

# North River Collaborative Fiscal Year 2020 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 2020**

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December 07, 20

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 2020 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. NRC 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.

Throughout the past year and amidst the unprecedented times of the COVID-19 pandemic, NRC has demonstrated resiliency and a steadfast commitment to education, community, and the health and safety of our students and staff. The response to the pandemic forced us to reconfigure even the most basic elements of our work. Through the ever-changing guidelines for learning, the teachers, therapists, nurses, and staff of North River Collaborative adapted their curriculum for remote learning. Our Transportation Department, when unable to transport students, delivered school lunches for districts to ensure that no child went without, and our North River School Principal, Lauren Enos and her staff were nominated for the Community Partner Commissioner's Award for going above and beyond to keep students engaged in learning.

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 Patricia Oakley Superintendent of the West Bridgewater 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, Holbrook, Rockland, Stoughton, West Bridgewater, and Whitman-Hanson. 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

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Peter Schafer, Abington</li><li>• Christine Godino, Avon</li><li>• Derek Swenson, Bridgewater-Raynham</li><li>• Elizabeth Legault, East Bridgewater</li><li>• Matthew Ferron, Hanover</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Julie Hamilton, Holbrook</li><li>• Alan Cron, Rockland</li><li>• John Marcus, Stoughton</li><li>• Patricia Oakley, West Bridgewater</li><li>• Jeffrey Szymaniak, Whitman-Hanson</li></ul> |
|---|---|

### Special Needs Advisory Committee

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• James Robbins, Abington</li><li>• Karen Romans, Avon</li><li>• Paul Tzovolos, Bridgewater-Raynham</li><li>• John Phelan, East Bridgewater</li><li>• Keith Guyette, Hanover</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kathleen Turner, Holbrook</li><li>• Linda Maniglia, Rockland</li><li>• Carolan Sampson, Stoughton</li><li>• Cory Mikolazyk, West Bridgewater</li><li>• Lauren Mathisen, Whitman-Hanson</li></ul> |
|--|--|

### Curriculum Coordinators Committee

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• James Robbins, Abington</li><li>• Karen Romans, Avon</li><li>• Ryan Powers, Bridgewater-Raynham</li><li>• Gina Williams, East Bridgewater</li><li>• Deborah St. Ives, Hanover</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kathleen Turner, Holbrook</li><li>• Jan Sheehan, Rockland</li><li>• Jonathan Ford, Stoughton</li><li>• Cory Mikolazyk, West Bridgewater</li><li>• Rosamond Dorrance, Whitman-Hanson</li></ul> |
|---|---|

### North River Collaborative Administrative Team

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stephen Donovan, Executive Director</li><li>• Clarice Doliber Asst. Executive Director</li><li>• Michael Laliberte, Director of Business</li><li>• Diane Baxter, Technology</li><li>• Annie Robinson, District Services</li><li>• Lauren Enos, Principal North River School</li><li>• Deni Howley, Behavioral Health Initiative</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Moira Leon, Community-Based Vocational</li><li>• Beth Litchfield - Social Work Internship</li><li>• Ryan Morgan, Independence Academy</li><li>• Kate Stevens, Learning Center Programs</li><li>• Eileen Millett, Transportation</li><li>• Kimberly Beck, Professional Development</li></ul> |
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# 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 FY20

<b>Students Served in NRC Programs*</b>	
Multiple Disabilities	22
Autism/developmental Disabilities	16
Social and Emotional Disabilities-North River School	56
Substance Abuse and Dependence -Independence Academy	38
Substance Abuse and Dependence -Upper Course	26
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>158**</b>
<b>Students Served in NRC Services*</b>	
Community-Based Vocational	48
Therapy and Other Related Services	530
Social Work Interns	297
Behavioral Health Initiative	150
Transportation	540
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>1,565**</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,723**</b>

