

# North River Collaborative Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report



**North River Collaborative**  
**Stephen Donovan, Ed.D.**  
**Executive Director**  
**198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370**  
**781-878-6056**  
**[www.northrivercollaborative.org](http://www.northrivercollaborative.org)**  
**December 2019**

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December 11, 2019

Dear Members of the Board of Directors, School Committees, and Colleagues,

As the Executive Director of the North River Collaborative (NRC), I am delighted to present to you the Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report. The report summarizes the highlights of the past school year in which the collaborative focused its efforts on our core mission of providing high-quality, cost-effective educational programs and services for students, districts, partner organizations, and communities.

In this report, you will find:

- Information on the programs and services provided by the collaborative;
- Discussion of the cost-effectiveness of these programs and services;
- Discussion of the progress made toward achieving the objectives and purpose set forth in the collaborative agreement; and
- Audited financial statements and the independent auditor's report.

North River continues to be a fiscally healthy organization as you will see in the audited financial statement. The North River Collaborative maintains a fund balance below the maximum allowable by statute yet sufficient to support the collaborative's needs. Our Capital Fund continues to support maintenance and improvements to the North River School and Conference Center facility.

Some of the highlights of the past fiscal year include the creation and approval of a new four-year strategic plan and the addition of Holbrook as a member district effective July 1, 2019.

On behalf of the entire NRC staff, I would like to thank member district administrators and staff for their input and involvement with the collaborative. The continued success of the collaborative depends on this participation as educational collaboratives exist to "bring school districts together to form partnerships that maximize efficiency by sharing costs and expertise" in order to enhance the lives and effectiveness of students, families, and educators. It is this work that we do on behalf of districts that keeps the North River Collaborative moving forward as an organization.

Lastly, on behalf of the collaborative, I would like to thank Marguerite Rizzi, Superintendent of the Stoughton Public School Schools, for her dedicated service as a Board member to the North River Collaborative and wish her well in her future endeavors.

Sincerely,

Stephen Donovan, Ed.D.  
Executive Director

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## ***Section 1: Governance and General Information***

The North River Collaborative (NRC) is governed by the superintendents of the member districts: Abington, Avon, Bridgewater-Raynham, East Bridgewater, Hanover, Rockland, Stoughton, West Bridgewater, and Whitman-Hanson. Holbrook will be joining the collaborative as a member beginning July 1, 2019. Each member district annually appoints its superintendent of schools to form the NRC Board who is vested with the authority given it by Chapter 40, Section 4E of the General Laws, and all acts amendatory or supplementary thereof, to take necessary action to oversee the operation of the collaborative. In addition, there are regular advisory meetings of the special education directors and the assistant superintendents/curriculum coordinators throughout the year to provide input and feedback about the programs and services as well as information about emerging needs in the districts. The tables below list the members of each of these groups for the 2019 fiscal year. The North River Collaborative is grateful for their service.

### ***Board of Directors***

- |                                       |                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Peter Schafer, Abington, Chair      | • Matthew Ferron, Hanover           |
| • Christine Godino, Avon              | • Alan Cron, Rockland               |
| • Derek Swenson, Bridgewater-Raynham  | • Marguerite Rizzi, Stoughton       |
| • Elizabeth Legault, East Bridgewater | • Patricia Oakley, West Bridgewater |
|                                       | • Jeffrey Szymaniak, Whitman-Hanson |

### ***Special Needs Advisory Committee***

- |                                      |                                    |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • James Robbins, Abington            | • Keith Guyette, Hanover           |
| • Karen Romans, Avon                 | • Linda Maniglia, Rockland         |
| • Paul Tzovolos, Bridgewater-Raynham | • Carolan Sampson, Stoughton       |
| • John Phelan, East Bridgewater      | • Cory Mikolazyk, West Bridgewater |
|                                      | • Lauren Mathisen, Whitman-Hanson  |

### ***Curriculum Coordinators Committee***

- |                                    |                                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • James Robbins, Abington          | • Deborah St. Ives, Hanover         |
| • Karen Romans, Avon               | • Jan Sheehan, Rockland             |
| • Ryan Powers, Bridgewater-Raynham | • Jonathan Ford, Stoughton          |
| • Gina Williams, East Bridgewater  | • Cory Mikolazyk, West Bridgewater  |
|                                    | • Rosamond Dorrance, Whitman-Hanson |

### ***North River Collaborative Administrative Team***

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Stephen Donovan, Executive Director                      | • Moira Leon, Community-Based Vocational   |
| • Clarice Doliber Asst. Executive Director                 | • Beth Litchfield - Social Work Internship |
| • Michael Laliberte, Director of Business                  | • Ryan Morgan, Independence Academy        |
| • Diane Baxter, Technology                                 | • Kate Stevens, Learning Center            |
| • Annie Robinson, District Services                        | • Ann Terrill, Transportation              |
| • Clarice Doliber, Interim Principal North<br>River School | • Deborah White, Professional Development  |
| • Deni Howley, Behavioral Health Initiative                |  |

## *2019-2023 Strategic Plan*

### *Mission*

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

### *Vision*

The North River Collaborative (NRC) provides innovative, flexible, and diverse educational programs that engage and motivate students to reach their potential.

### *Guiding Beliefs*

We believe that...

- Programs, services, and facilities should be of the highest quality and responsive to the changing needs of students.
- All students should be provided with the opportunity and support to reach their potential for academic achievement and independent living.
- All students should be challenged to learn in a caring, inclusive, and flexible environment that appreciates diversity, values life-long learning, and prepares students to be successful.
- Achieving equity is a continuous process of assessment, reflection, and continuous improvement.
- High-quality professional development combined with educator evaluations is essential for improving education practice and maximizing student achievement.
- Supporting the social and emotional well-being and self-determination of our students is essential.
- Through collegiality and shared commitment, we accomplish more collectively than separately.
- To facilitate the educational process, we need to support families.
- A variety of opinions will stimulate innovative and creative ideas leading to effective solutions.
- Student assessment and program evaluation are essential to continuous improvement.

### *Strategic Objectives*

**Objective 1:** Evaluate and enhance existing programs and services.

**Objective 2:** Establish responsive, strategically designed programs and services.

**Objective 3:** Expand and enhance a coordinated and state-of-the-art student transportation system.

**Objective 4:** Secure and adapt facilities and operations to support high-quality programs and services.



## *Serving Students & Districts*

### *Serving Students*

**FY19**

<b>Students Served in NRC Programs*</b>	
Multiple Disabilities	21
Autism/developmental Disabilities	18
Emotional Disabilities	61
Substance Abuse and Dependence -Independence Academy	42
Substance Abuse and Dependence -Upper Course	27
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>169**</b>
<b>Students Served in NRC Services*</b>	
Community-Based Vocational	47
English Language Learners	18
Therapies	545
Social Work Interns	339
Behavioral Health Initiative	181
Transportation	516
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>1,646**</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,815**</b>

\*Each category represents the total number of students serviced in the program for the year

