

Dear Visitors:

Welcome to an open meeting of the Abington School Committee. This is the agenda that will be discussed this evening. Please note that Hearing of Visitors is included; and if you have a statement or question, please be kind enough to wait to be recognized by the Chair and give your name and address.

Chris Coyle, Chair

This meeting may be digitally recorded

ABINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ABINGTON, MA 02351

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ABINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, November 28, 2023

ABINGTON MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL – LIBRARY

7:00 P.M.

Note: A Public Hearing on School Choice participation for the 2024-2025 school year will be held at 7:00 p.m.

- I. CALL OF MEETING TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE
- II. HEARING OF VISITORS
- III. READING AND APPROVAL OF RECORDS
October 24, 2023
- 1V. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT
 - A. Director of History and Business (Jason Scott)

B. *Abington Innovates Review*

V. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

A. Recommendation to Appoint the Director of Finance and Operations effective July 1, 2024.

B. Consideration of the Abington Public Schools' participation in the School Choice Program for the 2024-2025 school year in accordance with Chapter 76, The Education Reform Act of 1993.

VI. REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

FY 24 Salary and Expense Allocation

VII. REPORT ON THE MASC DELEGATE ASSEMBLY (Melanie Whitney)

VIII. ESTABLISHMENT OF NEXT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

Tuesday, January 9, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.
Public Hearing on the FY-2024 Preliminary Budget @ 7:15 p.m.

Tuesday, January 30, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.
Regular Monthly Meeting

IX. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

- Class of 1972 Legacy Gift
- North River Collaborative First Quarterly Report
- READS 2022-2023 Annual Report
- Civics MCAS Testing

- **Dates to Remember**

1. Thurs., November 30-SEPAC Meeting @ 6:30pm AMS/AHS Library
2. Wed., December 6- Inservice/Early Release Day for Students
3. Mon., December 25 – Mon., January 1 – Holiday Vacation Break
4. Tues., January 9 – School Committee Meeting with an FY-24 School Department Budget Hearing @ 7:30 p.m.
5. Thur., January 11 – Inservice/Early Release Day for Students
6. Mon., January 15 – Martin Luther King Day – All School Offices and Buildings Closed
7. Tues., January 30 – Next Regular School Committee Meeting @ 7 p.m.

- **Personnel Administration - Informational**

1. The Superintendent has accepted the resignation of Cait Southwood as a transition tutor within the Abington Public Schools effective on October 27, 2023.
2. The Superintendent has accepted the resignation of Marianne Dankese as a teacher within the Abington Public Schools for purpose of retirement effective February 14, 2025.
3. The Superintendent has accepted the resignation of Julia Goode as a paraprofessional within the Abington Public Schools effective on November 15, 2023.
4. On the recommendation of Jonathan Bourn, Principal of Abington High School, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Kristina Wilson and Meg Doherty as the Detention Supervisors at Abington High School.
5. The Superintendent has granted Elizabeth Despres, a teacher within the Abington Public Schools, parental leave of absence in accordance with the Unit A agreement.
6. On the recommendation of Julie Thompson, Principal of Beaver Brook Elementary School, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Erin Casey as a paraprofessional within the Abington Public Schools.
7. On the recommendation of Jonathan Bourn, Principal of Abington High School, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of William Caseley as a tutor within the Abington Public Schools.
8. On the recommendation of Jennifer Barresi, principal of Woodsdale Elementary School, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Steven Finn as a .2 Music teacher within the Abington Public Schools.
9. The Superintendent has accepted the resignation of Christine Stavropoulos as a teacher within the Abington Public Schools for the purpose of retirement effective in June, 2024.

X. **ADJOURNMENT**

**I. CALL OF MEETING
TO ORDER AND FLAG
SALUTE**

A regular meeting of the School Committee was held in the library at 201 Gliniewicz Way.

Present: Mr. Chris Coyle, Chair; Ms. Danielle Grafton, Vice-Chair; Ms. Heidi Hernandez, Secretary, Julie Groom, Member and Melanie, Whitney Member. Also in attendance were Mr. Peter Schafer, Superintendent of Schools, and Ms. Danielle Gaylor, Executive Secretary

II. HEARING OF VISITORS

Mike McDonald, 3 Pine Crest Road, shared his concerns with the newly approved Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks For Health and Physical Education.

III. READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

VOTED: on motion of Julie Groom (Danielle Grafton) the members of the School Committee voted to approve the minutes of September 26, as presented.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chris Coyle appointed Melanie Whitney as the voting delegate for the MASC/MASS Annual Joint Conference (November 8-10, 2023). The Committee reviewed and voted on proposed 2023 Resolutions:

#1 Full, Stable Funding for METCO

VOTED: on motion of Danielle Grafton (Julie Groom) the members of the School Committee unanimously voted to support resolution #1.

#2 Regarding Investigations and Recommendations for Transportation Bidding Procedures

VOTED: on motion of Chris Coyle (Heidi Hernandez) the members of the School Committee voted to support resolution #2

#3 Regional Transportation

VOTED: The School Committee decided to pass on this vote. Melanie Whitney will vote on this Resolution during the MASC Conference

#4 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

VOTED: on motion of Julie Groom (Chris Coyle) the members of the School Committee voted not to support resolution #4

Yes: Julie Groom
Opposed: Chris Coyle
Heidi Hernandez
Melanie Whitney
Danielle Grafton

#5 MA School Building Authority

VOTED: on motion of Melanie Whitney (Chris Coyle)
the members of the School
Committee unanimously voted to
support resolution #5

#6 School Bus Stop Arm Surveillance Act and Enforcement and Penalties

VOTED: The School Committee decided to pass on this vote.
Melanie Whitney will vote on this Resolution during the
MASC Conference

#7 Related to MCAS

VOTED: on motion of Chris Coyle (Melanie
Whitney) the members of the
School Committee voted not to support
resolution #7 as written

Yes: Chris Coyle
Opposed: Melanie Whitney
Heidi Hernandez
Julie Groom
Danielle Grafton

VOTED: on motion of Chris Coyle (Melanie
Whitney) the members of the
School Committee unanimously voted to support
resolution #7 if amended

Yes: Chris Coyle
Melanie Whitney
Julie Groom
Danielle Grafton
Abstain: Heidi Hernandez

#8 Safe Storage of Firearms

VOTED: on motion of Chris Coyle (Julie
Groom) the members of the
School Committee voted not to support
resolution #8

Yes: Chris Coyle
Julie Groom
Opposed: Danielle Grafton
Heidi Hernandez
Melanie Whitney

Dr. Basta thanked the school committee for having the department heads here this evening to review the MCAS results in math, science and ELA. He stated that overall our students did well but we have a few areas to work on as a district to support all students. He reviewed the data against the State MCAS Results. Dr. Gonsalves, Ms. Doherty and Ms. Corbett reviewed the areas of strengths and growth and recommendations for each area.

Dr. Basta also reviewed the outline of the November 1st professional development day, *Abington Innovates*.

VI. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Superintendent of Schools Peter Schafer provided an overview of the search process for the Assistant Superintendent And Director of Finance and Operations positions which included search committee members and interview dates.

Mr. Schafer, Ms. Melanie Whitney and Ms. Heidi Hernandez provided an update on Strategic Planning. Mr. Schafer started by thanking all of the members who are part of the broadly represented Strategic Planning team. The team is working on creating long term 5 year goals for all schools.

VII. ESTABLISHMENT OF NEXT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING DATE

Tuesday, November 28, 2023 @ 7:00 p.m.

VIII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

- **Dates to Remember**

1. Wed., November 1 – No School for Students- Half Day of Professional Development for Staff
2. Wed., November 8 – Abington Education Foundation (AEF) Board Meeting @ Buckley Room at Abington Town Hall @ 7 p.m.
3. Fri., November 10– Veterans’ Day Observance– All School Offices and Buildings Closed
4. Wed., November 22 – Half Day (Thanksgiving Break)
5. Thurs., November 23 and Fri., November 24 – All School Offices and Buildings Closed

- **Personnel Administration - Informational**

1. On the recommendation of Matthew MacCurtain, Principal of Abington Middle School, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Kylie Lasky as a paraprofessional with the Abington Public Schools.
2. On the recommendation of Julie Thompson, Principal of Beaver Brook Elementary School, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Jennifer Cummings as a paraprofessional with the Abington Public Schools.
3. On the recommendation of Julie Thompson, Principal of Beaver Brook Elementary School, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of Kim DiVito as an LTS teacher within the Abington School System.
4. On the recommendation of Jonathan Bourn, Principal of Abington High School, the superintendent

has approved the appointment of Alexis Pineda as a tutor within the Abington Public Schools.

5. On the recommendations of Jonathan Bourn, Principal of Abington High School and Peter Serino, Athletic Director, the Superintendent has approved the appointment of the following coaches for the 2023-2024 winter season:

Head Girls Basketball	Dan Norton
Assistant / JV Girls Basketball	Jennifer Worden
Head Boys Basketball	Peter Serino
Assistant / JV Boys Basketball	Jason Brown
Freshman Boys Basketball	Tom Carey
Head Ice Hockey	Bryan Woodford
Assistant / JV Ice Hockey	Ed O'Neil
Head Girls Indoor Track	William Caseley
Head Boys Indoor Track	Mike Caseley
Auxiliary Indoor Track	Connor Bennett

6. The Superintendent has accepted the resignation of Andrea Harmon as a Music Teacher within Abington Public Schools.
7. The Superintendent has accepted the resignation of Christine Cook as a Cafeteria worker within Abington Public Schools.


IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

@ 9:15 p.m.

VOTED: the School Committee, by roll call vote in accordance with MA G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21, for the purpose of discussing strategy in preparation for negotiations with nonunion Personnel, Assistant Superintendent and Director of Finance and Operations. Holding this discussion in open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee; and not to return to regular session

Yes:

Mr. Coyle
Ms. Grafton
Ms. Groom
Ms. Hernandez
Ms. Whitney


Heidi Hernandez, Secretary

Social Studies and Business Department

School Committee Presentation

By: Jason Scott

Goals for this year and going forward

Update World History Curriculum (In progress
– should be complete this school year)

A light orange downward-pointing arrow is positioned on the right side of the orange box, pointing towards the brown box below.

Better meet the needs of English Learners

A light brown downward-pointing arrow is positioned on the right side of the brown box, pointing towards the grey box below.