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

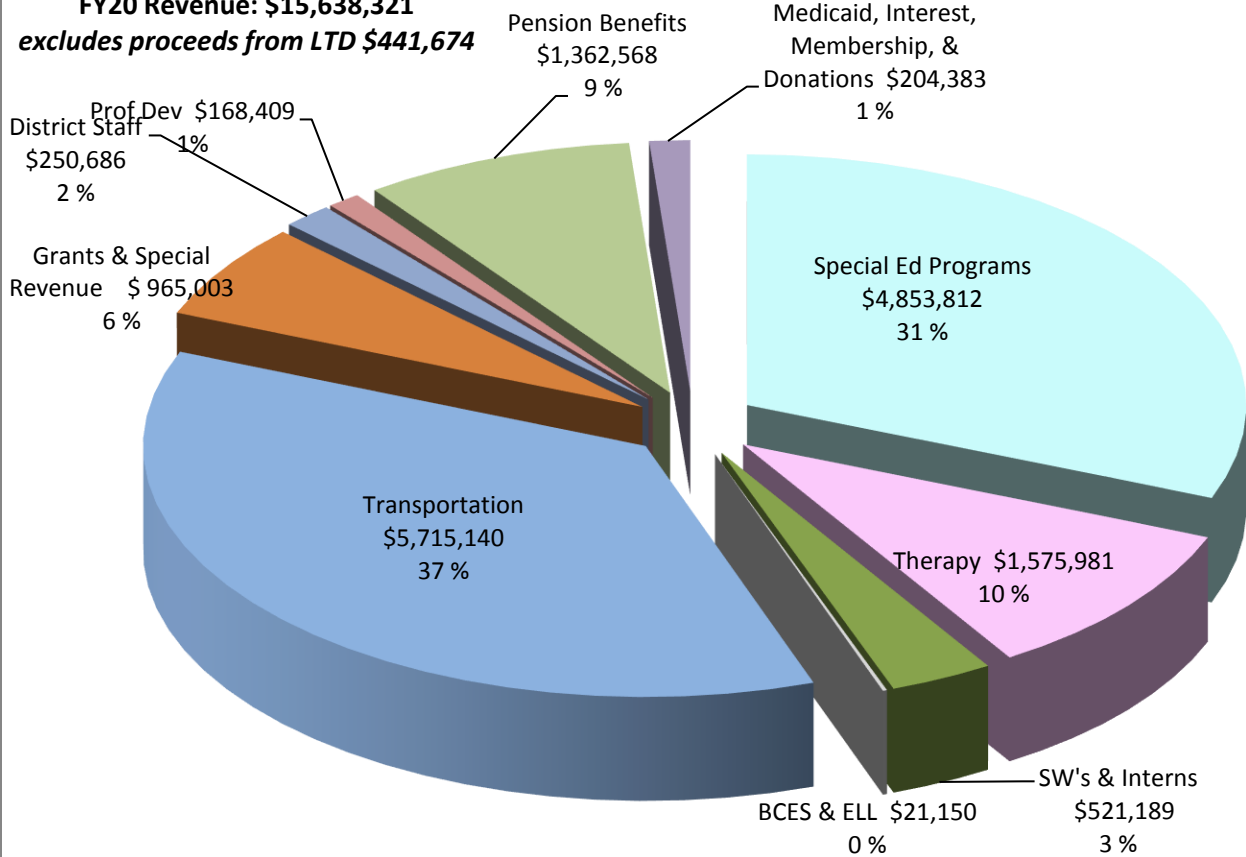
\*\* The totals & subtotals may include a duplicated headcount due to students participating in multiple services

### Serving Districts FY20

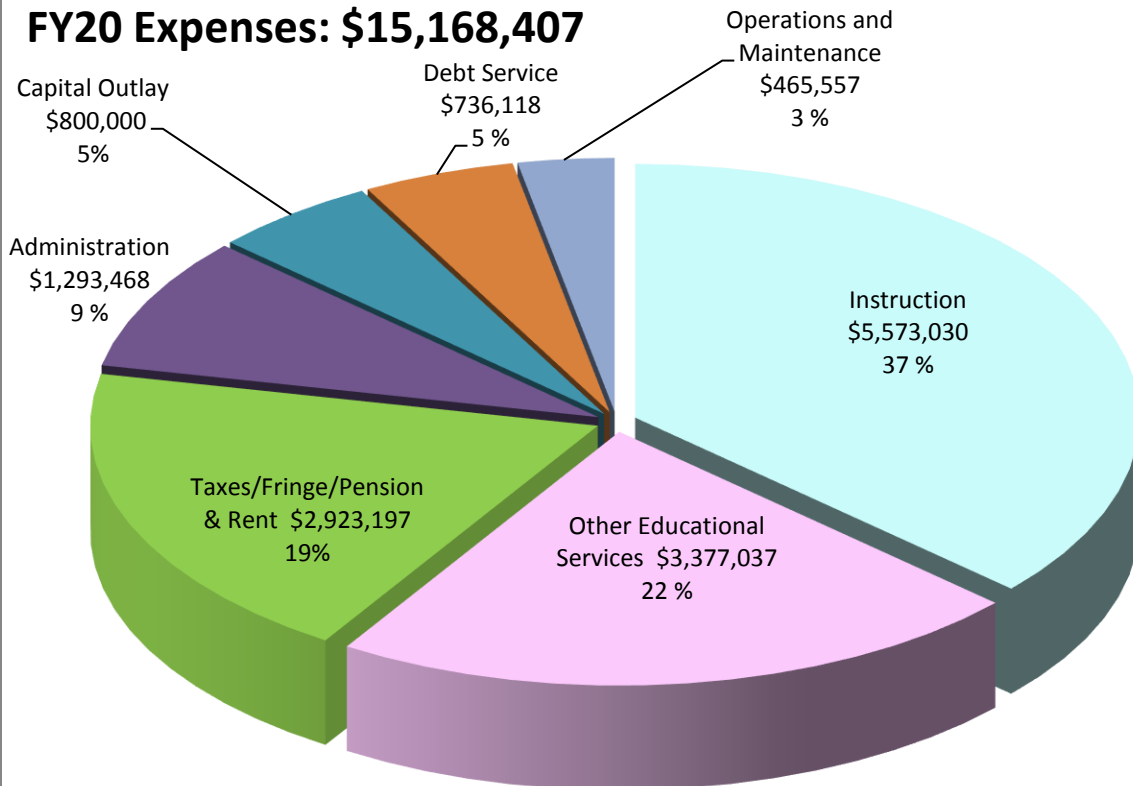
Transportation	40
Municipal Medicaid	18
Grant Writing	10
Behavioral Health	5
Professional Development (PD)	72