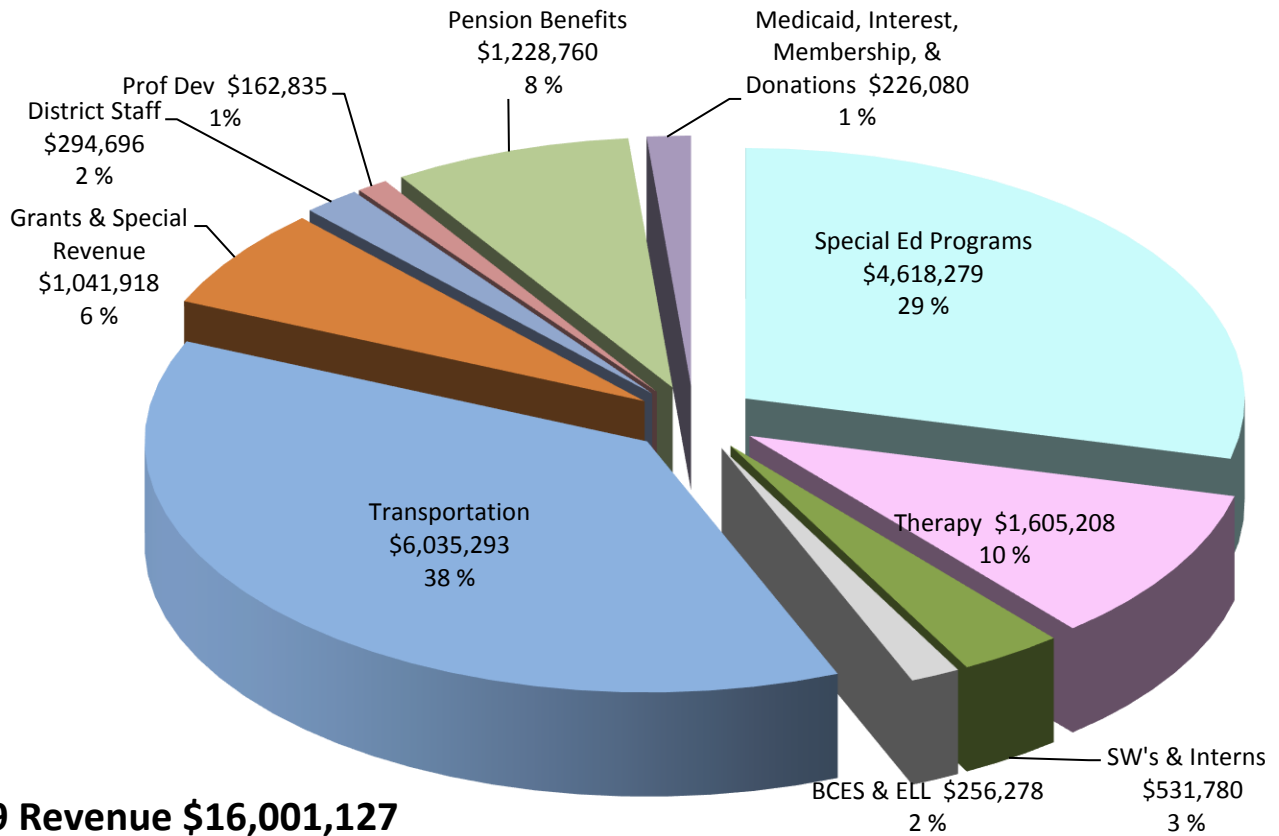
\*\* The totals & subtotals may include a duplicated headcount due to students participating in multiple services and do not include the number of BHI students served.

### *Serving Districts*

**FY19**

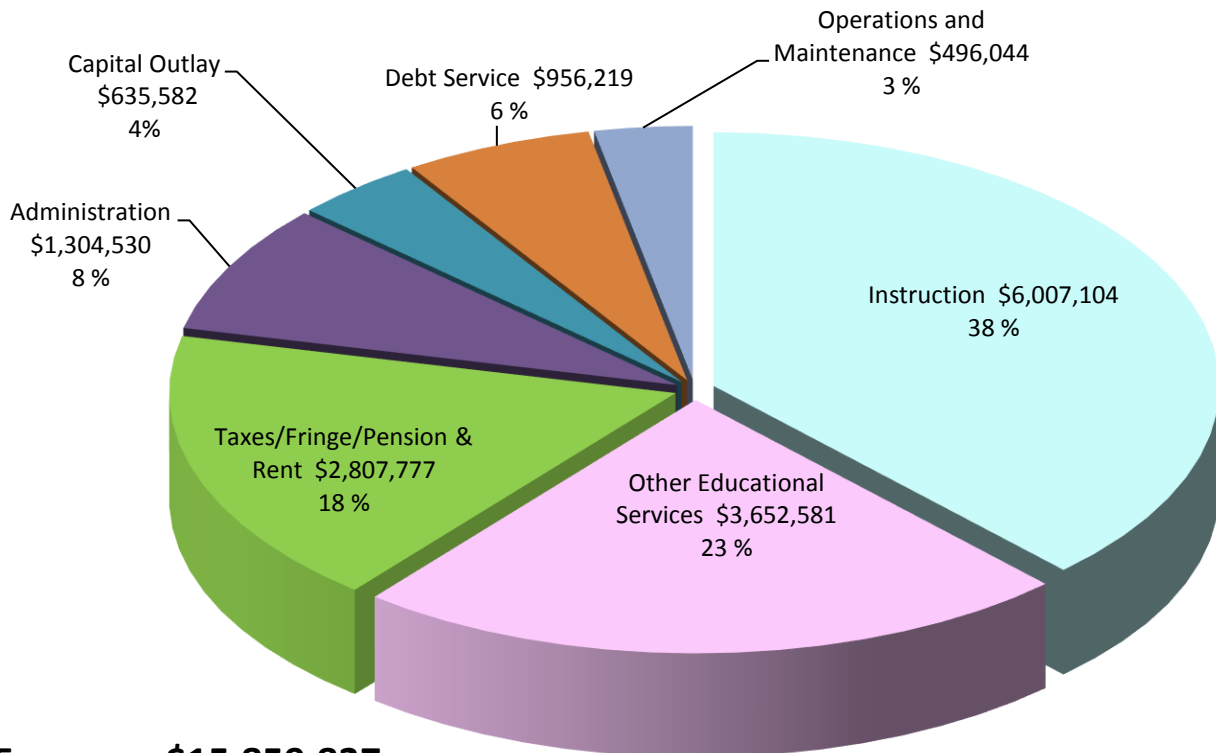
Transportation	34
Municipal Medicaid	18
Grant Writing	37
Behavioral Health	5
Professional Development (PD)	65

## Financial Information



**FY19 Revenue \$16,001,127**

*excludes proceeds from LTD \$498,044*



**FY19 Expenses \$15,859,837**

## *Section 2: Programs and Services*

The North River Collaborative offers the following programs and services (described on subsequent pages) in accordance with its Collaborative Agreement:

- Day School Placements (North River School) and other services for students with disabilities (Learning Center Programs)
- Alternative School Programs for At-risk Students (Independence Academy)
- Community-Based Vocational Services
- Behavior Consultation and Education Services
- Therapy Services
- Vision Services
- Social Work Internship Program
- Family Services
- Teachers of English Language Learners (ELL)
- Professional Development
- Transportation Services
- Collaborative Grant Applications
- General Education Supports and Services
- Clinical Evaluations
- Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement

The programs/services listed above are not all-inclusive. The NRC Board of Directors, acting at the request of the NRC Executive Director and/or member districts may consider and approve other programs/services to be provided by the collaborative so long as such programs/services are in the best interest of the members and are not inconsistent with M.G.L. c. 40, sect. 4E and 603 CMR sect. 50, et seq, as amended from time to time.

### *North River School*

The overarching goal of the North River School is to provide middle school and high school students with a highly structured and therapeutic environment while ensuring the 21st century skills they will require post-graduation are taught and developed.

NRS addresses the academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs of students individually with the most current and best practices. In addition to traditional academic subjects, students also participate in daily living and transitional skills classes such as Culinary class, the Innovation Studio, and social emotional learning.

The NRS curriculum is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and is modified as needed to meet individual student's needs, providing added supports throughout the day to facilitate success. Instruction is delivered in a small group format within a therapeutic milieu with counseling services. A strong home-school relationship is a critical and essential part of the program's success, and one that is fostered through regular, two-way communication.

The goal of the North River School is to assist students in developing the behavioral, social-emotional, and academic skills needed to successfully return to their sending schools. Students receive academic credits toward graduation from their own school districts by completing the course of studies provided at the North River School. Vocational exploratory opportunities, including off-site internships, are offered. The Innovation Studio is a technology-based class that incorporates the most current tools and technology such as 3D printing, graphic design, desktop publishing, and model building. In addition, students in this class are introduced to small business operations through the design and printing jobs community agencies and groups hire NRS students to complete under the direction of the class instructor. The Culinary Exploration/Food Service continuum of classes teaches students culinary and food service skills as well as addresses food safety, nutrition, work habits, and entrepreneurial skills.

Internships in the community are also offered to upperclassmen in good academic standing with support from a job coach as needed. Students, with prior agreement from their district's TEAM, also have the opportunity to participate in their district's academic and extra-curricular activities. It is the goal of NRS to incorporate flexibility and creativity when addressing the needs of students.

The North River Middle School (NRMS) is a Massachusetts DESE approved public special education day program. The NRMS's mission is to assist students in developing appropriate behaviors and improved academic skills which will allow them to achieve success in transitioning to high school and/or returning to their sending school.

