



**ACCEPT**  
Education Collaborative

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
2021-2022





*Dr. Donna Flaherty*  
*Executive Director*  
*ACCEPT Collaborative*

## Dear ACCEPT Education Collaborative Community,

Helen Keller once said, "Alone we do so little; together we can do so much." I am pleased to share with you how much we have accomplished by coming together through shared passions to work together to improve education for every child who enters the ACCEPT family. It is my pleasure to present ACCEPT Education Collaborative's 2021 - 2022 Annual Report to you.

This report represents the collective actions of all ACCEPT departments to provide excellence and innovation in educational practice for students, families and school districts. In conjunction with our Board of Directors, ACCEPT developed, adopted and began implementation of a five-year Plan for Success. Guided by our Mission and Vision, ACCEPT established a theory of action with four pillars to help guide our path: 1) Staffing and Professional Culture; 2) Partnerships and Communities; 3) Programs and Services; and, 4) Budget, Finance, and Operations. President Abraham Lincoln once said, "The best way to predict the future is to create it." We look forward to executing this plan to achieve positive outcomes that lead to a better future for all in the ACCEPT community.

ACCEPT experienced a transition in Board of Directors membership during FY22. First, we would like to thank Dr. Sara Ahern, formerly Superintendent of Franklin Public School District, for her years of support and thoughtful contributions to the success of ACCEPT. Second, we would like to thank Dr. Kathleen Smith, Interim Superintendent of Dover Sherborn Regional Public Schools for her service to the Collaborative. Finally, we would like to welcome our newest Board members Lucas Giguere, Superintendent of Franklin Public Schools, and Dr. Elizabeth McCoy, Superintendent of Dover Sherborn Public Schools.

This report shares detailed information regarding all ways in which ACCEPT Education Collaborative works to provide the best possible programs and services that help districts maximize cost efficiency, provide educational professional development, and improve student outcomes through programs and services. Thank you for your contribution to our work at ACCEPT Education Collaborative. We look forward to continuing our partnership as we continue our mission to service the needs of students, families, educators and communities.

Warmest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna Flaherty, Ed.D." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Donna Flaherty  
Executive Director  
ACCEPT Collaborative





# What are Collaboratives?

Massachusetts collaboratives are services agencies that bring school districts together to form partnerships that create regional resources. Collaboratives benefit districts, students, families, educators, and taxpayers by increasing efficiency through shared costs and expertise; play a leadership role in developing a broad range of programming to meet emerging needs; provide training; enable the sharing of exemplary practices; and serve and educate directly many of our most vulnerable students across the Commonwealth. Massachusetts legislation originally addressed demands for special education services. Since then, educational collaboratives statewide have grown to encompass a range of educational services (Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives, 2016)





atives are educational  
nal educational  
maximizing  
l range of innovative  
educational practices;  
wealth. In 1974  
ce then, the 28  
vices and programs.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

6 ..... ABOUT ACCEPT EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE

9 ..... BOARD OF DIRECTORS

10 ..... PLAN FOR SUCCESS

17 ..... STRATEGIC PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING PURPOSE

24 ..... COLLABORATIVE OFFERINGS

### SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Pre-K - Transition .....26

Extended School Year .....28

### EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

Professional Development for Educators..... 30

32 ..... COLLABORATIVE SERVICES

Home-Based Services .....34

Consultation and Evaluation Services for Schools and Districts .....35

VHS (Virtual High School) Online Learning..... 36

Transportation for Special Education Students.....37

Medicaid Reimbursement Services ..... 38

40 ..... FINANCIALS

41 ..... ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

# MISSION AND VISION

**Since 1974, ACCEPT has provided excellence and innovation in educational practice for school districts in Metrowest Boston.**

Working collaboratively, ACCEPT offers opportunities for districts to stretch dollars and better meet the needs of students. This allows districts to maximize their investments in learning and growth. Flexible and adaptable, ACCEPT quickly responds to the individual needs of member districts with new programs and services. ACCEPT is supported primarily by fee-for-service activities, with an annual operating budget of almost \$18.6 million.

In 2018–2019 ACCEPT marked its 45th year of serving students, families, and districts in the Metrowest area. Over the years, ACCEPT has evolved and grown in educational programs and transportation services, as well as professional development, school consultation, program and student evaluations, home-based services, Medicaid reimbursement, and more.