## Financial Information

**FY20 Revenue: \$15,638,321**  
*excludes proceeds from LTD \$441,674*



**FY20 Expenses: \$15,168,407**



## 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
- Professional Development
- Transportation Services
- Collaborative Grant Applications
- General Education Supports and Services
- Psychoeducational 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 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 and behavioral consultation. 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 that 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 with guidance from a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst. 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 continues academic and social skills development.

**North River Middle/High School**

525 Beech Street, Rockland, MA 02370

Phone: 781-871-8320

Lauren Enos, 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**

Kate Stevens- Program Coordinator

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

### **Learning Center Multiple Disabilities (Early Childhood)**

Hobomock School (Room 200)  
81 Learning Lane, Pembroke, MA 02359  
Phone: 781/294-0911

- **Learning Center Multiple Disabilities (Intermediate)**

Duval School (Rooms 133A, 133B)  
60 Regal St., Whitman, MA 02382  
Phone: 781/618-7290

- **Learning Center Multiple Disabilities (Elem, Middle, High School)**

Richardson Olmsted School (Rooms 123, 126, 128)  
101 Lothrop Street, North Easton, MA 02356  
Phone: 508/230-3205 x5123, x5126, x5128

- **Learning Center Autism & Developmental Disabilities (Elementary)**

Hobomock School (Room 255)  
81 Learning Lane, Pembroke, MA 02359  
Phone: 781/294-0911

- **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 eighth full academic year in 2020, Independence Academy has enrolled well over 200 students from over 40 different communities. Since opening in January 2012, the school has now helped more than 60 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

Moira 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)

Annie Robinson – Coordinator

## **Therapy Services**

The North River Collaborative provides **occupational, physical, and speech therapy services** within 38 public school buildings in nine school districts. Services are also provided within North River Collaborative Learning Center for Students with Multiple Disabilities, Learning Center for Students with Autism and Developmental Disabilities and the North River School. The collaborative's therapy staff is dedicated to excellence in student service, committed to facilitating and supporting optimal curriculum access and participation, 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, learning media 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 addressed through the expanded core curriculum), and production and ordering of materials. Additionally, teachers of the visually impaired may support schools and families in accessing educational resources through a variety of agencies such as Massachusetts Commission for the Blind and American Printing House.



## Orientation and Mobility

The North River Collaborative provides consultative and direct services to students with visual impairments from certified 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) through the expanded core curriculum.

### 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 FY20, 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

## Psychoeducational 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.

### **Psychoeducational Evaluation Services**

The Almshouse, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370  
Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 120)  
Annie Robinson – Coordinator

## 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)

Kim Beck – Coordinator

## Southeast Transportation Network

The Southeast Transportation Network served 540 students in 40 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)

Eileen Millett– Transportation Director

## 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 FY20 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, whenever feasible.
- 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; 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

- Seven (7) students earned their high school diploma from four different school districts.
- Twenty-two (22) students attended the 2019 NRS summer program which included Academics, Health and Wellness, Social Emotional Learning and Horticulture.
  - A garden was built in the Horticulture program and the vegetables that grew were used to create two family style meals for NRS students and staff
- Seven (7) students returned to their sending district after making significant social emotional and academic progress at North River School.
- Students continued to volunteer to volunteer at the Rockland Food Pantry twice a month
- Eleven (11) interim alternative educational settings (IAES)/Extended Evaluations were completed. All students remained at North River School after the evaluation period.
- As part of the Safe and Supportive Schools Grant, North River School completed a self-assessment to advance and sustain the overarching goals of the therapeutic milieu.
- In March, all North River students were provided with a Chromebook for remote learning; North River staff delivered Chromebooks to any student that was not able to pick it up at NRS.
- On-going professional development was provided to teachers, counselors, the nurse, and milieu staff about trauma-informed practices, CPI and de-escalation, and enhancing cultural competency throughout the school.
- The North River School completed the school lunch program recertification process and was able to continue as a community eligibility program allowing all students to receive free breakfast and lunch through the DESE National School Lunch Program.
- Positive Friday phone calls to parents/guardians continues to be a successful project to enhance family/community engagement.
- In an effort to enhance participation in parent/teacher conferences, the North River School started “Family Fun Night.” Both nights were very well attended!
- Instructional materials/curriculum were updated in the History/Social Studies, Math and ELA classes in both North River High School and North River Middle School.