Supporting students in meeting deadlines

How We are
Addressing World
History Revisions

A Thematic Approach to World History

- This is a multi-year project
- Department time during Wave Week Wednesday and professional development time will be used to:
 - Identify themes
 - Create opportunities for students to learn about diverse regions and time periods
 - Create collaborative projects and assessments
 - Finalize the curriculum in the district format

How We are Working to Better Meet the Needs of English Learners

- Analysis of data related to student performance among EL's in History
- PLC work – multiple department members are part of this committee.
- Wave Wednesday work as a department and with other departments



How We are Supporting Students who Struggle to Meet Deadlines

Department-wide expectations related to late work – nothing after 5 days***

Using Canvas and in-person touchpoints to help struggling students complete their work

Utilizing the Bridge Block period to support students who have missing work

- ***does not apply to students who are entitled to extra time per IEP or 504***

AP US History Data

Year	Number of Students	Average Score	Global Average	Percent earning 3 or higher	Global earning 3 or higher
2023	25	1.88	2.54	28	47.5
2022	25	2.08	2.57	20	48.2
2021	17	1.88	2.52	23.5	47.2
2020	16	2.38	2.83	56.3	58.8
2019	Course did not have sufficient enrollment to run				

AP European History Data


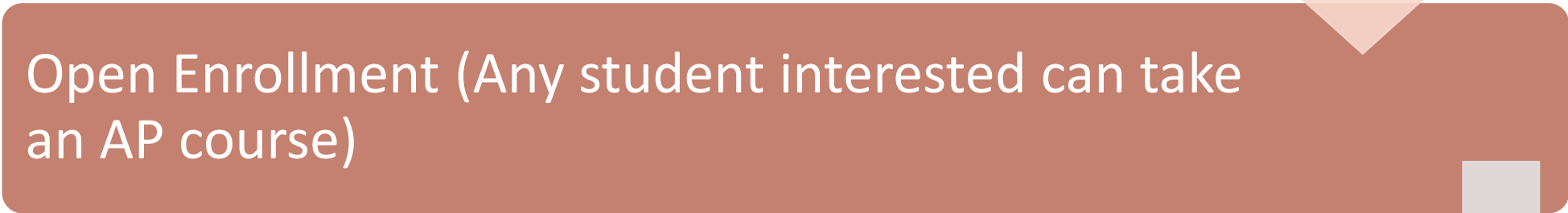
Year	Number of Students	Average Score	Global Average	Percent earning 3 or higher	Global earning 3 or higher
2023	6	3.33	2.95	83.3	59.4
2022	7	3.71	2.95	100	58.9
2021	Course did not have sufficient enrollment to run				
2020	Course did not have sufficient enrollment to run				
2019	5	4.2	2.9	100	58.1

Ways students are recruited to AP courses



Teacher Recommendation (Spring of every school year)



Open Enrollment (Any student interested can take an AP course)



Each year, all teachers review the department offerings before student course selection happens



8th Grade Civic MCAS Pilot



The history department is in the process of preparing students to take the MCAS Civics exam in the Spring of 2024.



Department members have attended Professional Development from the state.



We have multiple PD opportunities planned to prepare for this experience as well.

Business Department Enrollment

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Personal Finance Enrollment	28	52	77	48
Other Business Class Enrollment	223	174	153	144
Total Business Class Enrollment	251	226	230	192

Personal Finance Follow-up

- 2023-2024 school year:
 - Math department will do a unit in the Spring for graduating seniors.
 - Business department will be contributing to the unit.



Credit for Life – Running Early May, 2024 for All Interested Seniors



CREDIT
FOR LIFE

Sarah J. Gainey

Education:

August 2024 (Anticipated Completion)	Bridgewater State University Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Educational Leadership
May 2006	Bridgewater State University Bachelor of Science in Management; Graduated Cum Laude
June 2002	Abington High School High School Diploma; National Honor Society

Massachusetts Department of Secondary and Elementary Education Licensure:

School Business Administrator Licensure (Initial)

Professional Experience:

School Accountant

August 2014 - present

Abington Public Schools, Abington, MA

- Assist in the oversight of the \$40,000,000 school department budget; including town allocation, revolving accounts, and grants.
- Work closely with the Assistant Superintendent on yearly projections for all accounts.
- Apply the principles, methods and procedure used in modern accounting and auditing to ensure the district financial processes and policies.
- Responsible for record-keeping of accounts payable for the school budget, state and federal grants and articles appropriated by town meeting.
- Monthly reconciliation of all school department account balances with the trial balance reports of the Town Accountant.
- Assist with the procurement of all goods and services; including assisting in the preparation of bid documents, awarding of contracts and adherence to public procurement regulations.
- Enter purchase orders into the accounting system and upon receipt, verify invoices and prepare the warrants for school department using funds from the town appropriation, federal and state grants, special articles, and revolving accounts.
- Works in collaboration with the school-based Student Activity Account bookkeepers, Athletic Director, Summer School Director and Food Service Director in the collection, recording, depositing, and reconciling of all cash, checks and electronic payments received.
- Assist Director of Student Services with the yearly special education Circuit Breaker submission by keeping copious electronic records of all special education transportation and tuition expenses paid throughout fiscal year.
- Prepare financial data for End of Year State Report for all accounts inclusive of all budget expenses, federal and state grants expenditures, revenue reconciliation, and special education transportation and out-of-district tuitions.
- Work collaboratively with the office of the Abington Town Accountant and Treasurer/Collector.
- Provided financial and purchasing support to the Abington School Building Committee during the design, bid, and subsequent building, of a new \$96,000,000 middle-high school (built in collaboration with the MSBA).

Account Executive
Program Administrator
Harte Hanks, East Bridgewater, MA

June 2008 - August 2014
October 2007 - June 2008

- Written and verbal communications as it relates to tactical, day-to-day client account activity
- Preparation of monthly client invoice through combination of Excel reporting and other data sources; total yearly invoicing of ~\$3.5 million.
- Management of client approved IT projects; defining of business requirements, control of scope, resources and deliverables by closely working with IT peers.
- Monthly revenue forecasting, budgeting and monitoring of profitability margins.
- Assistance with pricing negotiations and contract renewal of existing client base.
- Assembly of all documentation and reporting in preparation for Quarterly Business Reviews.
- Presentation to client and internal peers of Quarterly Business Reviews.

Administrative Assistant
PeopleCube, Waltham, MA

February 2007 - October 2007

Sales Assistant
Sales Department Intern
Sullivan Tire, West Bridgewater, MA

May 2006 - February 2007
January 2005 - May 2006

Professional Memberships and Associations

- Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials

DELEGATE ASSEMBLY 2023: REPORT ON ACTIONS TAKEN

MASC's 78th annual meeting was held at the start of the annual conference in Hyannis, Wednesday, November 8. A total of 108 delegates representing school districts across the state were registered and participated in the deliberations.

The meeting was led by MASC President Stacey Rizzo (Revere). The Association's Financial Report was presented by Vice President Jason Fraser (Plympton and Silver Lake Reg.). MASC Executive Director Glenn Koocher and Acting General Counsel Patrick Francomano, Esq. served as Parliamentarian and Legal Counsel for the event.

Approved for Life Membership were: Don Erickson (Bay Path Vocational Technical), Jack Foley (Worcester), and Kim Savery (Plymouth).

Elected to the 2024 MASC Board of Directors were: as President-Elect, Jason Fraser (Plympton and Silver Lake Reg.); as Vice President, Denise Hurst (Springfield); as Secretary-Treasurer, Beverley Griffin-Dunne (Peabody and Essex Tech.).

Mildred Lefebvre (Holyoke) who is the 2023 President-Elect becomes President on January 1, 2024.

Current President Stacey Rizzo (Revere) becomes Immediate Past President at the same time.

Following are the actions taken on the eight proposed resolutions, as well as on the proposed amendment to the MASC By-Laws. The full texts of the resolutions and proposed amendment are printed in the 2023 Delegate Manual and posted on the MASC website.

In the interest of expediting discussion and allowing more time for resolutions of a more controversial nature, a special procedural action was adopted that allowed delegates to vote on resolutions considered non-controversial as a group. Each resolution was presented and delegates identified those that they wished "held" for further discussion. Those resolutions not held, would be voted and approved as a single slate.

This year, all but one of the resolutions (Resolution 2: Regarding Investigations and Recommendations for Transportation Bidding Procedures) were held for further discussion.

RESOLUTION 2 passed, as presented, without debate, on a voice vote.

Following are the actions taken on the seven remaining resolutions that the delegates held for in-depth discussion.

RESOLUTION 1: FULL, STABLE FUNDING FOR METCO
(Sponsored by the Arlington School Committee)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees calls upon the Governor and the Legislature to create a stable funding structure to support METCO and its partner districts that fully funds the

support provided by METCO, and the cost of providing services delivered by METCO's partner districts.

The resolution passed, as presented, on a vote of 92-3, with no abstentions.

RESOLUTION 3: REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION
(Sponsored by the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School Committee)

BE IT RESOLVED that in such case where a pupil resides greater than one and one-half mile from the school of attendance, measured by a commonly traveled route, and the commonwealth reimbursement does not fully cover the amounts expended for such transportation, the regional school district may allow pupils to opt out of such transportation or may charge a fee that in aggregate may not exceed the differential between the amounts expended for furnishing transportation and the commonwealth reimbursement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MASC encourage the Legislature to modify M.G.L. Title XII c. 71, § 16C, with the aforementioned proposed language (or alternative and re-move the period) to provide regional districts the ability if so desired to charge a transportation fee that in aggregate can-not exceed the differential between the and that the Commonwealth reimbursement and the regional school district transportation expense for any pupil that resides greater than one and one-half mile from the school of attendance measured by a commonly traveled route. Pupils may opt out of transportation and not be subject to a transportation fee.

Following much discussion, the resolution failed to pass on a vote of 53 (opposed) to 27 (in favor). There were 12 abstentions.

RESOLUTION 4: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION
(Submitted by Division X; amended by the Resolutions Committee)

BE IT RESOLVED that MASC recommends that all districts adopt the position of DEI coordinator to work towards an anti-racist school system.

After much vigorous discussion and several failed amendments, the assembly voted to table the resolution on a vote of 47 (in favor) and 34 (opposed).

RESOLUTION 5: MA SCHOOL BUILDING AUTHORITY
(Submitted by the Wachusett Regional School Committee)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees calls upon the Massachusetts Legislature to amend MGL ch.70B, section 7 by removing the \$1,200,000,00 cap; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees calls upon the Massachusetts School Building Authority to reinstate the Accelerated Repair program for 2024 applications; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees calls upon the Massachusetts Legislature to allow public preschools to be included in the Accelerated Repair Program and Core Program.

After much discussion, including debate of a proposed amendment from Worcester that failed to pass, the resolution passed as presented although the language was updated to reflect the increase of the cap from \$800,000,000 to \$1,200,000,000.

RESOLUTION 6: SCHOOL BUS STOP ARM SURVEILLANCE ACT AND ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES
(Submitted by the Peabody and Marlboro School Committees)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees calls on the Massachusetts Legislature to enact legislation to pass into law the ability for cities and towns to install on all school buses live digital video detection monitoring systems for the purpose of enforcing violations against the owner of a motor vehicle whose vehicle failed to stop for a school bus when required to do so by law.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees calls on the Massachusetts Legislature to enact legislation raising the fine for passing a stopped school bus to a significant schedule of fines as penalty whether witnessed by a police officer or recorded by a digital video detection monitoring system.

After considerable debate, a motion was made to table the resolution.

The resolution was tabled on a voice vote.

RESOLUTION 7: RELATED TO MCAS
(Submitted by the Framingham School Committee)

BE IT RESOLVED:

- that MASC urges Massachusetts to develop a wider, more consensus-built strategy for an evaluation system with meaningful input from legitimate stakeholders.
- that MASC urges the state Legislature to launch a comprehensive evaluation to investigate the extent of biases pertaining to MCAS testing and make these results public.
- that MASC urges Massachusetts to enact a moratorium on MCAS testing effective immediately.
- that MASC urges Massachusetts to develop an alternative to the high-stakes MCAS tests.

A motion was made to table this resolution.

The resolution was tabled on a voice vote.

RESOLUTION 8: SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS
(Submitted by the Framingham School Committee)

BE IT RESOLVED that MASC recommends all districts to urge their Superintendent and staff to create an appropriate communication to parents and guardians that explains the importance of secure firearm storage to protect children and teens from unauthorized access to unsecured firearms, and their legal obligations consistent with Massachusetts safe storage law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that MASC urges other communities to work with their local law enforcement agencies, health agencies and non-profit organizations to collaborate and increase efforts to inform District parents and guardians of their obligations regarding secure storage of firearms in their homes and vehicles.