North River Middle School serves students in grades 5 through 8 in classrooms designed for small-group instruction, with an integrated therapeutic milieu, counseling services and a behavior management system. A strong home-school relationship is encouraged as an essential part of the school's success. The NRMS teachers work with students to earn academic credit toward promotion to high school. Core curriculum academics focus on preparing students for success on MCAS tests and overall educational achievement. The NRMS schedule includes life skills development, health and wellness education, social-emotional learning, and vocational exploration.

The NRMS's well-developed, successful summer program helps students prevent regression of skills during the summer break and continue academic and social skills development.

#### **North River Middle/High School**

525 Beech Street, Rockland, MA 02370

Phone: 781/871-8320

Clarice Doliber – Interim Program Coordinator/Principal and Lauren Enos – Assistant Program Coordinator

### ***Learning Center Programs***

The **Learning Center for Students with Multiple Disabilities** serves students ages 3 to 22. This program is designed to meet the academic, medical, and therapeutic needs of students with disabilities in multiple areas. Communication, self-care, mobility, and vocational and leisure skill development are addressed throughout the day and guided by the teacher, classroom staff, and an extensive therapy and vision support team. Program nurses oversee promotion of overall student health. This program offers a summer program as well as community field trips. Classroom locations within public schools allow students access to inclusive opportunities in order to help facilitate academic and social skill development.

The **Learning Center for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder** serves students ages 3 to 22. This program is within a structured ABA-based program where students are provided with the behavioral, social-emotional, and academic support to meet their unique needs. Communication, self-care, mobility, and vocational and leisure skill development are addressed throughout the day and guided by the teacher, classroom staff, and an extensive therapy and behavior support team. This program offers a summer program as well as community field trips. Classroom locations within public schools allow students access to inclusive opportunities in order to help facilitate academic and social skill development.

#### **Learning Centers for Students with Multiple Disabilities**

##### **Learning Centers for Students with Autism & Developmental Disabilities**

Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 103)

Kate Stevens – Coordinator

- **Learning Center Multiple Disabilities (Early Childhood, Intermediate)**  
Duval School (Rooms 133A, 133B)  
60 Regal Street, Whitman, MA 02382  
Phone: 781/618-7290
- **Learning Center Multiple Disabilities (Elementary, Middle)**  
Richardson Olmsted School (Rooms 126, 128)  
101 Lothrop Street, North Easton, MA 02356  
Phone: 508/230-3205 x5126, x5128



- **Learning Center Multiple Disabilities (Middle/High School)**  
**Learning Center Autism & Developmental Disabilities (Elementary)**

Gordon Mitchell Middle School (Room 310, 309),  
435 Central Street, East Bridgewater, MA 02333  
Phone: 508/378-0488

- **Learning Center Autism & Developmental Disabilities**  
**High School**

East Bridgewater High School (Room 129),  
43 Plymouth Street, East Bridgewater, MA 02333  
Phone: 508/378-8214 x1290.

- **Learning Center Autism & Developmental Disabilities**  
**High School**

West Bridgewater High School (Room 216),  
155 West Center Street, West Bridgewater, MA 02379  
Phone: 508/894-1220 x1216



## ***Independence Academy: Recovery High School***

**Independence Academy (IA)** is an alternative multi-service secondary school serving adolescents who struggle with issues related to substance use and dependence. The program is one of only five recovery high schools in Massachusetts. IA enrolls students from the southeast region of Massachusetts that have struggled with substance use and who understand that their greatest opportunity for success is in an environment that understands and focuses on their recovery and emotional well-being. The mission of Independence Academy is to provide a customized educational experience in a supportive environment and to engage students in a process of change through which they improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.

Independence Academy offers a full, rigorous academic program leading to high school graduation as well as numerous service components that support a student's commitment to recovery and healthy living. Some of those components include an on-site recovery counselor, peer-recovery support groups, health and wellness curricula and activities, and a comprehensive summer program. Existing partnerships with the Old Colony YMCA, Massasoit Community College, High Point Treatment Center, as well as other community service agencies allow for program enhancements and provide unique opportunities for students enrolled at IA. The staff at Independence Academy works closely with each student's sending school district staff to ensure that each student meets the local graduation requirements for their respective district. As a result, students are awarded a diploma from their sending school district upon completion of all requirements.

In accordance with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, Independence Academy provides an education that is individualized to best meet student needs while taking into consideration their strengths, abilities, and interests. IA aims to provide students an education which enables them to communicate effectively and empowers them to think critically and become well-informed, active members of society. IA's small class sizes provide an environment that encourages students to be highly motivated, accept the challenge of an academically rigorous curriculum, work independently, and meet the pace of a technology-rich world. Students are encouraged to seek educational opportunities outside of the traditional school day (i.e., independent study, internships, etc.). The daily academic schedule focuses on interdisciplinary units that are co-taught by a team of teachers. Utilizing current research, teachers provide a learning environment that capitalizes on student strengths and allows students to focus on areas that need development. The staff actively work on goal setting with students and assist them with academic opportunities that allow them to explore areas of interest and prepare them for post-secondary education and training.

Independence Academy staff strive to provide students with positive adult role models and social supports in and out of school. Our school provides recovery programming and education that is interwoven into their daily routine. Students participate in both group and individual recovery work during the school day. Our

counseling staff works closely with each student and their family/support network to educate, support, and cultivate resources within the community with the ultimate goal of continued and lifelong sobriety.

In addition to providing students with a comprehensive educational experience, Independence Academy is also determined to become the primary resource for school districts and communities in the region to address issues related to adolescent substance use. Through strong community partnerships, short-term intervention programs for out of school youth, and outreach work, IA is committed to working with the surrounding communities to better address the growing concerns of substance use and its impact on adolescents and families.

Completing its seventh full academic year in 2019, Independence Academy has enrolled over 180 students from over 40 different communities. Since opening in January 2012, the school has now helped more than 50 students realize their goal of obtaining their high school diploma.

### **Independence Academy**

460R Belmont Street, Brockton, MA 02301

Phone: 508/510-4091

Ryan Morgan – Principal



## ***Community-Based Vocational Program***

The **Community-Based Vocational Program (CBV)** supports students between the ages of 16 and 21 with unique learning styles who need vocational and transitional training. For many, this is their first introduction to the world of work. Students are matched to community-based worksites with supervision from a job coach. The job coach's role is to teach transferable skills which can be applied in a variety of settings as well to develop strategies in tandem with students in site specific situations. As students become proficient at community-based sites, responsibilities are increased to match their progress. Established sites for vocational exploration include animal care, warehouse supports, maintenance, food service, collating, customer service, television and radio production, childcare, office work, recreational activities, counter help, and retail.

Student enrollment varies from one to five days per week, depending on individualized circumstances. A typical day begins with a Transition Skills Group which includes lunch preparation and activities from the Community-Based Vocational Program Curriculum. Examples of transition topics include life skills activities (budgeting, taxes, emails, travel training, etc.), a lunch program, and presentations from relevant resources (DDS, MRC service coordinator and benefits specialist, Housing Authority, etc.). During the day, students participate in Community-Based Vocational sites and have lunch. At the end of the day, students participate in exercise and socialization activities at a state-of-the-art fitness center prior to going home. All students are transported in 7D vehicles and all job coaches have a 7D license.

The Program Coordinator works closely with parents and students to facilitate the transition process. This may include tours of adult service providers, local colleges, volunteer opportunities, job placement, travel, housing, and recreational opportunities. In-depth vocational assessments are provided for each student. A job club, and job placement services are available to eligible students. Upon request, the Community Based Vocational Program will develop individualized programs outside of the, "typical" schedule to accommodate unique situations.

### **Community-Based Vocational Services**

Frolio School, 1071 Washington Street, Abington MA 02351

Phone: 781/871-1589

Moir Leon – Coordinator



## ***Summer Work and Learning Program***

The North River Collaborative's Summer Work and Learning Program provides an innovative summer program offering a broad range of transition services for students with intellectual impairments, developmental disabilities, behavioral challenges, and autism. The program is differentiated for students ages 14-17 and 18-22 who may attend one or more summers. The program is located at Rogers Middle School and select community-based job sites. A broad range of transition services are tied to academic support and remediation for students through hands-on instruction and opportunities for daily work experiences such as horticulture, building maintenance, shipping and receiving, office practices, and food service.