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# 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 2019-2020 school year. Some of these included:
  - Everyday Speech: *Everyday Speech is a social-emotional learning platform utilizing an interactive and video-modeled curriculum for teaching all students*
  - AFLS Vocational Skills Assessment: *The Assessment of Functional Living Skills is an assessment, skills tracking system, and a curriculum guide for the development of essential skills for achieving independence*
  - TEACCH Vocational Task Boxes: *During the COVID-19 school closure, the Learning Centers provided students with TEACCH Shoebox Tasks to build independence and vocational skills*
- The Learning Center High School programs participated in a variety of community job experiences. An NRC van is provided at each Learning Center High School site and students are supported at the work sites by a 1:1 ABA trained teacher aide/job coach. Some of the vocational experiences included: volunteer positions at West Bridgewater Public Library (fronting books), YMCA (cleaning machines and equipment), Keeping Pace with Multiple Miracles Thrift Store (sorting donated clothes), and Meals on Wheels (delivering meals to the community). Internal jobs at West Bridgewater High School included cleaning the cafeteria, sorting and delivering mail, and paper recycling. Students in the Learning Center program at East Bridgewater High School provided mail delivery, including inventory and delivery of needed supplies, for all of the Learning Center programs. The students also completed job tasks at the North River Collaborative administrative office, such as restocking paper for copy machines and recycling.
- During the school closure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, multiple protocols were put into place to address the students' synchronous and asynchronous learning. The Zoom Education platform was utilized as a vehicle for synchronous learning; ClassDojo along with a variety of curriculum including the Unique Learning System curriculum and News-2-You, Boardmaker online, and Boom Learning were provided for asynchronous learning. A Parent Resource site was generated on the NRC website to assist families in need, including housing resources and access to food pantries. TEACCH task boxes, along with other educational materials, were delivered to homes. NRC-issued Chromebooks were provided to students. In addition, students participated in remote music therapy lessons provided through Sing, Explore, Create. Learning Center teachers and therapists worked together with students and families on a variety of games and activities that culminated in a Field Day held remotely on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020.



- Learning Center staff took part in many different professional development trainings. For example, Ellen Bennett, NRC Occupational Therapist, conducted a training on therapeutic massage. Staff were provided methodology about therapeutic massage as well as a variety of therapeutic massage techniques appropriate for students with multiple disabilities, autism, and developmental delays. In addition, a full day Assistive Technology training was provided to Learning Center teachers focusing on the use of CORE vocabulary. Working along with their SLPs, teachers examined their own students' communication tools and classroom curriculum, developing CORE vocabulary boards for individual students, thematic activities and for the classroom in general. Michelle LaFrance, NRC Board Certified Behavior Analyst, also provided multiple Safety Care trainings, including initial and recertification to Learning Center staff. Additionally, Learning Center teacher assistants participated in RBT training during the COVID-19 school closure.

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## Independence Academy

### Program Enhancements

- During FY20, Independence Academy (IA) enrolled 19 new students and a total of 38 students throughout the year (19 students returned from the previous year).
- 9 seniors graduated from Independence Academy this year, our largest graduating class.
- IA continued to serve 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 26 students from September to March from 11 different communities.
- Independence Academy worked closely with state legislators for increased support for recovery high schools. IA staff presented testimony at the Massachusetts State House and lobbied for changes around the funding structure and transportation model for Recovery High Schools.
- IA is a trauma-informed school and the staff continued to meet monthly with a trauma consultant to continue the work in this area.
- Over the summer, students went camping, hiking, kayaking, rock climbing, and to Six Flags and a ropes course as part of IA's efforts to expose students to social and substance-free activities.
- IA worked closely with the Caron Foundation and the students completed a 6-week workshop program on Nicotine Cessation, and another 6-week program for students who have family members in their homes struggling with substance use.
- 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.
- IA staff continued to meet and be an active member of the Bridgewater State University "Opioid Working Group."
- A graduate intern from Bridgewater State University completed her clinical internship during the Fall of 2019 under the supervision of Karin Burke-Lewis.
- For the fourth consecutive year, IA presented at the National Association of Recovery High Schools Annual Conference which was held virtually.
- Independence Academy hosted an information session and tour for the South Shore Adjustment Counselors group in January.
- Throughout the 19-20 school year, Independence Academy was evaluated by independent researchers appointed by DESE to better understand the Recovery High School model.
- IA was awarded and implemented the first phase of a two-year Safe and Supportive Schools grant and completed a self-assessment and goal action plan for implementation in the coming year.