Following discussion, a motion was made to table the resolution.

The resolution was tabled on a voice vote.

PROPOSAL TO AMEND THE MASC BY-LAWS

(Submitted by the MASC Legislative Committee)

IT WAS PROPOSED THAT the following paragraph be added after the final sentence of By-Laws Article IX, Section 1.

Resolutions will expire at the conclusion of the Delegate Assembly three years after their adoption. The MASC Legislative Committee shall provide a list of expiring resolutions to the membership no later than March 1st of the year in which they expire. Readoption of an expiring resolution can be accomplished under the method proscribed in ARTICLE IX, section 1.

The amendment to the By-Laws, Article IX, Section 1, was approved as proposed.

The Abington High School Class of 1972

Joan Crosby Pastuzak • Deborah Damon • Mike Gregory
Jane LaPointe Brooks • Sue Ellen Melanson Gregory
Elaine Murray • Doug Ulwick • Marilyn Zagarella Weber

c/o Box 26
Hanover, MA 02339
ulwick@verizon.net
781.871.5084

Peter Schafer, Superintendent of Schools
Town of Abington
1071 Washington Street
Abington, MA 02351

RE: AHS Class of 1972 Legacy Gift

Dear Peter,

The AHS Class of '72 has a very active alumni group, faithfully gathering classmates together every 5 years for reunions, and maintaining a private Facebook page to stay in touch in between those gatherings.

On the weekend of September 16-18 in 2022, we gathered to celebrate our 50th reunion; and as a part of those activities, we decided to collect funds for a Legacy Gift to the Abington Public Schools. \$3,000 was raised through individual donations and through a raffle.

Subsequently, Marilyn Weber, an active member of our group and a retired Abington School Principal, has been working with Felicia Moschella to determine how to best dedicate these funds. We have learned that:

Woodsdale School

Would like to supplement the materials they use for Science and Social Studies with appropriate non-fiction.

The Middle & High Schools

Would like to use the money to enhance the positive messaging throughout the building- murals, quotes, etc.

Beaver Brook Elementary School

Would like to use the funding for Makerspace Carts.

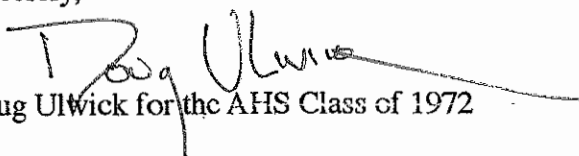
The Abington Early Education Program

Would like to use the money to enhance outdoor classroom resources.

We are excited to learn that our gift can benefit so many across the school system and are grateful to all the staff who worked together to arrive at this list.

We are attaching a check in the amount of \$3,000.00 with our best wishes and our fond memories of all the Abington Public Schools people and experiences that shaped our lives.

Sincerely,


Doug Ulwick for the AHS Class of 1972



North River Collaborative Quarterly Report

SY 2023-2024 –Quarter One



North River Collaborative (NRC) is a multi-purpose, educational organization formed in 1976 to serve as an extension of school districts. The member districts of Abington, Avon, Bridgewater-Raynham, East Bridgewater, Hanover, Holbrook, Rockland, Stoughton, West Bridgewater, and Whitman-Hanson work together to provide high-quality,



cost-effective educational programs and services predominantly to students with disabilities from our member districts and many other surrounding communities.

Mission Statement



North River Collaborative cooperatively develops and delivers quality and cost-effective programs and services for students, school districts, partner organizations, and communities.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The North River Collaborative does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, limited English speaking ability, genetic information, ancestry, age, disability, homelessness, military status, marital status, or any other protected class under the law in admission to, treatment in or employment in its programs or activities.

Notes from the Executive Director



A visit to Ms. Reynolds' Learning Center Classroom in Easton.

Learning Center Programs

We had another successful summer program that ran from July 5th through August 17th this year. Students participated in a variety of thematic activities and field trips. The highlight of the summer was a visit by "Idaho" the miniature therapy pony!

Our programs were very fortunate to add a fifth Learning Center classroom to our Pembroke location this year serving PreK through grade one students with autism and developmental disabilities. September instructional units including "Back to School" and "All About Me" themes using the Unique Learning System resource. Students in our high school and post-graduate programs will begin to work on a post-grad binder of resources and information, real world math concepts, purchasing skills, measurement skills, and time planning skills.

Staff Additions: Kaleigh Litchfield, Special Education Teacher and Melinda Pina, Teacher Assistant

Enrollment Snapshot: Multiple Disabilities Program, 23 students and ASD/Developmental Program, 14 students

It has certainly been a pleasure to be a part of the team here at North River Collaborative as I conclude my first quarter of operations as the Executive Director. I have been excited to work more in-depth with our program coordinators and staff with whom I previously had connections with while serving in the role of Director of Student Services within the Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District. These team members have helped me to compile this report of our service to students and districts, program highlights, and general points of pride as we embarked upon fiscal year 2024, our 2023 extended school year, and school year 2023-2024. The standout opportunity for me has been to start to build relationships with all our staff members, district stakeholders, and (most importantly) students so far. Visiting our classrooms and meeting with staff over the summer and the start of the school year has been incredible and provides an opportunity to reflect upon the care and support that our team provides for some of the most vulnerable students in the region. I look forward to continuing to share this work with all of you and thank you for your amazing support!

-Paul Tzovolos

North River School

The North River School had a successful summer program and start to the 2023-2024 school year! The school year started with several great programming additions to increase the support and resources available to our students. The first was the pursuit of the iDecide Program, which is a tier two substance abuse prevention program to enhance the interventions and alternatives to discipline for our students who engage in substance use or chronic vaping. Assistant Program Coordinator, Abby Horbach, has been trained and two additional staff, including the school nurse, will also be trained in the coming month. We are also excited to announce that Liz Darnell, Lead Teacher at North River School, is in the process of being trained in the Wilson Reading Program so we are better able to support struggling readers using a step-based phonemic program. Staff at the North River School are also in the process of updating their Crisis Prevention and Intervention (CPI) Training over the course of the fall. Finally, our instructional tutor, Dianne Sammon, is working with Innovation Lab instructor, Mark Wooding, and culinary teacher, Venessa Mitsis, to offer our seniors some additional college and career readiness opportunities. Some students will be assigned internships with community partners and others will be doing work study programs. We will also be offering senior specific field trips to bring our seniors out to job sites, colleges, and community programs.

From a facilities standpoint, the building underwent preparation as the site that welcomed back all our transportation, office, and program staff for our orientations. The driveway and parking lot have been repaved and thanks to the MA Mechanics Grant we will be making several upgrades to our kitchen and Innovation Lab facilities!

Looking ahead, we are excited about our first basketball game against READS Collaborative and the beginning of our Student Council Meetings this October. “Wicked Fun Wednesdays” will also begin in October, which focuses on relationship building and SEL topics on one to two early release days each month. We are also proud of a generous donation from the Rockland Food Bank so that we can once again hand out Thanksgiving meals to our families prior to the break in November.

Staff Additions: Shannon George, Instructional Aide. TBD School Adjustment Counselor currently.

Enrollment Snapshot: 32 students with over 30 referrals received this quarter, 6 still to be reviewed.



Independence Academy

The summer of 2023 found the creation of a two-tier program at Independence Academy (IA), which was a great success as it allowed for the separate grouping of newer students in the “Foundations Program” and veteran IA students in the full Independence Academy Program so that more intensive support could be provided. This also allowed for increased enrollment during the summer. Attendance in the summer program was 76% for the full Independence Academy students and 86% for the students in the “Foundations” program. The Independence Academy students from the summer session were able to engage in multiple community service projects including Volunteer Ventures, Colorful Kidz, and ReVision Urban Farm and

Food Pantry. At these volunteer sites students were able to build handicapped accessible picnic tables, repurpose bedroom furniture, and cultivate food to be donated to needy families.

Independence Academy was also excited to be invited to an event with Governor Maura Healy to celebrate Recovery Month at the Statehouse. The team at Independence Academy also continues to provide outreach to over 20 different area high schools and middle schools to update on the current programming that we offer.

We continue to **advocate for and improve our districts** to support transportation to and from Independence Academy for our students as cost and consistency are major factors for our students to fully access and engage in the program.

Staff Additions: Brooke Morgan, Outreach Specialist and Clinician, who has been a significant factor in the district outreach described above.

Enrollment Snapshot: 12 students in the full Independence Academy Program, 2 students in the 45-day Intervention Program, and 5 students in the ten-day Upper Course Program.

Professional Development

The summer and fall offerings are very diverse focusing on several key cohorts and topics. Educator Evaluation Training began for administrators and districts also sent teams of educators to our District Curriculum Accommodation Plan training, as well. Our Legal Issues Seminar for administrators was also very well attended, as usual. In the fall, several RETELL course offerings will be scheduled as well as training focused specifically on the paraprofessional population.

District Services

Our District Services Team has continued to provide high quality related services and evaluation services to our districts under the supervision of our new Coordinator, Meredith Daly. The team is focused on refining digital documentation processes for an increase in response time. The team has also had eight team members trained in Safety Care this fall with our BCBA, Katie Cullen. The OT team engages in monthly case study/research article groups and will be trained in a new evaluation tool, the Visual Skills Appraisal 2) this fall. The speech/language team has been trialing apps for increased computer access for students who take part in our assistive technology assessments.

Staff Additions: Moira Sadler, Teacher of the Visually Impaired, and Shannon Cookfair, ORT/L, have been wonderful additions to our team.

Enrollment Snapshot: Ongoing psychological, vision, orientation/mobility, assistive technology, and behavioral assessments and services are being well-accessed by our districts.

Transportation

Our transportation orientation meeting in August kicked off another great start to the school year! All staff are currently CPR and First Aid trained and we are working to build capacity in our new Transfinder routing software. As always, staffing our driver and monitor team is a consistent area of need. We have made outreach attempts through new signage for our sites and vehicles, a mass mailing based upon current driver/monitor residence, and implementation of referral and sign on bonus pay structures. We will continue to build capacity and work to expand our transportation offerings in the coming months.