Students participate each day in a variety of activities offering instruction in life skills for independent living including: daily living skills (e.g., managing money, use of household tools/appliances, time management, health and safety, basic meal preparation, health and fitness leisure/recreation activities, community experiences), social thinking skills, job exploration (e.g., training opportunities and job placement, developing/maintaining appropriate work skills and behavior), and functional academics.

### **Summer Work and Learning**

The Almshouse, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370

Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 107)

Clarice Doliber – Assistant Executive Director and Philip Buckley – SWL Coordinator

## ***Behavior Consultation and Education Services***

The North River Collaborative's Behavior Consultation and Education Services (BCES) includes extensive training and ongoing support in developmental disabilities, autism spectrum disorders (ASD), applied behavior analysis treatment and intervention approaches, and community and school-based support services. BCES staff members have extensive experience in service delivery to students with ASD, other disabilities, and typical students experiencing difficulties with behaviors that interfere with learning and social relationships. In addition to responsibilities of assessments and program design, Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) provide supervision and training to behavior service providers and assistant behavior consultants working directly with students, staff, families, and community partners.

With input from other professionals, staff members focus on facilitating the development of each student's skills in the area of communication, academics, social-emotional, receptive and expressive language, leisure/play, adaptive behavior, and activities of daily living. A strong emphasis is placed on the use of research-based applied behavior analysis (ABA) principles and strategies including discrete trial instruction (DTI) and incidental teaching within the natural environment. Strategies and techniques incorporated may include visual supports, social stories, and behavior support plans. When needed, home-based services provide parents and other caregivers training in techniques to teach, promote, and manage skills and behaviors at home and in the community.

Using a tiered staff support model, NRC professionals train classroom staff in all aspects of ABA services in order to best meet student needs and expand the districts' ability to support students in the least restrictive environment. Rapid generalization of learned skills and behaviors is accomplished when staff is trained to provide consistent instruction during both DTI and incidental teaching times.

One BCBA is certified to teach the Safety-Care™ Behavioral Safety program for North River staff, providing the skills and competencies necessary to effectively prevent, minimize, and manage behavioral challenges with dignity, safety, and the possibility of change.

### **Behavior Consultation and Education Services**

The Almshouse, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370

Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 107)

Clarice Doliber – Coordinator

## *Therapy Services*

The North River Collaborative provides **occupational, physical, and speech therapy services** within 35 public school buildings in eleven school districts and to its Learning Center for Students with Multiple Disabilities and Learning Center for Students with Autism and Developmental Disabilities programs. The collaborative's therapy staff is dedicated to excellence in student service, committed to facilitating optimal curriculum access, and provides high-quality consultation services to parents and educational staff in order to maximize student success. At each location, therapists are integral members of a multidisciplinary team that facilitates student progress through a coordination of services. More than 20 licensed physical, occupational, and speech therapists, most with advanced degrees and certifications participate in monthly meetings and ongoing professional development activities to enhance knowledge and maintain an evidence-based practice. Therapists provide each student with service guided by the current developments in therapeutic, rehabilitative, and educational research.

### **Therapy Services**

The Almshouse, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370

Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 120)

Annie Robinson – Coordinator



## *Services for Students who are Visually Impaired*

### **Teachers of the Visually Impaired**

The North River Collaborative contracts with teachers of the visually impaired to provide program-based consultative and direct services to students with visual impairments. The collaborative also works with member/non-member district towns to provide itinerant vision services to students with visual impairments who are attending district schools.

Teachers of the visually impaired provide: functional vision assessments, technology assessments and instruction, consultation to staff and parent/guardians, Braille instruction, compensatory skill development (e.g., large print, optical devices, etc.), life skills (e.g., daily living skills, social interaction skills, recreation, and leisure), and production and ordering of materials.

### **Orientation and Mobility**

The North River Collaborative provides consultative and direct services to students with visual impairments from orientation and mobility instructors. The collaborative works with member/non-member school districts to provide itinerant orientation and mobility services to students with visual impairments who are attending district schools.

Services provided by the orientation and mobility instructor may include: functional travel assessments, consultation to staff and parents/guardians, travel instruction in school and community settings, compensatory skill development (e.g., low vision aids, use of other senses, and spatial relationships), and life skills training (e.g., daily living skills, social interaction skills, recreation, and leisure).

### **Vision Services**

The Almshouse, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370

Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 120)

Annie Robinson – Coordinator



## ***Social Work Internship Program***

The North River Collaborative's Social Work Internship Program provides school-based social work services to help students and their families face a complexity of challenges in order to foster competency in all areas central to children's lives – academic, social-emotional, and behavioral. The consultation process establishes and implements interventions to meet students' needs. Services include individual and group counseling, crisis interventions, whole-class presentations, lessons, and consultations with parents and teachers. These services enhance teacher effectiveness related to social-emotional development of children and facilitate a functional "bridge" relationship between home and school. The interns attend Bridgewater State University, Boston University, Simmons University, and Boston College.

### **Social Work Internship Program**

The Almshouse, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370

Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 302)

Beth Litchfield – Coordinator



## ***Behavioral Health Initiative***

The North River Collaborative Behavioral Health Initiative offers on-site behavioral health consultation to districts, professional development on social and emotional learning strategies, and facilitates development of student support teams. Contracted school social workers and wrap-around service support for students and their families are also available to districts. During FY19, through DESE grant funding, NRC once again offered a graduate-level course titled "Integrating Social and Emotional Learning into Tier One Instruction." Teams of school leaders from eight districts each established a school-wide tiered system of behavioral interventions and supports based on current research on child development and the impact of trauma on learning. Participants developed implementation plans for sharing with others and building capacity in their districts.

### **Behavioral Health Initiative**

The Almshouse, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370

Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 301)

Deni Howley – Coordinator



## ***Teachers of English Language Learners***

The North River Collaborative provided **English Language Learner (ELL)** services to one district. The teachers assist students whose first language is not English in the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. Referrals are made through the district's ELL Coordinator. However, as districts have grown in their number of ELL students, more districts have chosen to hire their own ELL teachers due to the number of teachers needed.

English language instruction is provided in alignment with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development Standards. ELL teachers provide appropriate instruction in language variations, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Instructional methods are employed that are appropriate for the maturity and skill level of students. Student assessment is conducted regularly, with written quarterly progress reports and other reports completed as needed.

Since carryover in the classroom is imperative for student success, ELL teachers coordinate instruction with classroom activities and provide consultation to classroom teachers to ensure a comprehensive service delivery program for each student. Our teachers also confer with parents to help them better understand the school program and their student's progress toward accomplishing stated goals.

The North River Collaborative's teachers keep current with knowledge in their field by participating in high-quality professional development. ELL teachers participate in monthly staff meetings to facilitate communication and assist classroom teachers in meeting the needs of students.

### **English Language Learning (ELL) Services**

The Almshouse, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370

Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 107)

Clarice Doliber – Assistant Executive Director

## ***Clinical Evaluation Services***

The North River Collaborative's school psychologist is available to complete psycho-educational evaluations for students enrolled at the North River School or in public school districts upon request.

## ***Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement***

School-based Medicaid billing has become a way for cities and towns to recoup dollars for funds spent on special education programs if a student is receiving special education services and is eligible for Mass Health. Direct services claiming provides school districts an opportunity to be reimbursed for furnishing medically necessary services to eligible Mass Health students pursuant to an eligible IEP. The North River Collaborative is familiar with both school and town governance and aware of confidentiality and privacy issues, including HIPAA and FERPA, as well as the necessary recordkeeping required by districts, towns, and the Office of Medicaid. An annual cost report reconciles 12 months of direct service and administrative cost.

### **Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement**

The Almshouse, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370

Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 105)

Michael Laliberte – Director of Business and Finance

## ***Professional Development***

NRC is committed to providing high-quality professional development programs based on current research and best practices that focus on improving the learning of all students. The collaborative's decisions about the selection/identification of programs and courses, audience, scheduling, duration, and implementation factors are driven by research-based standards for professional learning, such as those identified by the Massachusetts Department of Secondary and Elementary Education.

Professional development offerings for the North River Collaborative and district staff are determined based on ongoing and newly identified needs of our member districts, the needs of low-incidence educational staff, state, and federal mandates, emerging issues, and current educational best practice. Curriculum coordinators and special education directors from each member district and the collaborative's program coordinators work to collaboratively plan programs that address collective needs. Programs are designed to focus on knowledge and skill development to impact student learning. When educators from many school districts participate in professional development training together, they have the opportunity to share with and learn from one another, often discovering a synergy that results in understanding, growth, and solutions that were unanticipated.