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# Community-Based Vocational

## Program Enhancements

- New Community-Based Vocational Program Curriculum.
- Task Analysis Sheets updated for each job site and distributed to parents and district staff monthly.
- Person-Centered Planning presentation created for students.
- Work-Based Learning Plans created for all CBV students.
- Four new job sites developed.
- Students obtained ServSafe Food Handler Certifications.
- Student's illustrations published on Autism website.
- Two students collaborate to create three short stories including illustrations.
- Three students were invited to appear on two community access television shows to discuss the success of their short stories and involvement in the TIC radio productions.
- Remote Learning Plans created for each student.
- Four daily transition groups offered each day (Transition, Vocational, Life-Skills, and Self-Advocacy) to continue online learning March 2020- June 2020.
- Two remote job sites were developed (TIC and Disability Law Center) during online learning.



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# Therapy Services

## Program Enhancements

- The OTs and PTs continue to work collaboratively on school teams using input from school teams to develop goals and treatment strategies to maximize student participation in the school setting.
- Therapists participate in school wide initiatives Best Buddies including
- OTs developed a Preschool Parent Report form to assist in gathering information regarding parent perception of child's strengths and areas for growth. Therapists use this tool to guide the initial evaluation process and support the transition into the public schools.
- The OTs and PTs developed 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 more than 250 hours of continuing education.
- The speech therapists updated AAC/AT evaluation templates
- The therapy staff continued to use a variety of digital platforms to support collaboration between team members.
- OTs, PTs and SLPs developed Plan of Care and record forms to comply with state licensing requirements and support the School Based Medicaid Program documentation.
- NRC therapists supervised university students who completed fieldwork experiences, including two OT students [Salem State University] and one COTA student through a partnership with Bristol Community College.





- All related service providers engaged in ongoing learning to support provision of services through a remote model including synchronous and asynchronous activities across all districts, Learning Center Programs and North River School.



## Behavior Consult and Educational Services (BCES)

### Program Enhancements

- BCBA earned certification to provide Quality Behavioral Solutions Safety Care training to NRC staff
- The BCBA staff provided four initial/recertification Quality Behavioral Solutions (QBS) Safety Care trainings for a total of 17 staff.
- Transportation staff were trained in the area of positive behavior interventions and supports.
- Sharepoint/OneDrive was consistently used for objective progress monitoring of student performance across settings.
- BCBA participated in South Shore Job Alike to support professional growth and development
- BCBA onsite at North River School to support positive behavioral interventions and objective progress monitoring for students grades 5-12

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## Social Work Internship Program

### Program Enhancements

During 2019-20, North River's MSW Intern Program placed 13 interns across 4 districts within 11 schools serving students in grade pre-K-12<sup>th</sup>. The program was successful in transitioning into the district of East Bridgewater. This provided for 3 additional clinical placements ranging from PreK-grade 12. In addition, the program was invited into Whitman - Hanson's preschool academy that increased our early education settings to 2.

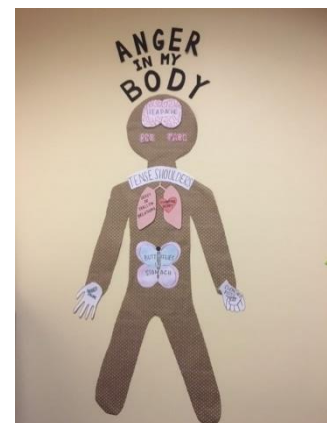
The MSW intern program remains focused on the integration of classroom learning into the field to include the exploration of the social worker's role, professional identity, client and family engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation while developing solid and ethical practice skills and boundaries 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 school performance and successes, both inside and outside the classroom. 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 remain busy 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 providing meaningful and effective therapeutic interventions.

## Accomplishments/Data

- Interns continued to solidify their role and function within the schools while increasing 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 were active participants in student support team meetings, IEP/504's and transition meetings.
- Interns continue to work with students and parents around mutually identified treatment goals and treatment plans allowing for the necessary involvement of the parent in the change process. Our work focuses on the process of feelings and issues, symptom management and reduction and the identification of healthy and effective coping strategies.
- Interns received a total of 297 referrals for individual and group counseling services. This averaged 23 referrals per intern.
- Boys continue to be referred more than girls, with 154 boys referred vs 143 girls.
- While social skills remained the significant reason for referrals (120), behavior, anger management and anxiety were all represented as significant reasons for referrals while crisis referrals continued to increase with 77 referrals that were made due to the need for crisis intervention.
- Eighty percent (239) of referrals were made on behalf of general education students, an increase from last year's data of 74%.
- The interns continued to move into the classrooms to provide whole classroom presentations, interventions, classroom assistance and lessons and were creative in providing services within classrooms at the request of teachers to meet and address classroom needs and dynamics. Themes included classroom management, behavior, self-awareness, and social awareness. Interns provided 135 whole classroom lessons and classroom assistance interventions this year allowing for additional students to be served. The whole classroom lessons and interventions were designed to promote student social emotional learning skill development and were supported by classroom teachers.
- Crisis interventions and student walk-ins looking for additional support resulted in 277 crisis interventions from September -mid March. This continues to be a significant number of students looking for additional unscheduled support during the school day.
- The interns remained active and busy providing both direct and non-direct services to include individual, group counseling, whole classroom interventions, academic support, crisis, and check-ins. In addition, interns provided observations, data collection, teacher and parent consultations, assessments, meetings, and collaboration to outside providers. Our interns in our preschool programs created monthly parent newsletters that consisted of articles, tips, and resources to increase parent engagement.
- The year was marked by unimaginable tragedies in several of our communities and all interns were active in supporting the students, staff, and each other during those difficult days.
- Interns created and implemented diversity, difference and inclusion projects that included classroom lessons addressing diversity, the development of diversity clubs and in one school a multi-cultural evening event involving the students, staff, and parents.