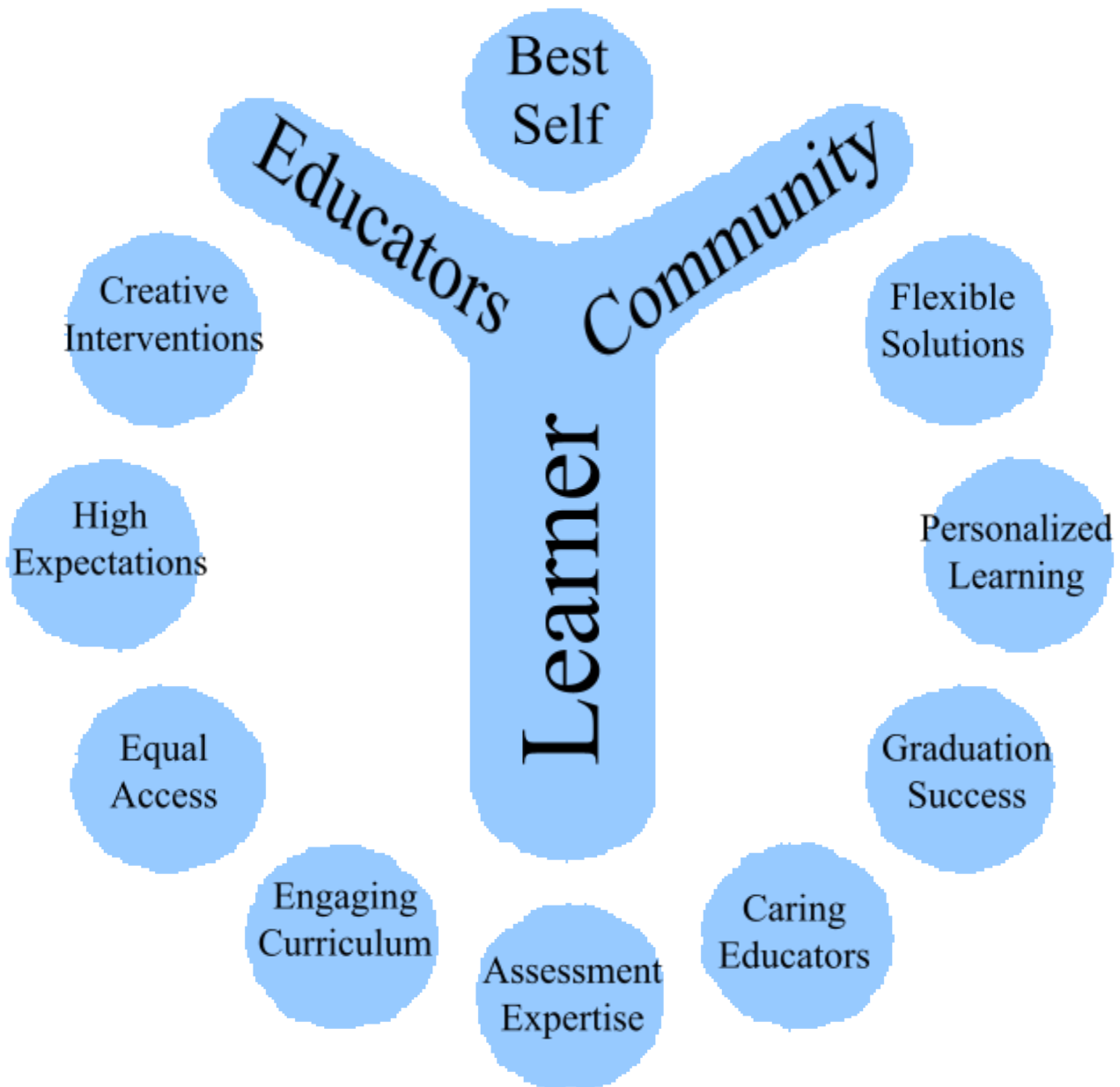
Contact Information

Thank you for reading our Quarterly Report! We are happy to answer any questions or provide additional information. Please reach out to Paul Tzovolos, Executive Director, at ptzovolos@nrcollab.org or 781-878-6056 x 101.

December 2023 Annual Report for 22-23

READS Collaborative

Promoting the success and well-being of every learner since 1974



Regional Educational Assessment and Diagnostic Services (READS) Collaborative

105 East Grove St., Middleborough, MA 02346

READS Collaborative's mission is to provide creative, flexible solutions that promote the success and well-being of each child, adolescent and adult learner.

www.readscollab.org



Approved by the Board on November 16, 2023

READS Collaborative is a multi-purpose, public organization established under Chapter 40 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that specializes in the development of regional programs and services for school-age children with disabilities. READS is governed by a Board of Directors that is composed of the school superintendents from each of the 18 Member Districts.

Leadership at READS Collaborative

READS Collaborative is governed by a Board of Directors which consists of the superintendent from each Member District.

Executive Committee as of December 2023

President – John Cabral, Superintendent, Taunton

Vice-President – Jeffrey Schoonover, Superintendent, Somerset and Somerset-Berkley Regional

Secretary/Clerk – Carolyn Lyons, J.D., Superintendent, Middleborough

- Peter Schafer, Superintendent, Abington
- Paula Bailey, Ed.D., Superintendent, Acushnet
- Melissa Ryan, Superintendent, Berkley
- Ryan Powers, Superintendent, Bridgewater-Raynham Regional
- Alexandre Magalhaes, Ed.D., Superintendent, Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical
- Scott Knief, Superintendent, Carver
- William Runey, III, Superintendent, Dighton-Rehoboth Regional
- Elizabeth Legault, Superintendent, East Bridgewater
- Alan Strauss, Superintendent, Freetown-Lakeville Regional
- Michael Nelson, Superintendent, Marion, Mattapoisett, Rochester
- Jennifer O’Neill, Ed.D., Superintendent, Norton
- Mark Bodwell, Superintendent, West Bridgewater

Special Education Administrators Advisory Committee

- James Robbins., Abington
- Kimberli Bettencourt, Acushnet
- Melissa Abrego, Berkley
- Melanie Hart, Bridgewater-Raynham Regional
- Amy Cohen, Bristol-Plymouth Regional
- Melissa Leary, Carver
- Marie-Juanita Digioia, Dighton-Rehoboth Regional
- John Phelan, East Bridgewater
- Ashley Bouley, Freetown-Lakeville Regional
- Kristine Lincoln, Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester
- Jennifer Healy, Middleborough
- Vincent Cerce, Norton
- Megan Ashton, Somerset and Somerset-Berkley Regional
- Amy Moynihan, Taunton
- Kathleen Marble, West Bridgewater

READS Collaborative Administration as of December 2023

- Dina Medeiros, M.Ed. C.A.G.S., Executive Director
- Lindsey Albernaz, CPA, Business Manager
- Michelle Holden, Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director
- Deirdre Dowd-Pizzuto, READS Academy Director of Program Advancement
- Erinn Fauteux, Program Director, READS Academy PreK-12+
- Evelyn Rankin, Program Director, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program
- Bethany Estrella, Ed.D., OTD, Coordinator, District Services
- Carrie Smith, Academy Clinical Director, PreK-6
- Doreen Souza, Academy Clinical Director, 7-12+

READS Collaborative Treasurer – Patrick Meagher

READS Collaborative Administrative Leadership Team as of December 2023

- Dina Medeiros, M.Ed. C.A.G.S., Executive Director
- Lindsey Albernaz, Business Manager
- Deirdre Dowd-Pizzuto, READS Academy Director of Program Advancement
- Erinn Fauteux, Program Director, READS Academy PreK-12+
- Carrie Smith, Academy Clinical Director, PreK-6
- Doreen Souza, Academy Clinical Director, 7-12+
- Evelyn Rankin, Director, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program
- Bethany Estrella, Ed.D., OTD, Coordinator, District Services
- Michelle Holden, Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director
- Linda Woodcock, Clinic Manager
- Christine Shea, Technology Coordinator
- John Dorn, Psy.D., Neuropsychologist
- Rachael Kent, Student Support and Referral Coordinator, READS Academy PreK-12+

READS Collaborative Mission Statement

The mission of READS Collaborative is to provide creative, flexible solutions that promote the success and well-being of each child, adolescent and adult learner.

Guiding Beliefs and Core Values

- **RESPECT** for each other through strong connections to students and families fosters active engagement in the student's education.
- **ENCOURAGEMENT** of a sense of belonging and responsibility for the community is essential to student social and emotional well-being.
- **ACHIEVEMENT** promotes a sense of comfort, confidence and growth when an individual's needs are met. Continuous assessment of programs and services assures student learning, achievement and growth.
- **DETERMINATION** is an essential trait to cultivate in order for students to contribute to an increasingly diverse, complex, technological, and rapidly changing global society.
- **SUCCESS** of the students, and the organization, is accomplished through a respectful approach to shared decision-making, meaningful encouragement, recognition of achievement and determination to continuously improve.

Vision Statement

- Students acquire skills to foster academic and linguistic growth and strengthen social, emotional, and physical well-being in a safe, healthy, supportive and inviting learning environment. The staff of **READS Collaborative** takes pride in the fact that students recognize that the entire staff respects them, encourages them to reach their potential and supports them in the achievement of their goals.
- **READS Collaborative** emphasizes determination as the key to achieving academic growth and to preparing for a successful transition to a general education setting, higher education or vocation, and a productive adult life.
- **READS Collaborative** continues to utilize the highly specialized educators, administrators, clinicians, therapists and assistants who work diligently to improve the educational outcomes and promote successes for children, adolescents and adults. **READS Collaborative** continues to provide these individualized, caring, educational settings and services to students through the collaboration of member districts.

READS Collaborative is a non-profit, public educational organization that specializes in the development of regional educational programs for children with low incidence disabilities. READS Collaborative provides diagnostic services, therapeutic services, assistive technology consultation, summer programming and professional development throughout the region. READS Collaborative provides comprehensive educational programming for children with emotional and/or social challenges and children who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing.

READS Collaborative is focused on the mission to *provide creative, flexible solutions that promote the success and well-being of each child, adolescent and adult learner*. READS Collaborative provides individualized, caring educational settings and services for students with disabilities through the collaboration of 18 Member Districts. This collaboration results in cost savings to Member Districts and provides individualized support and interventions that districts may not be able to provide on their own.

READS Collaborative builds connections between students, families, school districts and community services. READS Collaborative improves the educational outcomes for children and families of area communities by providing services through a highly specialized, trained staff of educators, administrators, therapists and

assistants. Students participate in educational experiences at READS Collaborative that improve their opportunities for passing state tests, receiving a high school diploma and exploring options for higher education or employment.

Information on Programs and Services Provided by the Collaborative

General Statistics

- READS Collaborative was established in 1974
- Years in Service – 49
- Employees – 154
- 18 Member Districts:
 - Abington, Acushnet, Berkley, Bridgewater-Raynham Regional, Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical High School, Carver, Dighton-Rehoboth Regional, East Bridgewater, Freetown-Lakeville Regional, Marion, Mattapoissett, Norton, Rochester, Middleborough, Somerset, Somerset-Berkley Regional, Taunton, West Bridgewater
- Total Member and Non-Member Districts Served – 18 Members, 30+ Non-Members

Programs Sites

Norton, West Bridgewater, Middleborough, Taunton (Bristol-Plymouth VTHS)

Enrollment

- READS Academy – 96 students
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program – 51 students
- Family Success Partnership – 80 families
- District Services - approximately 300

Programs and Services Provided to Member and Non-Member Districts

● Administrative Mentoring
● Alternative Education/Therapeutic Intervention Program PreK -12+ Public Day Program - READS Academy Program
● Assistive Technology Assessments and Consultation
● Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Assessments and Consultation
● Clinical Evaluations (Neuropsychological, Risk Assessments, Personality, Psycho-educational, Central Auditory Processes, Educational Audiology and Audiological Assessments)
● Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Program (PreK-12+)
● District Services (Therapeutic Intervention and Multi-Disciplinary Support)
● Early Intervention – Specialized Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (birth to 3)

● Educational Audiology Consultation
● Family Success Partnership (Wraparound Services)
● Grant Applications, as a collaboration of districts
● In-District Program Consultation
● Program Evaluations and Consultation to School Districts
● Program Evaluation
● Professional Development
● Social Emotional Learning and Behavioral Health Consultation
● Summer Programs
● Teacher of the Deaf Consultation

Staff Demographics **Indicates part-time or per diem staff*

Administrators/Directors/Coordinators Executive Director (1) Program Directors (5) District Services Coordinator (1) Business Manager (1) Clinic Manager (1) Technology Coordinator (1) Clinical Director (Academy)(1)	11	Administrative Clerks and Secretaries Administrative Assistant to Executive Director (1) Business Office Associate and Title IX Coordinator (1) Business Office Associate (1) Administrative Secretary (1) Technology Support Specialist (1) *Transcriptionist (part-time)	6
Educators – includes Special Education classroom teachers, Teachers of the Deaf, Reading Specialists, *Art, *Music and PE teachers, etc.	*34	Special Education Administrative Clerks and Secretaries Program Secretaries	5
Teacher Assistants – includes Assistant Teachers and 1 to 1 support	41	Counselors	15
*Occupational Therapists & Assistants	3	Nurses	2
*Physical Therapists & Assistants	7	Family Success Partnership Social Workers	4
*Speech/Language Pathologists & Assistants	9	*American Sign Language Interpreters	14
*Clinical Psychologists	3	School Psychologists	3
*Audiologist	1	Bus Driver	1

*Assistive Technology and AAC Specialist	1	Substitutes	11
Facilities Manager	1		

Progress toward Achieving the Objectives and Purposes Set forth in the Collaborative Agreement and Strategic Plan

The **READS Collaborative Agreement** sets forth the purpose of the collaborative as:

“The Collaborative shall conduct and/ or provide programs and/ or services for, but not limited to, special needs children, needs assessment and recommendations, and in-service education. In addition, the Collaborative shall provide diagnostic testing, evaluation, and recommendation in a variety of areas, including, but not limited to, medical, psychological, educational, audiological, ophthalmological, speech and language, and physical and occupational therapy. Such programs and/ or services shall maximize cost efficiency and program effectiveness through a collaborative effort.