Professional development training and support are provided to the North River Collaborative and district educators in order to:

- Continue to improve educational practice and maximize student achievement;
- Support supervision and evaluation to improve instruction;
- Improve curriculum and content knowledge and address pedagogy with a specific emphasis on differentiation, practices regarding assessment, and instructional technology integration;
- Address the issues of mental health, behavioral issues, and student safety;
- Address the individual needs of students including students with disabilities and ELLs; and
- Provide programs locally that are convenient for district staff to attend.

### **North River Conference Center**

525 Beech Street, Rockland, MA 02370

NRCC Phone: 781/616-6086

Almshouse Office PD Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 102)

Deborah White – Coordinator

## ***Southeast Transportation Network***

The Southeast Transportation Network served 516 students in 34 school districts, most of which are from the North River Collaborative, Pilgrim Area Collaborative, and South Shore Educational Collaborative regions. Given the fiscal challenges and the growing concern for student safety, the North River Collaborative is coordinating this program to obtain cost-effective, quality transportation for students with special needs who attend public and private special education programs in the greater Boston/Southeastern Massachusetts region. Through the Network, the North River Collaborative began providing transportation with the opening of school in September 2007. In-service training is provided for all staff on topics such as: disability awareness, first aid/CPR, behavior management, defensive driving, securing wheelchairs, bus evacuation, and winter driving.

### **Southeast Transportation Network**

The Almshouse, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370

Beaver Brook School, One Ralph Hamlin Way, Abington, MA 02351

Jones School, 137 Walnut Street, Stoughton, MA 02072

Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 160)

Ann Terrill – Coordinator

## ***Purpose***

The purpose of the collaborative is to provide intensive educational programs and services for students with disabilities, professional development to educators, related services to students with disabilities in member and non-member districts, and other high-quality, cost-effective services to meet the changing needs of member districts. The North River Collaborative has been successful in achieving this purpose during FY19 as outlined below.

## ***Objectives***

The overall objectives of the North River Collaborative Agreement are to:

1. Provide programs for students with low-incidence disabilities in the least restrictive environment;
2. Offer a variety of quality professional development opportunities to general and special education teachers and administrators, and related service providers;
3. Provide programs and services in a cost-effective manner;
4. Explore and pursue grant and other funding to support identified needs of the districts; and
5. Offer cooperative programs and/or services to help districts maximize cost efficiency and program effectiveness through a collaborative effort.

***Objective 1: Provide programs for students with low-incidence disabilities in the least restrictive environment***



***Objective 5: Offer cooperative programs and/or services to help districts maximize cost efficiency and program effectiveness through a collaborative effort***

The North River Collaborative provides programs and services for students with low-incidence disabilities in the least restrictive environment including social-emotional, multiple disabilities, autism, English learners, behavioral health, and substance abuse.

- The Learning Center programs are provided in age-appropriate public school buildings with inclusion opportunities provided.
- The North River School is an alternative setting for middle and high school students who have difficulty functioning successfully in public schools due to behavioral, social, emotional, and/or psychological challenges. The staff work closely with school districts to align curriculum with that of sending districts to allow students to transition back to local schools when appropriate.
- Independence Academy is an alternative setting for students with diagnosed substance abuse disorders. The staff work closely with school districts to align curriculum with that of sending districts to allow students to transition back to local schools when appropriate.
- For transition-age students, the North River Collaborative provides supports for students within community-based job sites through the Community-Based Vocational program and Summer Work and Learning program.
- The North River Collaborative provides services in member and non-member school districts that allow students to remain in their local community schools while receiving essential services to enhance access to the curriculum. In this way, instead of students leaving their districts, the services are brought to them and the educators that support their learning. These services include

occupational, physical, and speech therapy; behavior consultation; vision services including orientation and mobility, teacher of the visually impaired, Braille-trained aides; ELL; and social work services.

- The North River Collaborative also provides cooperative services to school districts including Municipal Medicaid reimbursement and special education transportation.

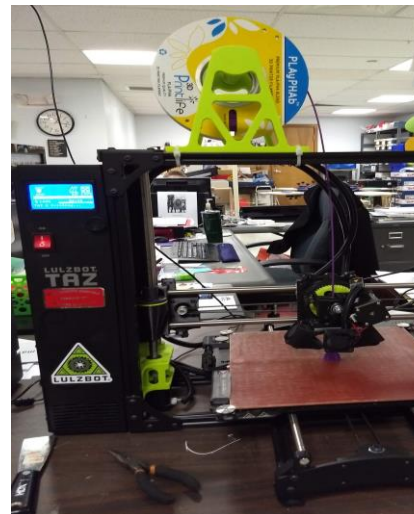
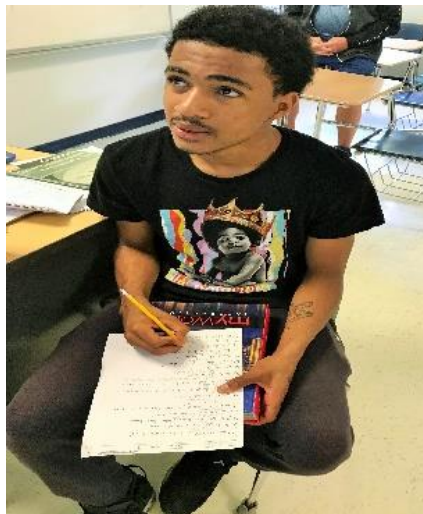
Each of these programs strives for continuous improvement in meeting student or district needs. This section includes a discussion of the progress of the North River Collaborative through program enhancements made throughout the school year.

## ***NRC Programs***

### ***North River School***

#### **Program Enhancements**

- Four (4) students earned their high school diploma from four different school districts.
- Eleven (11) interim alternative educational settings (IAES) were completed.
- On-going professional development was provided to teachers, counselors, nurse and milieu staff about trauma-informed practices, CPI and de-escalation, and data collection techniques and other topics related to behavioral health and social-emotional learning.
- The North River School completed the school lunch program recertification process and is able to continue as a community eligibility program allowing all students to receive free breakfast and lunch through the DESE National School Lunch Program.
- A therapeutic process intervention was implemented to reduce suspensions for behaviors at NRS.
- 22 students attended the Summer program which included courses in academics, social-emotional learning, health and wellness and horticulture. Students built, maintained, and harvested their own garden. Fresh produce from the garden was used in creating several menu items for daily snacks.
- A weekly practice of teachers calling parents to report something positive about their student was implemented with great success in the form of increased parent involvement.
- A new schedule was implemented in September 2018 to enhance student success and participation. The schedule changed from a daily alternating academic/vocational schedule to 90-minute vocational exploratory courses being part of the daily schedule along with Academics.
- Curriculum course descriptions and curriculum maps were updated for all courses.





# Learning Centers

## Program Enhancements

- Learning Center teachers and therapy staff collaborated to develop and implement monthly thematic units based on the Unique Learning System (ULS) curriculum. The ULS is an online curriculum correlated to the Massachusetts Curriculum Standards. The ULS provides thematic lessons across all domains that are age appropriate and leveled to meet the needs of students with special needs who are accessing the curriculum standards at a variety of different access points. Additionally, new curriculum and assessment tools were purchased and implemented within Learning Center classrooms during the 2018-2019 school year. These include:
  - Equals Mathematics (Ablenet) – *a pre-readiness math curriculum for students at any age who need the most basic starting point (e.g., attending to instruction, cause and effect, and everyday patterns); foundational math skills (e.g., numbers and operations) ; problem solving – making connections in meaningful ways*
  - Equals STEM Digital Edition – *e-library developed to support literacy instruction using non-fiction topics in math and science; designed for students with mild to severe disabilities; connects math and science concepts with real-life math and science examples*
  - Accessible Literacy Learning Program (Mayer Johnson) – *specially designed to meet the needs of students who require AAC, as well as students with complex communication and physical access challenges*
  - The Brigance Assessment was also updated to include the Brigance Transition Assessment.
- The Learning Centers participated in music therapy groups through Sing Explore Create from Rockland, MA. As a component of parent outreach and education, parents of Learning Center students were provided a music therapy workshop to better understand the therapeutic benefits of music for their child.