- Interns receive intensive weekly supervision and training. Outside speakers included Plymouth area DCF office, QPR suicide prevention training and a visit from The Children’s Advocacy Center who presented a talk on forensic interviewing of children who witness or are victims of abuse.
- The MSW interns continue to bring passion, energy and a strong commitment to their learning while supporting students, families, and school staff to address potential barriers to accessing the curriculum and providing for school successes.

## 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 **\$34 million** has been returned to the participating cities and towns. **In FY20, approximately \$1.2 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                   |

## Southeast Transportation Network

### Program Enhancements

The network provided special education transportation to 540 students (416 out of the Rockland and Abington Offices and 126 out of the Stoughton Office) in FY20.

- The Network enhanced its GPS system allowing improved monitoring and route planning.
- Additional cameras were installed on vehicles; now 90% of all vans have cameras for enhanced monitoring.
- All vans now have Child Checkmate system and back up alarms.



## 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 FY20 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 605 educators participated in one or more of the 18 training sessions. 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

#### **Instructional Strategies, Pedagogy & Curriculum**

- Differentiated Instruction in the Math Classroom: Grades 1-6
- Future of History, K-6

#### **Special Education & Related Services**

- Compassion Fatigue and Building Resilience for the Journey
- Paras - Instructional Strategies
- Restorative Justice

#### **English Language Learning**

*(some funded through Title III Grant)*

- Supporting English Learners in Specialty Subjects and Support Services: Building Academic Language and Competencies of ELLs
- RETELL – SEI Teacher Endorsement Course
- Purposeful Lesson Planning for Language Learners
- Supporting Newcomers ELL

#### **Social-Emotional Support & Behavior Intervention**

- 5 Steps to Solving a Student's Behavior
- Mental Health Issues: Identifying & Responding to Anxiety/Depression, Mood-Bipolar Disorders, and School Phobia
- Practical Strategies for Reducing Anxiety & Defiant Behavior in the Classroom
- Teaching Social Skills