The focus of READS Collaborative is the provision and creation of special education programs and services in the least restrictive environment, the provision of diagnostic assessments for children within the local communities, and the delivery of professional development for educators.

The overall objectives of READS Collaborative are:

1. *to complement the educational programs and services of districts in a cost-effective manner;*
2. *to improve the academic growth of students;*
3. *to provide a range of diagnostic educational assessments for local districts;*
4. *to offer quality professional development opportunities to general and special education teachers and related service providers; and*
5. *to expand programs and services in a manner consistent with the needs of the Member Districts.”*

The **READS Collaborative Strategic Plan** for 2021 -2024 sets forth the following priorities.

- Plan for the safety and wellbeing of students and staff during and following the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Promote social justice and improvement in practices that impact equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Enhance programs and services to better serve the students and families, our staff, and the member districts.
- Maintain cost effective programs and services in a manner that supports the fiscal health of the collaborative in the aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Continuing Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

The 22-23 school year resumed with all in person learning and activities. The remaining Covid-19 precautions have been followed per DESE. Like all surrounding districts and throughout the state, significantly increased mental health concerns and emotional challenges are being noted for our students and those being referred for services and assessments. Due to the staffing shortages that are plaguing schools throughout the country, READS has instituted a waiting list for students who are referred but cannot be accepted because of vacant position(s). The pandemic also continues to have a negative impact on a consistent rate of attendance for staff and students.

The challenge has continued to be felt by all educators with regard to the significant increase in the social/emotional and mental health challenges that students are presenting and the lack of access to mental health services outside of the school day. The need continues to be simply greater than the current outpatient resources available. READS is in a similar position to other collaboratives of continuing with placement of students who ordinarily would qualify for a higher level of care and/or receiving students who are returning from emergency/crisis care without having any sustainable out of school support in place to improve their emotional wellbeing.

Program Specific Progress Toward Achieving the Objectives and Purposes Set forth in the Collaborative Agreement and

The READS Collaborative Agreement was updated in the Spring of 2023 following approval by the Board, Member School Committees and the DESE. The agreement was revised to allow for the potential of other districts to join the collaborative through a revised process for adding new members. Specifically, Brockton Public Schools and Whitman-Hanson Regional School District expressed interest in becoming a READS Member District. That opportunity to re-open the READS Collaborative Agreement also resulted in adjusting and refining language in the finance section.

A brief overview of the actions taken in the past year to meet the 5 objectives of READS Collaborative as set forth in the Collaborative Agreement are:

- 1. to complement the educational programs and services of districts in a cost-effective manner;**
 - a. Grants received: Capital Skills, Safe and Supportive Schools Grant, application for MTSS – MH grant, SSVP/COPS Grant, MASSCUE scholarships for staff participation.
 - b. Tuition increases were 4% despite residual financial challenges due to the pandemic.
 - c. Two additional districts are seeking membership
- 2. to improve the academic growth of students;**
 - a. Students were educated in person for the entire school year 22-23 with the exception of those students who required some period of remote or alternate tutoring due to safety concerns and the need for short term interventions. Educators focused on building social-emotional resiliency, problem solving skills, and re-establishing/strengthening Work-Based Learning.
 - b. Enrollment by May 2023 included 96 students at the Academy (45 students were from Member Districts and 51 from 24 non-member districts).
 - c. Enrollment for the DHH Program by May 2023 included 51 Students from 26 neighboring member and non-member school districts.
 - d. Student's academic learning and social emotional progress has continued despite the challenges of quarantines, covid-related illnesses and other factors
 - e. **The Academy had 12 students graduate with a high school diploma for the Class of 2023!** The Academy at Bedford Street location had 9 graduates and the West Bridgewater location had 3. Post high school plans have included:
 - 1 student is currently enrolled at a 4 year university (Bridgewater State University)
 - 1 student is working full time as a result of his READS internship.
 - 4 students are currently working part-time.
 - 2 students are currently enrolled at a community college. (One of which is also working part-time while attending the 2 year college.)
 - 1 student is in the process of applying to community college
 - 1 student is working on entering the Marines
 - 1 has been contemplating community college, but undecided.
 - f. **The DHH Program had 3 students graduate with a high school diploma for the Class of 2023.** The DHH program in Norton had 1 graduate. The Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical High School location graduated 2 students.
 - All 3 DHH graduates are attending 4 year colleges. Two students are at Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, NY. One student is at Northeastern University in Boston, MA.
- 3. to provide a range of diagnostic educational assessments for local districts;**
 - a. READS Clinic offers psychoeducational, neuropsychological, risk, personality, Central Auditory Processing Systems, Functional Listening Assessments (ASL) and Educational Audiology and Audiological Assessments.

- o Maintain cost effective programs and services in a manner that supports the fiscal health of the collaborative in the aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Progress toward the objectives in the Strategic Plan are included within the description of each corresponding program heading below.

READS Academy Program Overview

READS Academy's location at 44 Bedford St. in Middleborough consists of one public day school building that houses two schools: Academy PreK-6 and Academy 7-12+.

READS Academy is a therapeutic public day school that establishes strong connections within the school community. The Academy serves children and adolescents between the ages of 3 to 22 who have been diagnosed with emotional, behavioral, neuro-developmental and learning disabilities, and require specialized instruction and services to meet their IEP goals. The mission of READS Academy is to facilitate a student's personal growth on an emotional and psychological level and to provide a structure for improving interpersonal and social skills through academics and counseling. The Academy is a highly structured program offering individualized and small-group academic instruction, individual and group counseling, and individualized emotional support and intervention. Therapeutic services such as individual and group counseling, speech/language therapy, occupational/physical therapy, adaptive physical education are also available. READS Academy promotes student learning success within the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the MCAS. The school operates on a 10-month calendar with an Extended School Year 5-week summer program.

The community at READS Academy cares for the students individually and collectively throughout the school year. This is especially evident during the holidays, which can be particularly difficult for students in the Academy. The Kindness Closet accepts donations and provides gift baskets, food items and gift cards to families in need. The Emporium is filled with donated items, including clothing, that students can select for themselves or wrap and gift to their family members.

Students' successes are measured and documented using READS Analytics. The READS Analytics tool gathers data for review by staff, students, and IEP teams in the following areas: Social Emotional Learning Skills, Employability Skills and Academic Skills. The analytics tool continues to provide data that is integral to instruction, assessment, intervention and team discussions around students' readiness to return to their home school district.

READS Academy Assessment Services

READS Academy offers short-term placement for Assessment Services at all grade levels, including the preschool classroom. The Assessment Services are designed to assist Special Education Teams in identifying the needs of students. The Assessment Services include comprehensive clinical and educational evaluations in a classroom environment that is supported by individualized counseling and therapeutic interventions. Evaluation Data is gathered through a variety of tools to assist the educational team in educational planning and placement at the conclusion of the assessment period. This year READS has restructured the leadership model at READS Academy to include a full time Admissions Coordinator PreK-12+ whose sole responsibility is to process intakes / referrals from surrounding districts. This includes coordinating communication between READS, districts and families, providing program tours, and classroom visits.

READS Alternative Learning Program Supports (ALPS)

All READS students are attending school in person with exceptions for those requiring short-term alternative programming due to safety and other circumstances requiring alternative learning program supports (ALPS) interventions. ALPS works with a student's team to develop a highly specialized

continuum of temporary or interim individual intervention for a child whose circumstances and level of need require such supports.

Therapeutic Support and Services in All READS Academy Locations include:

- Individual and group counseling daily
- Student Success Plans, behavior support and intervention daily
- Social skills training daily
- Therapy dogs (4)
- Family engagement through daily/weekly contact with parents and guardians
- Academic Support provided across all locations to promote college and career readiness that includes:
 - Individualized and small group academic instruction
 - Technology Instruction PreK-12
 - MCAS preparation and support
 - Reading Intervention
 - Pre-vocational training
 - Fine Arts education opportunities including Art and Music
 - Employability Skills (9-12+)
 - Dual Enrollment opportunities at Massasoit Community College
- READS Analytics data collection and analysis that supports academic and therapeutic intervention planning and discussions at Team meetings
- Consultation to referring school districts

READS Academy - PreK-6 School at Bedford St., Middleborough

READS Academy Program Director Erinn Fautuex supervises programming that serves the students, families and districts in preschool to grade 6. The special educators, assistants and therapists have experience and specialized training in promoting self-regulation and social development.

Therapeutic supports include individual counseling, group counseling, and classroom community building activities. In addition, counselors are available for daily check-ins as needed.

READS incorporates hands-on, project-based learning to engage students at all levels. The Academy is a Project Lead the Way school and has a dedicated makerspace that provides additional opportunities for students to engage in STEAM activities.

READS Academy has a one-to-one for Chromebooks for student use and utilizes Google Apps for Education, Class Dojo and other applications to provide families with access to student learning.

The elementary students learn science skills related to the health fields through implementation of augmented reality devices received through the MA Capital Skills Grant. These devices arrived in the late fall of 2022. Students in grades PreK - 6 also participate in music, art, and physical education classes.

READS Academy - 7-12+ School at Bedford St., Middleborough

READS Academy Program Director Justin Smith supervises programming that serves the students, families and districts in 7 - 12+. The READS Academy's specialized staff includes 4 full time counselors as well as special educators with experience and specialized training in promoting self-regulation and social development. READS has 4 therapy dogs at the grades 7-12 school to assist students with emotional regulation and motivation to engage

in school work or socialization.

Students at READS Academy acquire empathy and a sense of social justice through organized student council activities to raise funds for worthy causes. The students and staff have raised hundreds of dollars for organizations such as the Hoyt Foundation, Jimmy Fund, Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Fund and Hurricane Relief.

Community members donate new and gently used items to the school Emporium where students can use “READS bucks” earned for acts of kindness and behavior levels to purchase household items, clothes and gifts for themselves and family members. There has been a significant increase in the need to provide food and clothing directly to students and their families. In response, the Academy expanded the “Kindness Closet” to provide food staples that students can take home to share with their families.