- Professional development trainings included: Carol Kosnitsky, of Cristia Leshner Associates, who presented the topic “Taking Your IEP Goals to a New Level.” The one-day training provided a focused look at writing measurable and relevant IEP goals, with attention to creating effective and efficient progress monitoring plans. Using a series of IEP rubrics, Learning Center teachers and therapists examined their own students’ IEPs and were provided specific tools to guide their work. Julianne McLaughlin of Blue Cross Blue Shield presented the topic “Stress Management and Resiliency” with a specific focus on mindfulness, resiliency, stress management, and anxiety. Child Light Yoga presented “Yoga & Mindfulness for Children with Special Needs.” Learning Center staff were provided specific mindfulness strategies for their students as well as specific yoga positions. Melissa Cote, an NRC Behaviorist, provided multiple Safety Care trainings, including initial and recertification to Learning Center staff. The Learning Center nurses participated in a training on “Munchausen by Proxy” as part of a one-day training at Children’s Hospital/Boston that also included clinical rounds. Additionally, Learning Center staff participated in CPR/First Aid recertification.

- In addition to a 10-passenger van supplied for the Learning Center Autism High School classroom located at West Bridgewater High School, a second passenger van was provided for the Learning Center Autism High School program located at the East Bridgewater High School. Staff trained in Safety Care and in possession of a 7D license facilitated student participation in a variety of community vocational experiences, including the West Bridgewater Public Library, the East Bridgewater YMCA (cleaning machines and equipment), Savers (sorting donated clothing), and Meals on Wheels (delivering up to 20 meals within the West Bridgewater community). Students at East Bridgewater High School had the opportunity to provide a laundry service, with delivery, to the Learning Center classrooms, as well as recycling at the NRC Administrative Office in Rockland. Additionally, students in the Learning Center Multiple Disabilities program provided a monthly Walmart shopping trip to collect supplies for all the Learning Center programs. Students in the East Bridgewater classroom sorted, inventoried, and filled supply orders to deliver the purchased items to the various Learning Center classrooms.

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## ***Independence Academy***

### **Program Enhancements**

- During FY19, Independence Academy (IA) enrolled 26 new students and a total of 42 students throughout the year (16 students returned from the previous year).
- Six seniors graduated from Independence Academy this year and one student returned to their sending district during the year to graduate with their class at their sending high school.
- IA piloted and served students from surrounding districts in a short-term intervention program targeting youth suspended from school for substance related offenses (Upper Course). The Upper Course served 27 students from January to June from 10 different communities.
- Independence Academy applied for and was awarded additional funding through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to provide after school programming, transportation, and other social events and activities for students.
- Independence Academy worked closely with state legislators for increased support for recovery high schools. Students, families, and IA staff presented testimony at the Massachusetts State House at a legislative event for senators and representatives.
- IA students continued to be a resource for many area school districts. This year, IA students spoke at numerous schools including, Stonehill College and the Rising Tide Charter School. Additionally, students continued to provide outreach services to the youth stabilization/detox facility run through HighPoint Treatment Centers.
- The IA staff continued to meet monthly with a trauma consultant to continue working towards being a trauma-informed school.
- Over the summer, students went camping, to the beach, hiking, kayaking, rock climbing, and to a ropes course as part of IA's efforts to expose students to social and substance-free activities.
- IA hosted its third annual, "Coffee with a Cause" event which highlighted the self-expressive, artistic, and wellness activities that students engage in at IA to help them in their recovery. The "storytelling" style event had resource tables, guest speakers, live student and staff performances, and refreshments. The event was open to the public.
- IA worked closely with Health Imperatives (DPH) and the students completed a 6-week workshop program on adolescent sexual health.
- IA held a wellness fair in September which included vendors and community partners from around the area with the goal of connecting the community members with resources that promote wellness and a substance-free lifestyle.
- Drug Story Theater (DST) was incorporated into IA's ELA curriculum – each week on Wednesday representatives from DST came to IA to work on script writing, oral presentation, character analysis, and collaborative group work.



- Ryan Morgan presented to High Point – CBHI Team on trauma, mental health, and the impact on substance use and continued to meet and be an active member of the Bridgewater State University “Opioid Working Group.”
- IA students continued to go the Walsh Gymnasium in South Boston for “Program Day” once per month with the other recovery high schools and residential facilities in the area.
- Two undergraduate interns from Lesley University completed their internships in Expressive Arts Therapy at IA.
- IA hosted the annual Harvest Festival with Massachusetts and Rhode Island recovery high schools.
- IA students cooked lunch for patients at Hope Lodge currently in treatment for cancer.

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## ***Community-Based Vocational***

### **Program Enhancements**

- Chromebooks were purchased for students for communication and research.
- Bi-weekly plays conducted by CBV students and a CBV job coach were broadcasted by the Talking Information Center Radio Station affiliated with WATD. Many of the plays were created by CBV students.
- There was a presentation by a Social Security Benefits Specialist for all students, parents, and districts.
- Old Navy sponsored CBV’s field trip to the Franklin Park Zoo.
- Students obtained REAL ID’s at the Registry of Motor Vehicles.
- Six students were competitively employed within communities.
- Housing Solutions provided training for parents and students with housing options being discussed in detail.
- New Community-Based Vocational Program Curriculum was developed.
- Work-based Learning Plans were created for all CBV students; the documentation was provided in October and in June.
- All Community-Based Vocational Program Students have memberships at the South Shore YMCA as part of programming.
- The Community Lunch Program was implemented where students budget, purchase, and make their lunches each day.




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## ***Therapy Services***

### **Program Enhancements**

- The OTs and PTs utilized the *Teacher Reports of Function and Participation (pre-k, elementary, and middle/high school)* to guide evaluations across settings. This increases collaboration between teachers and therapists and focuses the evaluation on the student’s participation and access within the school setting.
- The OTs and PTs continued to develop a related services webpage link for parent-teacher information regarding therapy provided in schools and tips for home and community resources.
- Therapists kept current in their fields to ensure best practice by completing a total of 200+ hours of continuing education.
- The speech therapists updated referral forms (district and parent input) for AAC/AT evaluations for a more streamlined format.
- The therapy staff continued to use SharePoint as a tool to facilitate collaboration between team members. This year, an evaluation template was developed for use within the Learning Center programs with all team members contributing information to provide a comprehensive student profile.



- NRC therapists supervised university students who completed fieldwork experiences, including one OT student [UNH], one physical therapy student [BU] and one COTA student through a newly developed partnership with Bristol Community College.
- Updated testing materials were purchased for the Occupational Therapy Department including DTVP-3, MVPT-4, Easy-OT, and the Interoception Assessment.




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## ***Behavior Consult and Educational Services (BCES)***

### **Program Enhancements**

- The BCBA staff provided three initial/recertification Quality Behavioral Solutions (QBS) Safety Care trainings for a total of 18 staff.
- The BCBA staff provided mentoring hours to a staff member who is pursuing BCBA certification.
- Transportation staff were trained in the area of positive behavior interventions and supports.
- OneDrive was consistently used for objective progress monitoring of student performance across settings.
- A BCBA from NRC presented at a DESE-sponsored course titled “Integrating Social and Emotional Learning into Tier One Instruction.”

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## ***English Language Learners (ELL)***

### **Program Enhancements**

- The Title III grant provided funding for tutoring, transportation of ELL students after tutoring, professional development, curriculum enhancement, work in professional learning communities (PLCs), literacy materials, and a parent/ELL student kick-off or culminating event. Multicultural family nights were conducted by several ELL teachers.
- The ELL teacher assisted one district in compiling documentation to complete CPR reports, including the revision of procedures and forms.
- The ELL teacher continued to improve alignment of ELL curriculum with building-based grade-level curricula by increasing ELL teacher participation in classrooms, faculty meetings, and curriculum review committees.



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# ***Social Work Internship Program***

## **Program Enhancements**

During 2018-19, North River's MSW Intern Program placed 14 interns across 3 districts within 11 schools serving students in grades Pre-K through Twelve. The program focus was on the integration of classroom learning into the field to include the exploration of the social worker's role, engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation while developing solid and ethical practice skills and boundaries and the application of critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments. The North River Collaborative MSW intern program continues to grow in the role of prevention, intervention, and crisis by responding to the increased number of referrals made on behalf of students who are struggling with social-emotional issues and school performance. The interns are providing rich and meaningful interventions, collaborations, and consults while establishing trusting relationships that allow for students to succeed in school academically, socially, and behaviorally. Interns are busier than ever meeting the unique needs of each school by immersing themselves into the school milieu and communities while responding to the social-emotional and mental health needs of students across the district by increasingly providing meaningful and effective therapeutic interventions.