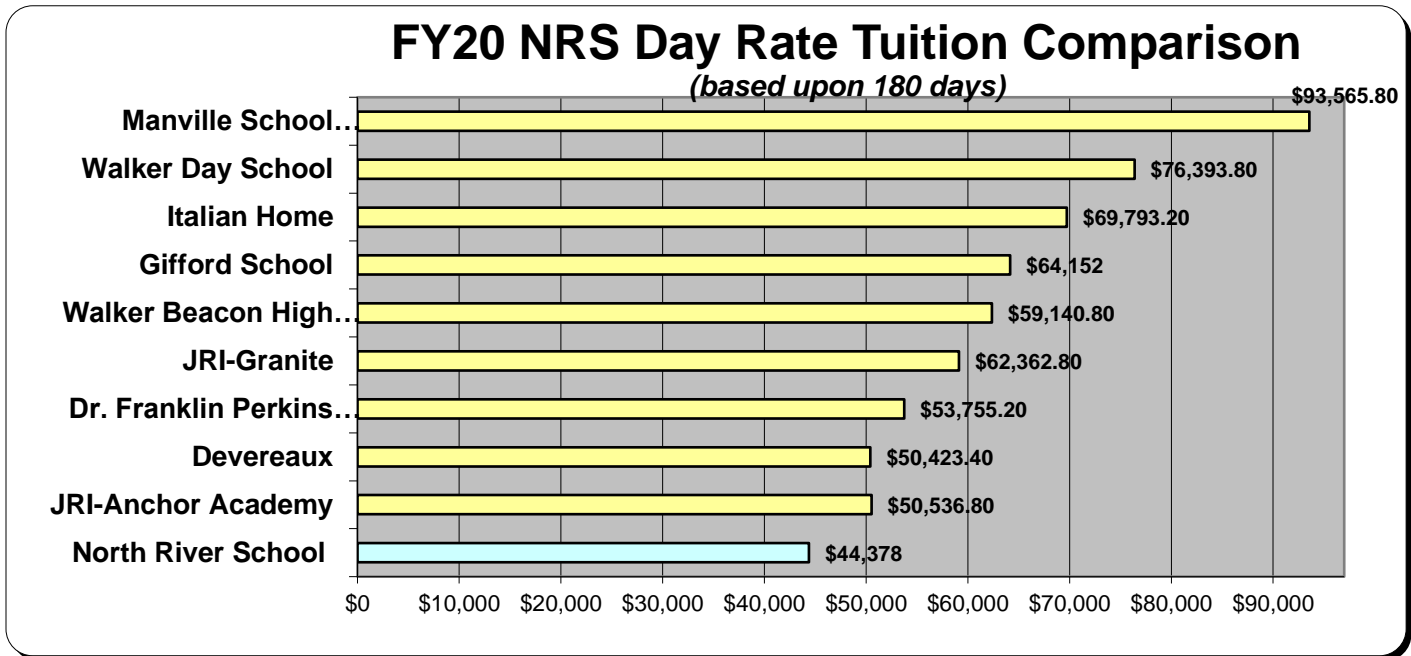
#### **School Health & Safety**

- Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) – Refresher Certification
- Adult CPR/AED, Pediatric CPR & First Aid Certification (American Red Cross)

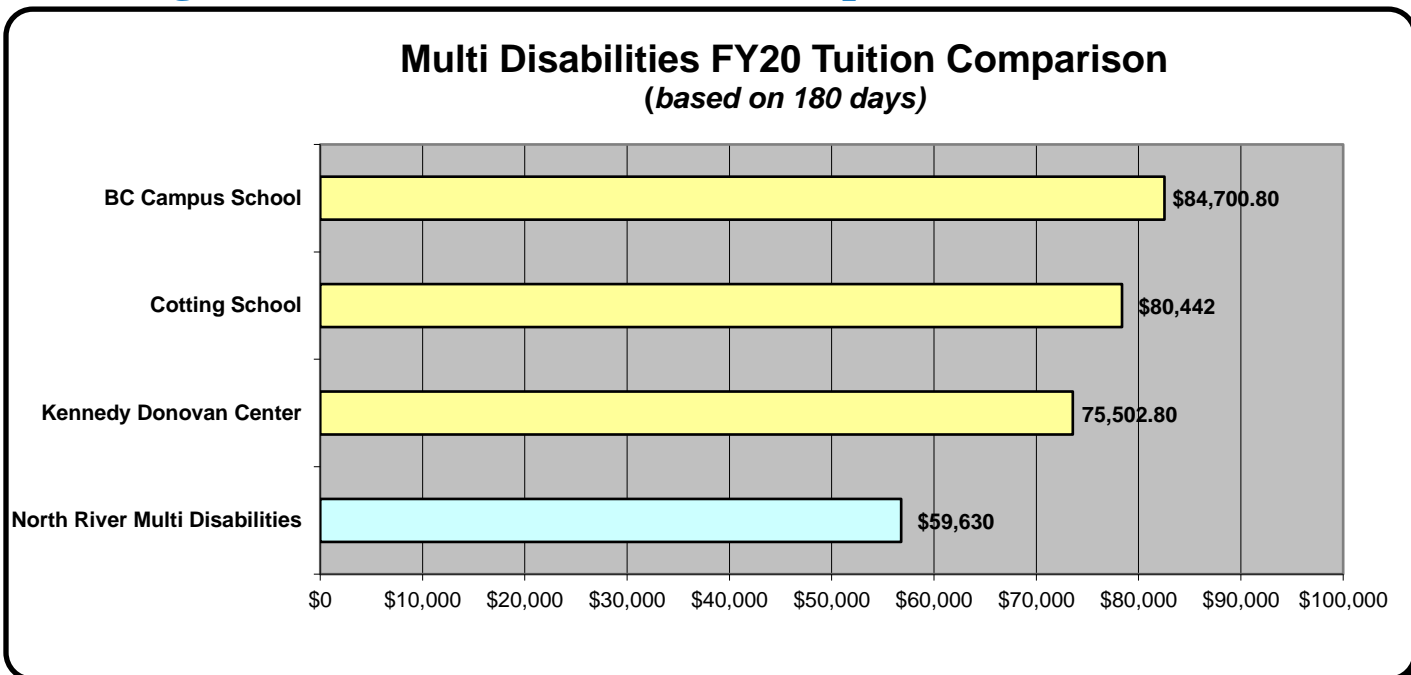
## Objective 3: Provide programs and services in a cost-effective manner

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.