## OUR MISSION

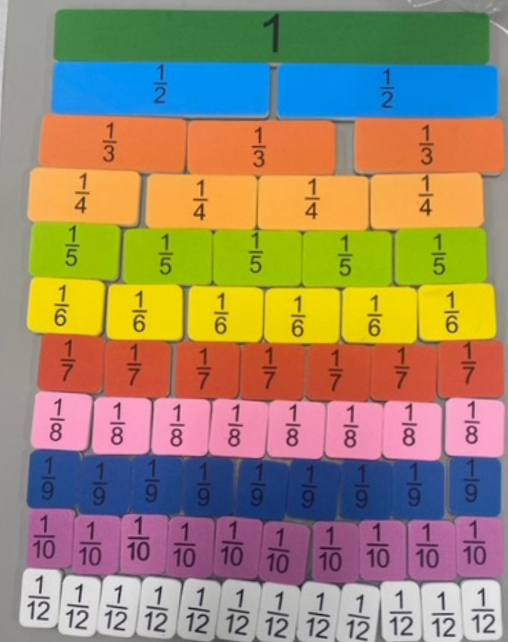
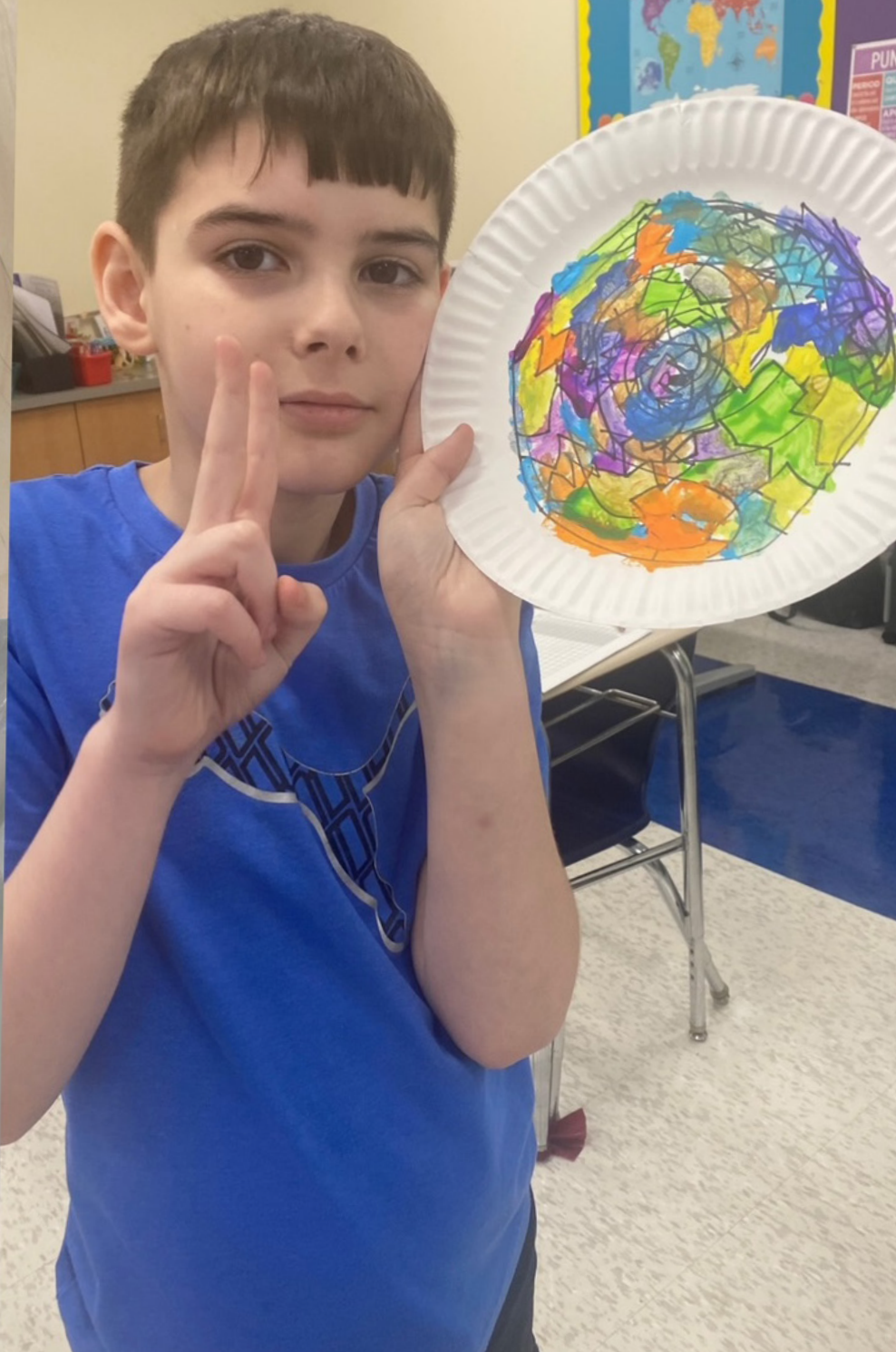
**To use the collective power of member school districts to provide programs and services that maximize the potential of students, their families, educators, and communities.**

- We anticipate and respond to evolving educational needs with innovative, forward-thinking, high-quality, best-in-class programs and services.
- We complement and extend in-district options by leveraging our expertise, utilizing economies of scale, and building strength through collaboration.