## **Accomplishments/Data**

- Interns continued to solidify their role and function within the schools and continued to increase their visibility and presence by responding to the needs of the schools, children, and parents. They provided individual and group counseling, crisis interventions, whole classroom lessons, interventions, and in class assistance designed to meet the social-emotional learning needs of students. Interns are active participants in student support team meetings, IEP/504's, and transition meetings.
- Interns received a total of 339 referrals for individual and group counseling services. This averages 24 referrals per intern.
- Boys continued to be referred more than girls with 205 boys referred vs. 134 girls.
- Interns continued to work with students and parents around mutually identified treatment goals and treatment plans.
- Seventy-four percent (251) of referrals were made on behalf of general education students, which was a slight decrease from the prior school year (77%).
- The total amount of services included individual and group counseling and parent and teacher consultation. All of these services increased significantly when compared to the prior school year, with the biggest increase in group counseling sessions (21% increase) and parent consultations (22% increase).
- The interns continued to move into the classrooms to provide whole classroom presentations, interventions, classroom assistance, and lessons. They proved to be creative in providing services within classrooms as a result of classroom teacher requests to meet classroom needs and dynamics. Classrooms services focused on many areas, which included classroom management, behavior, self-awareness, and social awareness. Interns provided 488 whole classroom lessons and interventions this year allowing for additional students to be served. This is a significant increase from last year (40%). The whole classroom lessons and interventions were designed to promote student social-emotional learning skill development and were well supported by classroom teachers.

- Crisis interventions and student walk-in's looking for additional support increased from 127 interventions to 443 interventions within one year. This speaks to the level of acuity that students are presenting as they arrive to school daily.
- All told, the interns successfully provided 3,230 sessions/interventions of direct services to include individual and group counseling, whole classroom interventions, academic support, crisis interventions, and check-ins. In addition, they provided 2,393 indirect services, which included observations, data collection, teacher and parent consultations, assessments, meetings, and collaboration with outside providers. The MSW interns continue to bring passion, energy, and a strong commitment to their learning while supporting students, families, and school staff.

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## ***Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement***

The North River Collaborative coordinates the School-Based Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement Program for 18 member and non-member school districts. Since the collaborative began providing this service in 1994, more than **\$33 million** has been returned to the participating cities and towns. **In FY19, approximately \$1.7 million** dollars were returned to 18 districts.

The North River Collaborative uses an internet-based Medicaid billing enhancement that reduces the burden on districts' administrative and direct care staff and provides the potential to increase Medicaid reimbursement. The software allows easy access for direct care providers to assess student history and to keep up to date with student caseloads. Additionally, administrative staff can monitor services and ensure reimbursement is maximized.

The North River Collaborative:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Coordinates enrollment agreements              | • Submits electronic claims                    |
| • Identifies eligible students                   | • Reconciles paid and unpaid claims            |
| • Helps obtain parental permission               | • Verifies amounts paid to towns               |
| • Enters services provided by private facilities | • Trains and works closely with district staff |
|  | • Ensures program compliance                   |

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## ***Southeast Transportation Network***

### **Program Enhancements**

- The network provided special education transportation to 516 students (392 out of the Rockland and Abington Offices and 124 out of the Stoughton Office) in FY19.



***Objective 2: Offer a variety of quality professional development opportunities to general and special education teachers and administrators, and related service providers***

***Professional Development Program Offerings***

A wide variety of professional development was scheduled during FY19 from workshops through graduate-level courses. Major initiatives included educational leadership and evaluation, curriculum content and pedagogy, behavior management, mental health, and safe schools. A total of 906 educators participated in one or more training sessions. A total of 508 hours of instruction were provided, which included 107 individual sessions. This calculates to a total of 9,473 hours of training. In addition, the behavior and education consultation education (BCES) staff provided training to their staff and the transportation department.

**Administration, Leadership, & Evaluation**

- Administrative Seminar: Legal Issues for School and District Administrators
- Analyzing Teaching for Student Results (ATSR)
- Educator Evaluation Mandated Training
- Marshall Memo Group

**Instructional Strategies, Pedagogy & Curriculum**

- Content Overview of Earth Space Science Standards (ESS1-ESS3)
- Differentiated Instruction in the Math Classroom: Grades 1-6
- Restructuring RtI to Reach All Learners

**Special Education & Related Services**

- Creating Inclusive Schools and Classrooms While Embracing Co-Teaching and Higher Learning Standards for ALL
- Creating Differentiation in Inclusive Classrooms Using Current Strategies, Universal Design for Learning, and Technology
- Taking Your IEP Goals to a New Level
- Introduction to Trauma-Informed Treatment with Adolescents
- Trauma-Informed Treatment: De-Escalation & Reduction
- Yoga & Mindfulness for Children with Special Needs

**Instructional Technology Integration**

- Chromebooks in the Classroom
- Harnessing the Power of Google Data Studio

**English Language Learning**

*(some funded through Title III Grant)*

- Differentiation for Linguistically Diverse Students
- Early English Language Development for PreK-K Teachers
- Supporting English Learners in Specialty Subjects and Support Services: Building Academic Language and Competencies of ELLs
- Next Generation ESL: Model Curriculum Unit (MCU) Development – PLC for ELL Teachers
- RETELL – SEI Teacher Endorsement Course
- SEI Administrator Endorsement Course

**Social-Emotional Support & Behavior Intervention**

- No Such Thing as a Bad Kid!
- Managing & Changing Difficult Classroom Behavior That Interrupts Instruction
- The Great Paraprofessional: Behavior Management Skills
- Stress Management & Resiliency; and Health Benefits of Tea

**School Health & Safety**

- Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) – Refresher Certification
- QBS Safety Care Behavioral Safety Specialist Training
- Adult CPR/AED, Pediatric CPR & First Aid Certification (American Red Cross)
- Heartsaver First Aid CPR AED Certification for Medical Personnel (American Heart Association)

### *Objective 3: Provide programs and services in a cost-effective manner*

Tuition comparisons below represent programs in the geographic region of the North River Collaborative that member districts typically use when out-of-district placements are needed for students of a particular disability. The daily rate for private schools is multiplied by 180 days to establish an equivalent tuition across programs regardless of days of operation. Additionally, there are savings to districts in transportation to program locations that are closer to their city/town which are not reflected in the charts below.