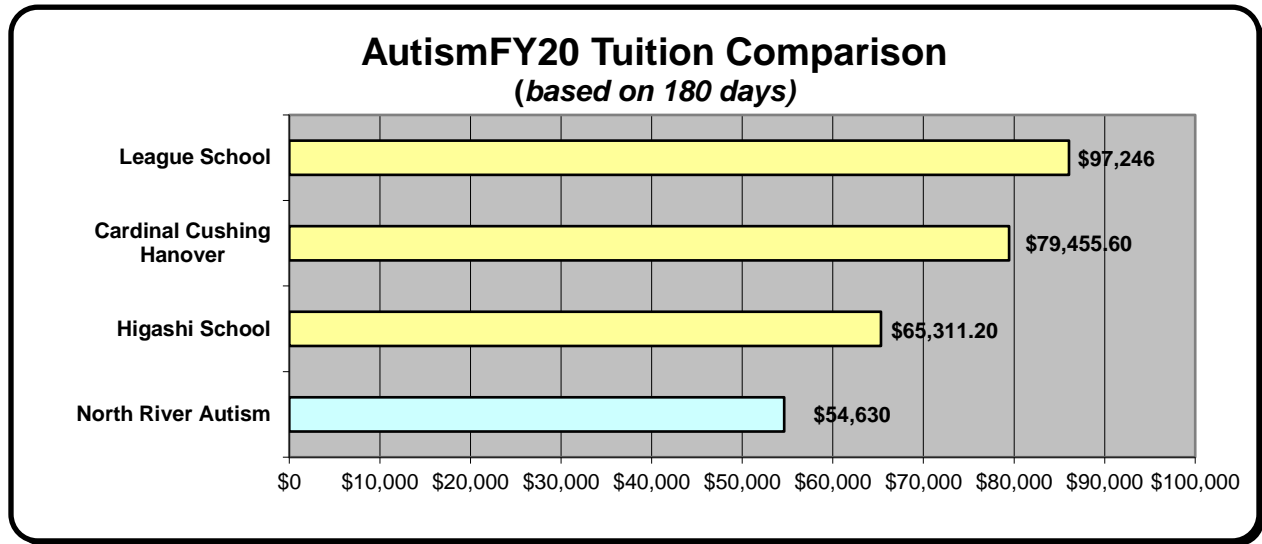
### North River School



### Learning Center for Students with Multiple Disabilities



# Learning Center for Students with Autism



## 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 FY20) and the school districts' tuition contribution is equal to the average per pupil expenditure as determined by DESE. For a portion of the 2020 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 \$34 million has been returned to the participating cities and towns. In FY20, approximately \$1.2 million dollars were returned to 18 districts.

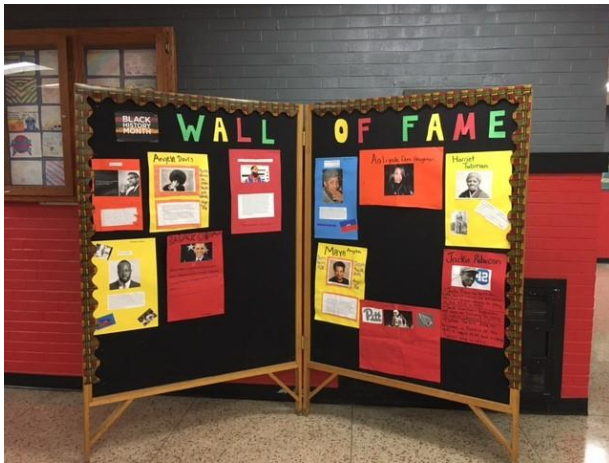
## Southeast Transportation Network

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 FY19 and FY20

### Funded Grants and Contracts

Grants on Behalf of Districts:	FY19	FY20
Recovery High School (Independence Academy)	\$639,860	\$587,000
	NA	NA
Mass Commission for the Blind	\$16,577	\$9,223
Title III Consortium Grant	\$42,941	\$36,109
CommBuys (SPED-SEL)	\$21,500	N/A
	NA	NA
<b>Total Grants for Districts</b>	<b>\$720,878</b>	<b>\$632,332</b>
Grants to Support NRC Programs:		
Safe and Supportive Schools Grant	N/A	\$7,988
Mass Mechanics	\$2,213	N/A
<b>Total Grants to Support NRC Programs:</b>	<b>\$2,123</b>	<b>\$7,988</b>
<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>\$723,001</b>	<b>\$640,320</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, and other public/private foundations, and organizations. During FY20, the total amount awarded on behalf of districts and to support NRC programs was **\$640,320**. Specific grants include: Recovery High School (Independence Academy), Safe and Supportive Schools Grant, 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.
- Safe and Supportive Schools initiative activities to assist our programs in enhancing the safety and well-being of students
- After school/weekend recreational program for students with visual impairment; and
- Tutoring, professional development, and parent support for English language learners.



**In memoriam of Ann Terrill, NRC's Southeast Transportation Network Founding Director who lived by the motto:**

**“No matter how you feel, get up, dress up, show up, and never give up”**

