ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS INFORMATION BULLETIN

What is an *accommodation*? Google defines an accommodation as "an alteration of environment, curriculum format, or equipment that allows an individual with a disability to gain access to content and/or complete assigned tasks. They allow students with disabilities to pursue a regular course of study.

A *modification* is a change to the curriculum. Modifications are sometimes made for students with disabilities who are unable to comprehend all the content an instructor is teaching. For example, assignments may be reduced in number. A modification changes what a student is expected to learn and/or demonstrate or changes content, requirements or expectations.

The following list of accommodations/modifications are not necessarily employed by the Nashoba Regional School District. This information bulletin is designed to give parents ideas about what are potential accommodations/ modifications; however, they may not all be available in our District. Nothing herein mandates that the District must provide any accommodation or modification listed in this information bulletin.

How many? There is no magical number of accommodations or modifications. Every IEP and 504 Plan will require a different set, however it is important to keep in mind that the goal is not to load lots of accommodations on an IEP. The goal is to focus on the right ones for your student.

Things to consider before requesting particular accommodations and/or modifications:

- Review your child's medical reports if you have any. If you have had your child evaluated by a neurologist, audiologist, ophthalmologist speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist or other specialist, it is likely that the specialist has included a list of recommended actions in their report. Many of the specialist's recommendations can relate into accommodations (ie: an audiologist may suggest best seating placement) but know that just because it is in your specialist's report, it does not mean that a school district will provide a service or base an accommodation or modification based on a medical report.

- Consider your student's strengths, weaknesses, challenges and how the child's disability or medical concern impairs how the child obtains the information, retrieves the information or conveys the information. While accommodations based on disability might be helpful, it is more important to focus on *how* your child's disability impedes their learning. Not all accommodations are right for your child. Another key consideration is the student's environment and whether any special equipment (or software) is required to enable the child to access the curriculum or convey the child's knowledge about the curriculum.

- Consider that although you know your child better than anyone else, your child may present differently in the school setting so carefully consider the recommendations offered by educators.

- Consider:
    How does my student access information?
    How will my student demonstrate competence?
    Where will my student be instructed and assessed?
    When will my child be instructed and assessed?

Note – many if not most of the following accommodations can be used for purposes other than the heading under which they are listed. It is useful to review them all.

TIME MANAGEMENT / EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING / ATTENTION

- Allow extended time to finish assignments
- Give breaks/ sensory breaks to allow student to move/ use sensory tools
- Use visual timers to help child conceptualize time and time passage
- Set up timelines to break down project assignments to keep track of assignment progression
- Provide checklists so student can see what is expected
- Use planners or visual schedules
- Use of electronic devices to signal work periods or remind student of dates/meetings/schedule
- Use checklist of necessary items to complete task/ necessary steps
- Repeat directions and list multi-step direction tasks in writing
- Use of assistive technology & software ie text to speech/speech to text tech and/or access to scribe for written work (human)
- Review / repeat / clarify assignment and testing instructions aloud/ in writing
- Use prompts to encourage edit of work
- Preview changes in routine
- Preview unit vocabulary to enhance understanding
- Preferred seating (ie away from distractions / beneficial to student due to auditory issue)
- Use of digital text boxes /side bars to bring attention to important information;
- Use of digital organizers
- Provide scoring rubric of expectations
- Access to small group instruction
- Provide quiet area for independent work

- Use of attention getting phrases like "IMPORTANT INFO" or have "important light" turned on for focus on important info.
- Repeat key information
- Use of headset (noise reducing) to limit distraction
- Use of routine / schedule within a class
- Provide worksheets that contain key vocabulary/ ideas/ notes/ formulas/ math tables etc. Sample problems broken down into numerated steps.
- Provide list of homework by week to encourage student to plan ahead
- Use of organizational tools – binders/containers for materials/ diagrams depicting how to organize/store materials or arrange backpack/checklist of what is needed for each class that can be kept in locker and organizer. Multiple copies of school schedule kept in locker/agenda/ home etc. Use of color, icons, labels to differentiate subjects
- Clearly state and list class expectations
- Use of dyslexic friendly fonts and sizing of text
- Gain student's attention before delivering lesson
- Teach test taking strategies
- Provide self-advocacy training
- Provide real world application or project based learning as a multi-sensory way to put forth the information

SOCIAL SUPPORT/ ANXIETY

- Visual aids to facilitate social skills, calming strategies/self-regulation
- Access to small group instruction
- Use of counselling services
- Use of "lunch bunch" opportunities or pairing student with peer for social interaction
- Access to cool down or calming space
- Modelling/prompting social behavior
- Use of positive reinforcement system for behavior/ social skills
- Use of trade ins and breaks as positive reinforcement
- Encourage use of regulation strategies

- Use a familiar individual to provide assessments/tests
- Develop a non verbal cue with the student so student will know when to adjust behavior without calling attention to other classmates
- Use of headset to reduce anxiety (ie: fire drills/ pep rallies / other loud events or classroom disturbances)
- Option of doing alternative activities during unstructured time
- Use of routines
- Clearly list and state classroom expectations
- Preferred seating away from anxiety provoking space (ie humming heater / child)
- Request periodic meet with counsellor to evaluate how student is doing (ie – schedule a monthly call or email to request a meet due to a recent event or emergency)
- Use chew jewelry (or actual gum or fruit chews - supplied by parent) instead of child biting zipper or buttons
- Use of wobble seats/ weighted vest or blanket / foot stool under desk

SETTING

- Space needs to allow for child's special equipment and students should be able to access every space of the school.
- The work station must be accessible to allow for plug in electronic equipment or positioning of ergonomic equipment
- Does your child need special lighting or acoustics?

VISUAL ENHANCEMENT SUPPORT

- Reduce glare on writing/reading surfaces
- Provide direct lighting
- Use of colored overlay filters to increase visibility
- Use of magnification equipment
- Use of braille / refreshable braille displays/ Nemath braille code/ tactile graphic images/ real objects instead of depictions

- Have text read out loud
- Use audio books / digitally adapted books (rfbd.org)
- Use of text to speech software
- Equipment with auditory output (ie: talking clock/ timers)
- Use of "buddy bench" where student wanting a friend sits during unstructured or recess times and teachers may assist student in making social connections

AUDITORY PROCESSING/ AUDITORY DISABILITY
In addition to several of the accommodations listed under attention/executive functioning section the following may be useful:

- Provide voice recorded lessons so student can listen again
- Note-taking apps/software can allow students to synchronize their notes to an audio recording.
- Use of captioning and closed caption video
- Use of a pass around microphone that students can use when responding to questions
- Personal Listening Devices or Frequency Modulation Listening Systems (teacher wears wireless mic and voice is directed to student's device which minimizes auditory overloads or distractions)

NONVERBAL

- In addition to several of the accommodations above, most parents of very young or nonverbal children worry about what their child cannot tell them. You *can* request a daily log from a teacher as to how was your child's day. Most schools / teachers have such a form. It will be a short ½ page that may have some boxes to check off and space to write a note if necessary.
- Use of sign language and visual cues and checklists and computer assisted communication technology