READS Academy has a one-to-one for Chromebooks for student use and utilizes Google Apps for Education and other applications to provide families with access to student learning.

READS Academy 9-12+ offers pre-vocational tracks within the public day high school, such as:

- Industrial Technology:
 - 3-D and Laser Printing Lab
 - Drone Pilot Lab
 - Assembling, repairing and maintaining materials constructed with hand tools
- Culinary/Food Service: Leading to Serve Safe Certification through the Middleborough Health Department
- Print Shop: Using state-of-the-art software and devices including a 3D printer to fulfill orders from READS and community entities.
- Health Services: Incorporating patient care through the use of simulation equipment including mannequins and adaptive equipment and new augmented reality learning stations.
- Capital Skills Grant - Welding: Virtual welding units, related welding equipment and materials and augmented reality learning stations were introduced in the fall of 2022.

Dual Enrollment

READS Academy offers Dual Enrollment in partnership with Bristol Community College and Bay State College according to student interest.

Work-Based Learning Program

READS Academy offers a Work-Based Learning Program for high school students who seek prevocational and vocational training in the form of on-site internships and off-site work study placements. This component of the program offers career readiness, transitional services, and opportunities for students to experience real-life working expectations to build employability skills and helps them to strengthen community connections.

WBL Programming includes Employability Skills Classes, vocational counseling, job shadowing and coaching, on-site internships, and off-site work-study placements as well as focused tutoring for successful performance on MCAS and acquisition of a high school diploma.

Off-site Work Based Learning

Students are expected to interview for a placement, create a contract addressing specific goals and review how they correlate to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. These opportunities have been slow to return after the pandemic.

READS Academy - 9-12 at West Bridgewater Middle Senior High School

READS Academy also offers a substantially separate therapeutic classroom for students in grades 9-12 which is located in the West Bridgewater Middle/Senior High School. Students in this classroom have the opportunity for integration into a mainstream school setting, while continuing to receive specialized academic, behavioral, and emotional support. This placement option is available for students who may be ready to transition from more restrictive educational placements, yet continue to require additional levels of therapeutic and academic support before returning to a full inclusion setting. The team of two teachers and one psychologist provide specialized support for students as they learn in the general education setting. Special Services (OT, PT, Speech/Language and Specialized Reading Instruction) are also provided in this setting. The students are fully embedded in the life of the West Bridgewater Public Schools including general education classes, school clubs and athletics. Program Advancement Director Deirdre Dowd-Pizzuto supervises programming that serves the students, families and districts of students in the 9-12 classroom.

READS Academy Program Advancement

READS Academy is continuously advancing services that support students in the Academy and students in their home districts. Program Advancement Director Deirdre Dowd-Pizzuto is the contact person for these services for providing resources to meet the mental health needs of students. The following are some of the services that have been put in place over the past year to respond to the needs of students, families and districts.

- Placement of MSW Social Work Interns
- Introduction to Mental Health Programs/Resources/Training Opportunities
 - Collaborative Problem Solving - Think:kids Program from MGH with Dr. Stuart Ablon
 - Social Resilience Model - Professional Development Offering
 - Mental Health First Aid - Trainers available
- Development and Implementation of the READS Analytics Data Tools to:
 - inform IEP Teams in the development of goals and objectives
 - monitor student progress and guide implementation of interventions that support Academic, Behavioral, Social Emotional And Employability Skills
 - enhance Data Driven decision-making around readiness of students to transition to less restrictive educational settings
- Consultation to School Districts: In District Program Reviews, Coaching of Special Educators and implementation of trauma informed SEL and behavioral interventions/supports
- Exploration and review of curriculum to expand pre-vocational and vocational instruction
- Expansion of Early College Access/Dual Enrollment
- Expansion of on and off site Work Based Learning internship placements

READS Academy's Progress toward Achieving the Objectives and Purposes Set forth in the Collaborative Agreement and Strategic Plan

- **Priority 1** - Plan for the safety and wellbeing of students and staff during and following the COVID-19 Pandemic. READS Academy staff have continued to comply with all state and federal mandates regarding the pandemic. Academy staff recently completed the Safe and Supportive Schools survey. The survey was issued to students and families in the fall of 2022. The Emergency Response Team schedules 'table drills' to practice emergency evacuations in the event of an intruder. The leadership team continues to periodically review safety procedures.

- **Priority 2** - Promote social justice and improvement in practices that impact equity, diversity and inclusion. READS Academy has several staff members and all 3 Directors participating in the meetings of the Social Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. A stipend for leadership of this work was established for the Academy program. In addition, the Safe and Supportive Schools grant award provided funding for an equity audit to support a defined action plan for future years. This audit was completed by IDEAS starting in January 2023 with a concluding report in June 2023 containing recommendations.
- **Priority 3** - Enhance programs and services to better serve the students and families, our staff, and the member districts. See all the above.
- **Priority 4** - Maintain cost effective programs and services in a manner that supports the fiscal health of the collaborative in the aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic. READS Academy enrollment trends improved in 2022-2023 resulting in the need to waitlist some referrals. Due to the increasing in-district specialized programming, READS is seeing increased referrals for students with more complex social-emotional profiles.

Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Program, PreK -12+, EI and Consultation

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing (hereinafter DHH) program is recognized throughout the state for its highly specialized instructional program that provides a broad spectrum of services. The READS Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program recognizes and facilitates all modes of communication as appropriate for each child. The Program Directors, Evelyn Rankin and Shannon Allen, sit on boards for the region and state including an advisory board for the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. READS DHH educators, therapists and interpreters contribute to the improvement of programming for children with hearing loss on the state, regional and national levels. Established by the Board of Directors as an essential service in 1979, over the past 43 years the program has educated hundreds of children with hearing loss. The program currently **(FY23) serves 51** students in grades PreK-12+ and 10+ children (birth to 3) in specialized Early Intervention.

The DHH program offers flexible and wide-ranging programming options within public school settings. There are eight classrooms for children in Preschool through grade 12 located within the Norton Public Schools. There is a second high school classroom option at Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical High School. The READS DHH program has the only program for Deaf students that is fully matriculated into a vocational high school. It has been stated that “the READS Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program is unmatched in the state.”

Program options range from self-contained classrooms with a Teacher of the Deaf providing maximum support in a small group, to full inclusion in general education settings with appropriate supports tailored to individual students. Instruction is accessible to students through the direct use of American Sign Language, interpreted ASL, use of spoken English, and a variety of specialized instructional techniques that enhance language and literacy for d/Deaf students.

The DHH preschool is a full-day program offering intensive language intervention (ASL and spoken language/listening, as appropriate), sensory-motor integration, Early Childhood Learning Standards and social-emotional skills. Students engage in play-based learning with an early literacy focus incorporating themes based on children’s literature.

Beginning in kindergarten and continuing through elementary grades, students receive academic and language instruction within self-contained classes with a Teacher of the Deaf while they also have opportunities to be included in general education classrooms. Students at this level join hearing peers for Specials classes (Art, PE, Computers, and Music (when accessible)), and are increasingly accessing content in the general education classroom with interpreters or other accommodations and supports through the DHH program. Intensive literacy intervention and support is provided throughout the elementary years from two specialized Teachers of the Deaf.

Middle school students are fully included in general education Science classes with interpreters and modifications as needed. Additionally, they join STEM, Tech Ed, PE, Art and Music. Students are included in Math, Social Studies and English classes according to IEP Team recommendations and with appropriate support and services needed to succeed. At the middle school level, students often begin participating in extra-curricular activities with their hearing peers as well. Social emotional learning at this age is fully supported through both the

general curriculum and with the assistance of a School Adjustment Counselor. The middle school level also includes programming for students with multiple diagnoses in addition to hearing loss or deafness. This classroom was developed in response to requests from two districts.

Students at both Norton High School and Bristol-Plymouth Vocational Technical High School are surrounded with supports that assist them in meeting the competency requirements for a high school diploma or certification of completion. They are able to participate in all school activities including extracurriculars according to their interests. Students in the DHH program who do not have an additional diagnosis to hearing loss will typically graduate from high school within 4 years. Some students attend high school for an additional year or two depending on their IEP transition goals. Students with an additional diagnosis are able to continue with a transition plan that includes placement in the program until the age of 22 as appropriate. Transition planning for these students includes participation in in-school pre-vocational internships & off-site internships as students are ready to do so.

The DHH program provides each child with access to a specialized teacher as well as teaching assistant in the classroom. Currently, Deaf adults, both teachers and assistants, provide in-depth modeling of American Sign Language in our classrooms. Children have strong spoken language models provided by hearing adults who are also skilled in ASL.

The DHH program provides each child with the skills to effectively use an interpreter in a variety of settings as they become more academically independent. Students in the DHH program learn valuable skills for using an interpreter to access learning, social interaction, extra-curricular activities and formal events. The development of these skills begins in the early grades within the DHH classroom and expands to core academic classes as well as job sites and community events as students prepare for graduation from high school. READS interpreters are certified as achieving a qualifying score on the Educational Interpreter Proficiency Achievement (EIPA) in accordance with regulations and are registered with the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH).

The DHH program provides each child with speech and language intervention that is specialized to their level of language acquisition, communication mode and type of amplification. The Speech and Language Pathologists and Assistants are fluent in ASL and have specialized skills in working with DHH students. The DHH program provides each child intensive literacy intervention in the early grades and continued support through high school. The Literacy Specialists have specialized training in providing literacy intervention to children with hearing loss and incorporate tools and assessments designed for children who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing.

The DHH program provides children with specialized counseling services through a structured social emotional learning program designed for children with hearing loss in the early grades and ongoing group or individual counseling support as needed at the secondary level.

Students in Norton High School and Bristol-Plymouth programs who have success in graduating in 4 years are entering college or transitioning into a vocation. Students in the lower grades are more successfully reaching grade level academics and transitioning to more general education classes than 10 years ago. The DHH program is improving literacy rates as measured by the Leveled Literacy Intervention Program. The students in the DHH program have qualified for the past several years to send a high school team to the annual Gallaudet Academic Bowl. This trip is possible through the generous support of donations from area businesses, Deaf Community Event funds and funds from the Hearing Loss Association of America. The 2022-2023 school year saw a return to in person competition. There were 4 DHH students and two staff who attended the Academic Bowl held in Kentucky. READS DHH placed 5th.

In partnership with Norton Public Schools, students in DHH have access to one-to-one Chromebooks, Google for Education and other technology. READS has provided each classroom with a state of the art Promethean TouchScreen to replace outdated SmartBoards.

Again this year, READS DHH preschool is serving as a paid co-op placement for a student from Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical High School as part of their Early Education and Care learning experience. This partnership provides the student with an opportunity for work experience and has provided the program with much needed support staff during a staffing shortage.

DHH students were happy to have full in person learning for the 2022-2023 school year. They participated

in the 8th grade trip to New York City with their peers. Two of the students participating have additional physical challenges. Students attended the Woosox game in Rhode Island for Deaf Awareness Night. DHH students also participated in Norton High School's Unified Sports.

