with oral and/or written expression
- Significant difficulty with reading and/or comprehension
- Significant difficulty with math computation and applications
- Moderate to high levels of anxiety (related to learning and social language challenges)
- Distractibility and self-regulation difficulties
- Significant difficulty with all aspects of organization and academic production
- Social language challenges

Within Bridges, students are provided with individualized, student-centered instruction within a supportive and challenging environment. The emphasis is on nurturing, developing, and

encouraging students' independent skills as learners and as contributing members of society. Moreover, the focus of the program provides students with programming to help them make a transition into the world of work and/or to other post graduate training opportunities. Students begin to explore and participate in a range of career exploration and employment opportunities, while concurrently participating in an academic program designed for independence and success.

Specific aspects of the program include the following:

- Small group credit-bearing academic classes
- Supported regular education classes
- Sensory accommodations
- Social thinking, self-awareness and self-advocacy skills
- Speech and language and social pragmatic instruction
- Pre-vocational skill building
- Life skills coursework
- Transitional planning and skills for independence

Secondary Transition Services

Complementing a rigorous academic program, and starting at the mandatory age of 14, students with special needs receive comprehensive transitional services with opportunities for real world experience and community involvement. Through these experiences, students gain knowledge and confidence for making future decisions. Services provided encompass many different aspects, all designed to support students in considering post-secondary education and/or employment.

Transition specialists partner with special education teams to develop recommendations for post secondary goals, gathering information through age-appropriate methods to better understand a students' interests and needs in the context of readiness for independence. Career exploration field trips, vocational exploration, and school to work seminars are all programmatic elements that promote a positive transition to a post secondary learning and/or employment setting.

Services and programming for younger students generally differ from upper classmen and include opportunities for user friendly career discussion and exploration, exploratory field trips, and "X Block" seminars that address telephone skills, creating a basic resume, and exposure to written and on-line job applications. As student matriculate through high school, school to work initiatives include participation in career exploration and job shadowing activities, finalizing resumes, creating career portfolios, and other more advanced employment skills. For some students, career exploration activities may count for credit and/or community service learning requirements.