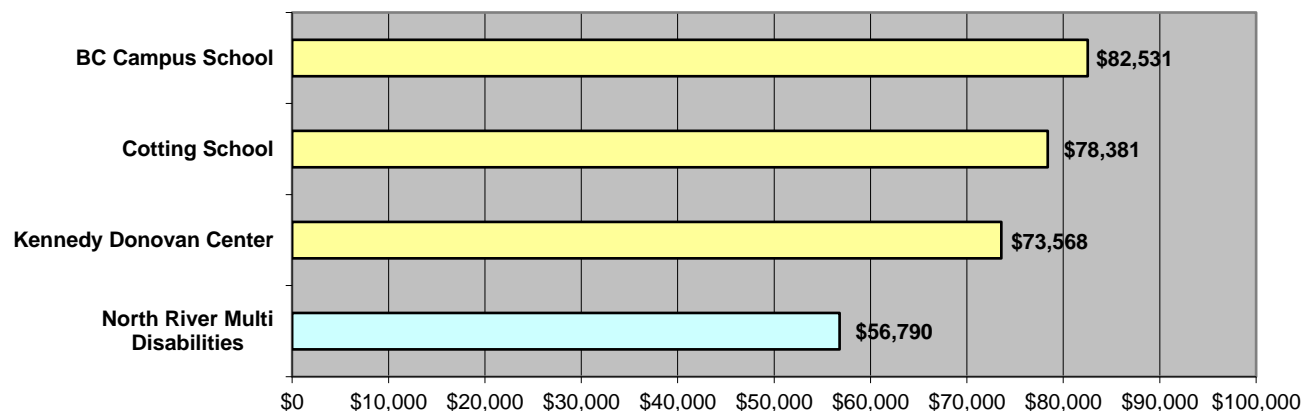
#### *North River School*

##### **FY19 NRS Day Rate Tuition Comparison** (based upon 180 days)

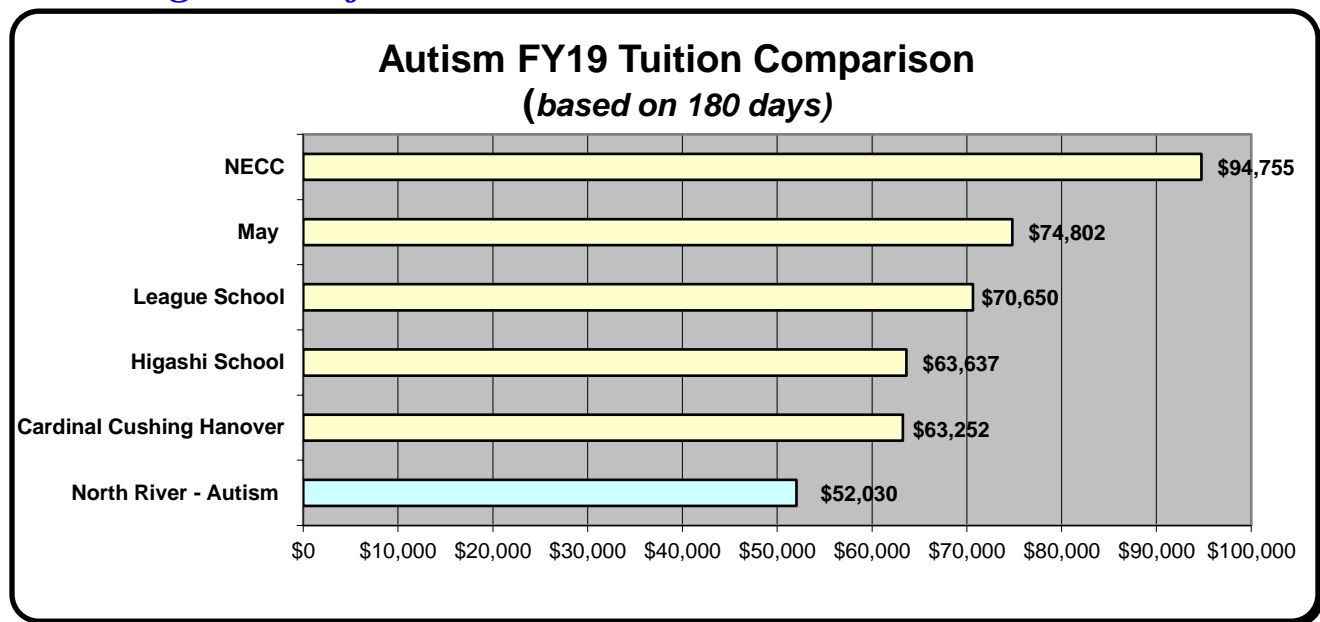


#### *Learning Center for Students with Multiple Disabilities*

##### **Multi Disabilities FY19 Tuition Comparison** (based on 180 days)







### *Independence Academy*

Independence Academy allows multiple school districts to provide a comprehensive recovery high school alternative program to at-risk students with substance abuse and dependence diagnoses. This school is a regional program and allows school districts to access services that would not otherwise be available to their students. Funding for this program is provided through shared contributions of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the local school districts. DESE provides approximately \$500,000 annually to each recovery high school (\$495,000 in FY19) and the school districts' tuition contribution is equal to the average per pupil expenditure as determined by DESE. For a portion of the 2019 fiscal year, North River received \$144,860 of additional funding from the DESE which partially supported student transportation for students (which is almost always not provided for by the sending district) and extended day/year programming for students.

### *Community-Based Vocational Program*

North River's Community-Based Vocational Program allows multiple school districts to provide a comprehensive program to students with disabilities by pooling resources and students in this program. A broad range of transition services are provided to each student and placement is available in a plethora of different job sites. If each district provided this program on its own, the range of job sites would need to be less extensive, student choice would be reduced, and options would be limited. By bringing these students into one collaborative program, the ability to place a student in a job site that matches his/her interest and skill level is greatly enhanced.

### *Summer Work and Learning Program*

North River's Summer Work and Learning Program allows multiple school districts to provide a comprehensive summer program to students with disabilities. A broad range of transition services are tied to academic support and remediation for students through hands-on instruction and opportunities for work experiences, such as animal services, horticulture, building maintenance, shipping and receiving, office practices, and food service. If each district provided this program individually, the range of job sites would need to be narrower, student choice would be reduced, and options would be limited. By bringing these students into one regional program, the ability to place a student in a job site that matches his/her interest and skill level is greatly enhanced.

## ***Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement***

The North River Collaborative coordinates the school-based municipal Medicaid reimbursement program for member districts and many non-member school districts. Since the Collaborative began providing this service in 1994, more than \$33 million has been returned to the participating cities and towns. In FY19, approximately \$1.7 million dollars were returned to 18 districts.

## ***Southeast Transportation Network***

The North River Collaborative's Southeast Transportation Network provides transportation for special needs and other students as a cost-effective service for districts. In most cases, the collaborative's prices are given to districts on individual routes, and the districts choose to contract for only the routes which are cost-effective when compared with prices from other providers. In other cases, North River has provided entire portions of districts' transportation programs such as all in-district special education services or all pre-school services. Thus, consolidated administrative and other supports are provided for the districts, resulting in efficiencies within their administration. In addition, the Network allows for an opportunity to maximize ridership on vehicles resulting in an economy of scale and a savings to participating districts. North River's enrollment has continued to increase each and every year since inception in 2007, providing solid market driven evidence that school districts find its transportation cost-efficient and highly reliable.

## ***General Education Supports and Services***

The North River Collaborative offered the following general education supports and services which are described in other sections of this document:

**Social Work Internship Program.** North River's Social Work Internship Program provides school districts with low-cost counseling services for students who are at-risk. By pooling resources to provide LICSW supervision of school-based graduate level interns, the schools can offer counseling to students who would otherwise not be able to receive it. Coordination and interface with colleges and universities, families, and school staff are all included in the program.



**Professional Development.** Professional development offered through the collaborative is cost-effective for districts.

- High-quality programs are offered that would be cost prohibitive for districts to offer individually. NRC programs allow districts to share the expense and enroll the number of staff they need to send, which helps to control cost.
- Specific needs of local districts are addressed through the design and selection of programs.
- Grant funding supports professional development for district and NRC staff.
- District capacity is expanded by the collaborative organizing appropriate and responsive training that is easily accessible for their staff members, usually at a lower rate than other public offerings.

## ***Objective 4: Explore and pursue grant and other funding to support identified needs of the districts***

The following chart details the grant funding awarded to by the North River Collaborative on behalf of school districts in FY18 and FY19.

### ***Funded Grants and Contracts***

<b>Grants on Behalf of Districts:</b>	<b>FY18</b>	<b>FY19</b>
Recovery High School (Independence Academy)	\$649,999	\$639,860
DSAC	\$80,565	NA
Mass Commission for the Blind	\$19,955	\$16,577
Title III Consortium Grant	\$40,071	\$42,941
CommBuys (SPED-SEL)	\$21,500	\$21,500
Behavioral Health Initiative Grant	\$32,895	NA
<b>Total Grants for Districts</b>	<b>\$844,985</b>	<b>\$720,878</b>
<b>Grants to Support NRC Programs:</b>		
Mass Mechanics	\$3,799	\$2,213
<b>Total Grants to Support NRC Programs:</b>	<b>\$3,799</b>	<b>\$2,123</b>
<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>\$848,784</b>	<b>\$723,001</b>

### ***Collaborative Grant Applications***

The North River Collaborative has a history of successfully implementing major federal/state programs to expand the capacity of member school districts at no cost. NRC has spearheaded the procurement of grant and foundation funding through agencies such as the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, the Massachusetts Mechanics Charitable Association, and other public/private foundations and organizations. During FY19, the total amount awarded on behalf of districts and to support NRC programs was **\$723,001**. Specific grants include: Recovery High School (Independence Academy), CommBuys SPED Contract, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, and Title III Consortium grants. Districts received the following grant funded supports and services:

- Transportation and extended day/year programming for students in recovery;
- Professional development in special education & tiered SEL interventions (CommBuys);
- After school/weekend recreational program for students with visual impairment; and
- Tutoring, professional development, and parent support for English language learners.

