



North River Collaborative Quarterly Report

SY 2023-2024 –Quarter One



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



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

Mission Statement



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

Non-Discrimination Statement

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

Notes from the Executive Director



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

Learning Center Programs

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

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

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

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

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

-Paul Tzovolos

North River School

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

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

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

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

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



Independence Academy

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

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

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

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

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

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

Professional Development

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

District Services

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

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

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

Transportation

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

Contact Information

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