## ACCEPT GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- **Respect for diversity and human differences**
- **Best practices**
- **Continuous improvement**
- **Open and honest communication & integrity**











# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The ACCEPT Education Collaborative is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of the 14 superintendents of the member school districts. Member district staff who serve on the Special Education, Curriculum, Technology, and Business Operations committees make recommendations to the Executive Director relative to program development and service delivery. ACCEPT is organized according to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40, Section 4e.



**SUSAN KUSTKA , CHAIR**  
Superintendent,  
Holliston Public Schools



**ANNA NOLIN, VICE CHAIR**  
Superintendent,  
Natick Public Schools



**JAMES ADAMS**  
Superintendent,  
Ashland Public Schools



**ELIZABETH MCCOY**  
Superintendent, Dover-  
Sherborn Regional School



**LUCAS GIGUERE,**  
Superintendent, Franklin  
Public Schools



**ROBERT TREMBLAY**  
Superintendent,  
Framingham Public Schools



**CAROL CAVANAUGH**  
Superintendent,  
Hopkinton Public Schools



**JEFFREY MARSDEN**  
Superintendent,  
Medfield Public Schools



**ARMAND PIRES**  
Superintendent,  
Medway Public Schools



**JONATHAN EVANS**  
Superintendent,  
South Middlesex  
Regional Vocational  
Technical School



**ROBERT MULLANEY**  
Superintendent, Millis  
Public Schools



**DANIEL GUTEKANST**  
Superintendent,  
Needham Public Schools



**BRAD CROZIER**  
Superintendent,  
Sudbury Public Schools



**DAVID LUSSIER**  
Superintendent, Wellesley  
Public Schools

# PLAN FOR SUCCESS (2021-2026) (Adopted January 14, 2022)

## THEORY OF ACTION

If we leverage the collective power and resources of member school districts to provide excellent, cost-effective regional programs and services to unlock the potential of students, their families, educators and communities then we create an environment where all staff are fulfilled, valued, and appreciated; establish flexible, proactive recruiting and staffing structures across all departments that sustain growth based on stakeholders’ needs; build and expand partnerships for all stakeholders; establish robust, innovative programs and services to meet the needs of students, families, and school districts; and develop and implement a collaborative and transparent process for budget development that identifies accurate revenue and expenses.

FOUR PILLARS OF SUCCESS			
Staffing and Professional Culture	Partnerships and Communities	Programs and Services	Budget, Finance, and Operation
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES			
1a. Create an environment where all staff are fulfilled, valued, and appreciated.  1b. Establish flexible, pro-active recruiting & staffing structures across all departments that sustain growth based on stakeholders’ needs	2. Build and expand partnerships for all stakeholders.	3. Establish robust, innovative programs and services to meet the needs of students, families, and school districts	4. Develop and implement a collaborative and transparent process for budget development that identifies accurate revenue and expenses

## PILLAR 1: STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL CULTURE:

Strategic Objective 1a: Create an environment where all staff are fulfilled, valued, and appreciated.

Strategic Objective 1b. Establish flexible, pro-active recruiting & staffing structures across all departments that sustain growth based on stakeholders’ needs



## **Initiative 1.1: Hire a recruiter to ensure appropriate staffing and effective orientation of new personnel**

### **Accomplishments in 2021-2022:**

- Streamlined recruiting process through ADP Module
- Increased advertising sources (Indeed, Zip Recruiter, LinkedIn, School Spring)
- Improved the ACCEPT image through improved advertising
- Increased response rates from applicants – 3 to 5 applications a day
- Improved notifications and communication tools for hiring managers resulting in more efficient hiring process and expedited onboarding rates
- Participated in Virtual Career Fairs: Bridgewater State, Simmons, MassHire, Handshake, Endicott, and Assumption Colleges
- Hosted multiple on-site hiring events for all open positions afternoons, weekends and evenings

## **Initiative 1.2: Increase internal and external professional development opportunities**

### **Accomplishments in 2021-2022:**

- Expanded our outreach to colleges and universities to foster collaborative connections
- Began development of personalized district professional development packages such as mandatory teacher training and teacher and administrator DESE evaluation process
- Developed and implemented professional development opportunities for ACCEPT staff that meets the specific needs of smaller professional groups such as speech and language pathologist and BCBA's
- ACCEPT values its employees and works to hire from within through trainings and mentorships
- Program staff are offered the opportunity to participate in external professional development trainings at no cost when seats are available