DHH Services Provided in All Locations

- Therapeutic support that includes:
 - Spoken language skill development
 - American Sign Language instruction
 - Speech/Language therapy
 - Specialized aural habilitation for children with Cochlear Implants and the full range of audition
 - Explicit literacy instruction
 - Small group and individual counseling
 - Educational Audiology consultation
- Academic Support to promote college and career readiness that includes:
 - Small group & individual instruction
 - General education classroom participation with supports
 - Educational Interpreters
 - School-to-work programming at the high school level
 - Opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities

Additional services may include:

- Extra-curricular support
- Intensive intervention
- One to one assistant (job coach, nurse, note taker)
- Occupational/physical/adaptive physical education as needed
- Vision consultation as needed
- Extended School Year
- Functional Listening Evaluations

Consultation Services from a Teacher of the Deaf (TOD)

The READS Consulting Team has continued to expand this year due to increased demand. The Consultation services are provided by licensed Teachers of Deaf who currently provide consultation that serves over 65 students in their home schools/districts. The consultation model in districts ranges from consulting with a teacher on just a few students on occasion to regular consultation and direct service for multiple days each week for dozens of students.

The Teacher of the Deaf also provides Functional Listening Evaluations for students in districts and assists with initial evaluation for incoming students. Due to demand, READS currently has 2 full time and 2 part-time Consulting Teachers of the Deaf.

DHH Early Intervention Specialty Service Provider

READS DHH Educators also serve as Specialty Service Providers through the Department of Public Health to meet the needs of families with children identified with reduced hearing or deafness from birth to age 3. These Early Intervention services focus on building the infant or toddler's communication skills while supporting parents and connecting them to resources and other families with similar experiences.

READS provides specialized instruction and support to children and families through contracts with several Early Intervention Offices. These services are provided per-diem and offer families in-home therapeutic intervention in areas that include: care of cochlear implants; American Sign Language instruction; behavioral intervention; language development; communication development (alternative and augmentative communication if needed); auditory attention skills; fine motor development for sign language proficiency and early literacy.

The number of children receiving specialized services from DHH staff through Early Intervention varies each year. There are currently 10 children receiving in-home services and support to families. READS provides specialized Early Intervention in partnership with EI Centers in Brockton, Taunton, Fall River and others.

Educational Audiology Consult

READS Audiologist, Dr. Kristy Lamoureux, provides a variety of consultation services to address the environmental concerns and needs of students in district classrooms as well as within READS DHH classrooms. The requests for educational audiology services continue to expand each year going from 65 in FY22 to 119 for FY23 reflecting a trend of 4 straight years of increased contracts. There were 11 Central Auditory Processing evaluations and 3 Audiological evaluations. These services are billed through the Clinic though many requests are initially received through the DHH program.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program's Progress toward Achieving the Objectives and Purposes Set forth in the Collaborative Agreement and Strategic Plan

- **Priority 1** - Plan for the safety and wellbeing of students and staff during and following the COVID-19 Pandemic. READS DHH staff have continued to comply with all state and federal mandates regarding the pandemic in collaboration with host school districts, Norton Public Schools and Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical School.
- **Priority 2** - Promote social justice and improvement in practices that impact equity, diversity and inclusion. DHH has several staff members and both Directors participating in the meetings of the Social Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. A stipend for leadership of this work has been established for DHH Teacher Mollie Roque to promote the goals within the DHH program. In addition, the Safe and Supportive Schools grant award provided funding for an equity review to support a defined action plan for future years.
- **Priority 3** - Enhance programs and services to better serve the students and families, our staff, and the member districts. See all of the above.
- **Priority 4** - Maintain cost effective programs and services in a manner that supports the fiscal health of the collaborative in the aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The READS DHH program continues to have a stable enrollment of students and several new referrals each year. Increased inclusive opportunities are available to students with support from ASL interpreters. In response to the demand for consultation services, the additional need for increased staff to provide services for students in districts is continually being assessed.

District Services

The District Services Program is a highly individualized program encompassing a wide variety of services, including consultation, evaluation, and direct services in response to the needs of students and districts in the following areas:

- Academic Tutoring in the Home
- Adaptive Physical Education
- Applied Behavioral Analysis, training and support
- Assistive Technology Assessments and Consultation

- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Assessments and Consultation
- Family Success Partnership Counselor (wraparound services)
- Functional Behavioral Assessments, consultation and training
- Home-Care Services
- Occupational Therapy
- Orientation and Mobility Consultation
- Physical Therapy
- Professional Development
- Program Reviews
- Sensory Integration, evaluation/consultation
- Speech/Language Evaluation and Intervention
- Specialized Staffing, including counselors
- Summer services

District Services is constantly evolving and expanding services to meet the needs of students and the requests of districts. Director Dr. Bethany Estrella supervises service delivery for the students, families and districts. Services expanded within this calendar year include the Family Success Partnership (FSP). This service has expanded from 7 to 8 districts and the number of families supported has increased from 75 to 80. Two additional FSP counselors were added this year to meet the consistent growing need. The READS FSP counselors meet with families to set goals that improve outcomes for the family and result in improved learning for the students. Referrals are made by school teams and participation in the services is voluntary. Since February 2016 when READS launched this service with one part-time counselor, the FSP counselors have assisted well over 200 families to meet their goals by supporting them outside of the school day and at locations that are convenient to the families' schedules. FSP counselors have continued providing individual counseling services as a bridge to more comprehensive services, connected families to community resources, stabilized food and housing instability and strengthened connections between families and schools. Anecdotal information identified incidences of family intervention that avoid potential out of district placements. This service is a factor in significant cost avoidance for districts. Qualitative data is gathered continually to evaluate the impact of this program, which identifies the themes in family goals, the additional resources added for families, and the satisfaction rates of families and districts.

Program Reviews are conducted for Member Districts at reduced cost. Past reviews have been conducted for Speech and Language services, Alternative Program models and Substantially Separate Program models.

District Services continues to coordinate and provide Assistive Technology and AAC services. The Assistive Technology/AAC Team is composed of a Speech Pathologist and Occupational Therapist with specialized expertise. This team can identify low, mid, and high-tech assistive/AAC tools that can support students with learning and communication. The AT/AAC team's expanded services include a software/equipment loan program and a model for sustained support for implementation after the initial assessment and recommendations are made.

District Services excels at providing services to member and non-member districts at reasonable cost that include: FMLA and Maternity coverage, as well as ongoing services of OT, PT, Speech Therapy, tutoring, ABA, AT, and APE. (Please see noted coverages on page 9.) There were 29 AT/AAC evaluations completed during the 22-23 school year. District Services completed an additional 97 evaluations (OT, PT, APE, and SLP) during the 2022-2023 school year to support 38 member and non-member districts.

All District Services referrals are carefully evaluated; goals and objectives are formulated; and a service/consultation delivery system is established by the service provider in coordination with the school/district.

District Service's Progress toward Achieving the Objectives and Purposes Set forth in the Collaborative Agreement and Strategic Plan

- **Priority 1** - Plan for the safety and wellbeing of students and staff during and following the COVID-19 Pandemic. District Services staff comply with all safety directives from both READS Collaborative and the host schools in which they work.
- **Priority 2** - Promote social justice and improvement in practices that impact equity, diversity and inclusion. The Director of District Services is a participant in the meetings of the Social Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.
- **Priority 3** - Enhance programs and services to better serve the students and families, our staff, and the member districts. See all of the above.
- **Priority 4** - Maintain cost effective programs and services in a manner that supports the fiscal health of the collaborative in the aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic. District Services continues to offer services to students and families in their schools/homes and has seen an increase in contracts for services and a significant increase in requests for Family Success Partnership services and mental health providers.

READS Diagnostic Clinic and Ancillary Services Progress toward Achieving the Objectives and Purposes Set forth in the Collaborative Agreement and Strategic Plan

Clinic

Regional Educational Assessment and Diagnostic Services (READS) was formed in 1974 when superintendents realized that there was a need for close-to-home, cost-efficient diagnostic services for students with disabilities whose needs were not being met in classrooms in their schools. The Clinic was formed to provide assessment services to children between the ages of 3 and 22 years. The Clinic currently provides psycho-educational evaluations, neuropsychological-educational evaluations, risk assessments, personality assessments, evaluations of audiological and central auditory processing, speech/language evaluations, classroom observations, educational audiology consultations, and a variety of additional specialized assessments, including specialized evaluations of children with hearing loss. After all aspects of the evaluation have been completed, a post-evaluation conference is scheduled. Families and school personnel are an integral part of this conference and are invited to participate by providing information to supplement the findings of the evaluation team. A comprehensive report is provided with each evaluation.

Referrals to the various programs are accepted at any time during the year and are sent by the Special Education Teams through the Special Education Administrator of the district in which the child resides. Requests are reviewed by the Clinic Manager and Lead Psychologist. Specialized evaluations of children with hearing loss are offered in coordination with the Director of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program.

The Clinic provided 210 pre-committed evaluations to Member Districts last year. In total the clinical psychologists conducted 270 evaluations of students from Member and non-member districts during the 22-23 school year, up from 256 for FY22. The Clinic provides flexible assessment schedules to accommodate families on an individual basis. The Clinic has found that participation in conferences with districts and families following an evaluation has increased through the use of Zoom due to the reduced impact of driving distances and time constraints. This option for attending a conference will continue to be an offering of the clinic.

Districts are permitted to use up to 25% of their pre-committed evaluation slots for Risk Assessments (not to exceed 5). This expansion of Member's use of clinic slots reflects READS Collaborative's responsiveness to an increased need of the districts as indicated by the Special Education Administrators group and was adopted as general operational practice since the 2019-2020 school year.

Educational Audiology Assessment and Consultation (identified under DHH program offerings) to school

districts have grown consistently in the fourth year of this service. During the 21-22 school year the number of consultations increased from 65 to 119 reflecting a trend of 5 straight years of increased contracts.

Professional Development

READS continues to offer PD that is targeted to meet the requests of the districts. READS offered Educator Evaluation for New Administrators on 2 different occasions during the winter and summer of 2023 as a hybrid model via ZOOM to support both Member and Non-Member Districts. These sessions provided districts with an opportunity to send educators to professional development sessions at a lower cost than individual districts could have procured.

In addition, Dr. Estrella provided professional development and/or training. She presented “Partnering for Family Success” at the MASC/MASS 2022 Conference and provided ½ day professional development to Abington Public Schools on AAC.

MOEC (Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives)

READS is an active member of MOEC. MOEC represents the 24 Collaboratives spread throughout the state of Massachusetts. Collectively, the 24 Collaboratives provide programming and services to over 300 member and nonmember public school districts. MOEC provides a wide variety of valuable resources to the state’s Collaboratives. This includes, but is not limited to, professional development, sharing of resources, policy development and research, information exchange and networking, and field support and technical assistance.

Cost Effectiveness of READS Collaborative Programs

READS COLLABORATIVE BUDGET SUMMARY - FY23

<i>PROGRAM</i>	<i>FY23 APPROVED BUDGET</i>
Administration	\$3,089,626
Clinic	\$304,266
Clinic Ancillary	\$151,975
Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Program	\$3,183,029
Academy Program	\$6,217,097
District Services & Ancillary	\$1,499,285
Teacher of the Deaf	\$186,004
DHH Summer	\$62,673
Academy Summer	\$180,679
District Services Summer	\$26,400
Early Intervention	\$27,425

Professional Development	\$7,200
<i>TOTAL FY23 BUDGET</i>	<i>\$14,935,659</i>

The collaborative structure is designed to leverage cost savings on behalf of districts in the provision of programs and services to children with disabilities as well as other collaborations for services. The collaborative's process for the development of the budget provides for a thorough review of revenues and expenses in relation to tuition rates and fees for services. Budget subcommittees of the Special Education Administrators Advisory Group meet for an in-depth review of the following budgets: READS Academy, Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, District Services and the Clinic. The Personnel Subcommittee and Finance Subcommittee of the Board of Directors and the President of the Board meet jointly to do a further analysis of the proposed budget. The Special Education Administrators Advisory Group meets as a whole to endorse the budget after another review of revenues, expenses, tuition rates and projected service fees. The Board of Directors then meets to review the budget and discuss any additional adjustments prior to a subsequent meeting to vote approval of the budget.

This process provides for multiple avenues for input from the advisory group and the Board. Tuition increases are carefully considered and questioned before endorsement. READS has engaged in a lease of a newly renovated facility to further enhance programming for students and moved the Academy program PreK-12+ into the space in September 2021. READS Academy tuition saw an increase over the previous 3 years in order to build toward funding for the new location but continues to be a cost-effective option for districts in the region. The projected impact on tuition was shared with the Board throughout the process.

READS Collaborative sold the previous Academy property located at East Grove Street, Middleborough during the 2022-2023 school year. The proceeds of the sale were added to the general fund. READS leases 8 classroom spaces from Norton Public Schools, 1 space at Bristol-Plymouth RVTHS and 1 from West Bridgewater Public Schools at reasonable rates.

READS Collaborative's educational programs provide interventions that promote a student's return to their home district to continue learning as appropriate. Students also receive support that has proven successful in helping them meet competency determinations for a high school diploma, most often within 4 years. Both of these programmatic goals result in reduced expenses for school districts as students spend fewer years in READS Collaborative, if appropriate, than they might spend in a private placement.

No Membership Fee

READS Collaborative is unique in its membership structure. There is no membership fee. Each of the 18 Member Districts are required to purchase 4 evaluations per year through the READS Clinic. The districts have a choice of using these 'slots' for a psycho-educational evaluation, neuro-psychological evaluation or a risk assessment. This fee for service is the only requirement of membership in the collaborative other than participation in governance, program development and student enrollment. Essentially Member Districts have immediate return for their investment in the collaborative in the form of service.

Competitive Tuition Rates

The costs of services and programs provided by READS Collaborative are highly competitive and result in cost savings to the Member and Non-Member Districts when compared to other out of district placements. The services would not be available in the area if the Collaborative did not coordinate them on behalf of the Board of Directors and in collaboration with the Special Education Administrators Advisory Group. A comparison of tuition rates with private schools and other collaboratives does not yield an accurate or informative description of the multi-faceted cost effectiveness of READS programs and services, but is provided in the appendices.

READS is a cost-effective solution in the region for both children with social-emotional challenges and children with reduced hearing or deafness. Appendix B shows a comparison of tuition ranked by daily rates for similar programs which students from the region may attend. The READS Academy Program offers a comprehensive therapeutic approved public day program at a tuition rate that is comparable to programs in both private schools and public collaboratives. The FY24 tuition for Member districts is \$61,200.00. READS' tuition rates and fees for service are reviewed carefully by the Special Education Directors and the Superintendents who form the Board of Directors and determined to be cost-effective alternatives to private school placements or other agencies given the scope of services provided.

READS delineates tuition levels for the DHH program in order to provide more cost effective alternatives that reflect the level of student need. The READS DHH program tuition for levels 1 and 2 is lower than comparable private school programs and is the only program in the region to offer mainstream opportunities in core content as well as electives and specials. The READS Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program is the only collaborative program in the state to provide PreK-12+ education in a public school setting. The Member rates for the Level 1 Tuition for FY 24 for the majority of students placed in the DHH program is \$69,480.00. Additional costs for participation in Bristol-Plymouth Vocational Technical High School, non-member costs, support for participation in extracurricular activities, specialized interventions and summer programs are not included in these rates.

Due to the evolving nature of the communication and learning needs of students in the DHH program a revised 2 tiered tuition structure, which was developed in cooperation with the Special Education Administrators Advisory Group, was implemented in FY21 and continues to be in place.

The assessment of cost-effectiveness for programs includes several factors that cannot be measured in tuition alone such as:

- proximity to the child's home district and reduced transportation costs for sending districts in most cases;
- reduced tuition costs for Members;
- higher rate of student return to districts for students in the READS Academy Program after improved self-regulation, resulting in multiple years of savings on tuition;
- increased likelihood of meeting competency determinations for graduation after 4 years of high school for most students (as determined by the Team) rather than the cost of educating them until they are 22 in both the Academy and DHH resulting in multiple years of savings on tuition;
- comprehensive support for families that reduces district day-to-day personnel resources to resolve issues and meet the child's needs thereby reducing the strain on resources of counselors, administrators and educators in the district; and
- provision of specialized services and equipment related to hearing loss in a coordinated manner, rather than reacting to specialized individual needs as they arise, thereby reducing the costly implications of compensatory services, litigation or hearings.

In relation to fees for service, the Collaborative absorbs the liability of health insurance costs and unemployment benefits for specialized service personnel and support personnel. The Clinic, District Services and Ancillary Services (including professional development) are designed to merely recoup the cost of providing the service and compensate the collaborative for administrative costs.

The surplus funds from these services are typically returned to the Member Districts in the form of Clinic Credits and Tuition Credits in the subsequent year thereby providing an additional financial benefit and further reducing the cost of participation in programs and services.

Tuition Credits and Clinic Credits to Districts at the Close of FY23

The READS Collaborative Board of Directors voted to issue a Clinic Credit from the FY23 budget, in the amount of \$99,360 which will be used to reduce the precommitted slot price by \$480, from \$2,009 to \$1,529 in FY24.

READS has provided cost-effective solutions to Member Districts since 1974 and will continue to provide those solutions into the future in alignment with the mission statement **to provide creative, flexible solutions that promote the success and well-being of each child, adolescent and adult learner.**



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Appendix A

Strategic Planning Action Steps 2021-2024

- **Priority 1** Plan for the safety and wellbeing of students and staff during and following the COVID-19 Pandemic
 - Develop and Staff Elements of 3 Tiers of Support for Mental Health as identified for priority implementation by Special Education Administrators.
 - Enhance mitigation and prevention strategies to reduce the spread of illnesses such as COVID-19.
 - Form a Wellness Committee to develop action steps to address the ongoing physical and mental wellbeing of students and staff.
- **Priority 2** Promote social justice and improvement in practices that impact equity, diversity and inclusion.
 - Invite staff from across the collaborative to engage in initial conversations.
 - Form a Committee and develop a 3 year plan.
 - Embed [Antiracist Leadership Competencies](#) in Program Director and Leadership Team Agendas and Professional Development.
- **Priority 3** Enhance programs and services to better serve the students and their families, our staff, and the member districts.
 - Build on the skills learned during remote learning to provide flexible growth opportunities for students and staff, and engagement opportunities for families.
 - Develop a process for improvement that encompasses a balanced, 3-pronged approach to: Academics, College and Career Readiness and Personal Social Development.
 - Expand programs that prepare students to transition to a fulfilling adult life through opportunities for internships, certification leading to employment, college readiness and dual enrollment, building financial literacy, preparing for adult responsibilities, and building healthy relationships.
 - Review program staffing models to provide increased opportunity for advancement and leadership.
- **Priority 4** Maintain cost effective programs and services in a manner that supports the fiscal health of the collaborative in the aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic.
 - Create supports throughout programs that result in improved focus on referrals and enrollment.
 - Engage in purposeful marketing of the Collaborative programs and services to attract more referrals to programs and more contracts for services.
 - Review the effectiveness of technology solutions to support students, staff and families in engagement, access, academics, college and career readiness, and personal social development.
 - Review Academy budget to align revenues and expenses related to staffing and the new building.
 - Develop a plan to allocate funds to the capital fund to prepare for an option to own 44 Bedford St. in the future.

Appendix B Deaf and Hard of Hearing Tuition Comparison FY24

Tuition Comparisons for placements that DHH students have transferred from, or to, over the past decade. For reference only:

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Programs FY24					
Agency Name	Program Type	Name	Days of Operation	Annual Price	Daily Price
Perkins School for the Blind	Intensive Day	Deaf/Blind/ Multi-Impaired	205	\$244,292.63	\$1,191.67
Learning Ctr. for the Deaf	Day	Walden	216	\$179,178.28	\$829.53
Perkins School for the Blind	Intermediate Day	Intermediate Day	205	\$211,799.00	\$1,033.17
Perkins School for the Blind	Day	Day	205	\$163,392.29	\$797.04
Beverly School for the Deaf	Day	Child. Comm. Ctr.	204	\$119,047.72	\$583.57
<i>READS DHH - Level 2 Intensive 3 Non-Member Students projected</i>	<i>Day - Level 2</i>	<i>Deaf and Hard of Hearing</i>	<i>180</i>	<i>\$102,240.00</i>	<i>\$568.00</i>
Learning Ctr. for the Deaf	Intensive Day	Day	198	\$107,097.78	\$540.90
Cardinal Cushing School & Training Ctr.	Day	Day/Vocational	216	\$116,184.86	\$537.89
Walker, Inc.	Day	Walker School	216	\$112,562.96	\$521.12
Cardinal Cushing School & Training Ctr.	Day	Day	216	\$108,737.88	\$503.42
Learning Ctr. for the Deaf	Day	Day	198	\$96,645.29	\$488.11
Beverly School for the Deaf	Day	BSD	204	\$97,320.89	\$477.06
Willie Ross School for the Deaf	Day	Day	180	\$79,444.99	\$441.36
READS DHH - Level 1 18 Member, 29 Non-Member Students projected	Day - Level 1	Deaf and Hard of Hearing	180	\$79,920	\$444
Clarke School for the Deaf	Day	Day Education	180	\$73,661.89	\$409.23

Appendix C READS Academy Therapeutic Day Program Tuition Comparison FY23

Therapeutic Day Programs FY24					
Agency Name	Program Type	Name	Days of Operation	Annual Price	Daily Price
McLean Hospital, Inc.	Day	CNS	216	\$114,004.17	\$527.80
F. L. Chamberlain School, Inc.	Day	Day	216	\$125,060.10	\$578.98
Cardinal Cushing School & Training Ctr.	Day	Day/Vocational	216	\$116,184.86	\$537.89
Home for Little Wanderers	Day	Southeast Campus Day	216	\$115,405.90	\$534.29
Walker, Inc.	Day	Walker School	216	\$112,562.96	\$521.12
Italian Home for Children, Inc.	Day	Italian Home Day	220	\$104,743.53	\$476.11
Stevens Children's Home	Day	Stevens Home	224	\$97,715.72	\$436.23
Justice Resource Institute	Day	Granite Day	202	\$81,493.58	\$403.43
New England Academy	Day	NE Academy	198	\$79,811.79	\$403.09
Pilgrim Area Collaborative	Day	All Programs	180	\$63,420	\$352.33
READS Collaborative Member	Day	READS Academy	180	\$70,380	\$391
Walker, Inc.	Day	Beacon High School	198	\$72,604.88	\$366.69
Justice Resource Institute	Day	Anchor Academy	198	\$68,257.93	\$344.74
North River Collaborative	Day	North River School	180	\$53,477	\$297.09

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To: Peter Schafer, Superintendent
From: Matthew MacCurtain
Re: Civics MCAS Testing
Cc:
Date: November 14, 2023

Peter,

As part of the DESE statewide Civics Field Test, all Abington Middle School 8th grade students will take the Civics MCAS this spring. The testing window is April 29- June 7. The field test has two sessions. The first is an end of course test. The second is a performance task. The topic of the performance test we have been assigned is Topic 6: The structure of Massachusetts state and local government.

Thank you,

Matt