## **Initiative 1.3: Establish connections with colleges and universities for recruitment and teacher training**

### **Accomplishments in 2021-2022:**

- Developed new relationships with Bridgewater State, Fitchburg State University and Endicott College
- Through ACCEPT's work with the Education Leadership Institute (ELI) whose goal is to develop Principals and Assistant Principals through an 18-month program, ACCEPT has developed a collaborative relationship with Fitchburg State University

### **Initiative 1.4: Provide orientation, training, and mentoring to support staff in all areas.**

#### **Accomplishments in 2021-2022:**

- ACCEPT has improved its mentoring program for teachers and new staff ensuring it is meeting state standards and providing a third year of mentoring as necessary
- Expanded our orientation and initial training to guide staff successfully through their first weeks on the job

### **Initiative 1.5: Offer competitive employee packages for salaries, benefits, and incentives (as feasible) for the hiring and retaining of staff**

#### **Accomplishments in 2021-2022:**

- A employee referral bonus plan was established and resulted in an improved hire and retention rate
- ACCEPT instituted a longevity bonus for employees committed to ACCEPT beyond five years of loyal service
- An improved vacation policy was established by increasing starting vacation rates from 10 – 15 days for non-director level administrative staff, and from 15 to 20 days for administrators
- ACCEPT established new benefits by providing staff with an opportunity to purchase vision and dental insurance
- ACCEPT began the process of analyzing insurance packages to improve it's employee offerings
- ACCEPT began the process of analyzing short-term, long-term, and life insurance carriers for employees
- Employee discounts were sought and developed in the areas of travel, car rentals, food, groceries, child care and family activities

## **PILLAR 2: PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITIES**

### **Strategic Objective 2: Build and expand partnerships for all stakeholders**

### **Initiative 2.1: Create a committee to plan, organize, and implement events and staff appreciation for ACCEPT**

#### **Accomplishments in 2021-2022:**

- A teacher appreciation committee was formed and implemented an event or activity each day to celebrate Teacher Appreciation week
- Various staff were publicly recognized at the end of each week for the exceptional work they did

### **Initiative 2.2: Develop and organize SEPAC/PTO, and combine with other parent programs**

#### **Accomplishments in 2021-2022:**



- ACCEPT created an internal committee to work to recruit family members to form a Parent Advisory Committee pertaining to our established Parent Forum meetings
- A goal of the Parent Advisory Committee was to improve the Parent Forum in terms of the contents/relevance of offerings and to increase family access/participation in the meetings
- Recruited four parents to be active members of the PAC to ensure the parent voice is part of ACCEPT's vision and mission
- The Home Based Department began efforts to develop evening activities to bring families together in an effort to improve students' social skills and develop families support structures.
- ACCEPT partnered with outside agencies, such as the ARC of Massachusetts, to provide parents necessary information to improve their child and family's lives and outcomes

## **Initiative 2.4: Develop a framework to establish, maintain, and sustain partnerships with businesses, families, higher education, community programs, and member districts**

### **Accomplishments in 2021-2022:**

- The School Consultation department contracts with school districts had increased by 65% including a 50% increase in providing school districts with special education evaluations
- Established monthly parent newsletters featuring updates on Program events, student activities, family resources, important dates and student highlights in each Program
- Hybrid monthly Parent Forums that included professional development in the following topics: a) Executive Function Skills and Increased Independence in the Home; b) Resilience in Children; c) Physical Fitness and Wellness; d) Nutrition and Hygiene; e) Transition for 18-22 year olds Planning; and, f) Summer Resources and Recreational activities
- ACCEPT expanded its external vocational placements for our aged 18-22 year old Program to include four new community partnerships including Regis College, Wegmans, MetroWest Humane Society and Fatima Shrine.
- The 18 - 22 year old Transition Program created several new internal vocational opportunities to include clerical skills, printing services, coffee cart and a business venture selling seasonal treats
- The high school Program partnered with Medway Public Schools to offer a Unified Basketball Team experience to interested ACCEPT students
- ACCEPT has increased the number and type of monthly job alike opportunities for professional educational groups to include Assistant Superintendents of Curriculum & Instruction, Special Education Directors, Business Managers, Team Chairs/ETLs, Principals & Assistant Principals, Transition Leaders, Preschool & Early Elementary Directors, Board Certified Behavior Analysts, and SEL/DEI Directors
- ACCEPT continues for over 20 years to provide a year long New Special Education Directors Leadership Institute
- ACCEPT helps to facilitate the Education Leadership Institute for the development of new principals and assistant principals

## **Initiative 2.5: Establish and maintain partnerships with higher education institutions to support students, staff members, and programs.**

### **Accomplishments in 2021–2022:**

- In partnership with Bridgewater State University, ACCEP has begun the process of creating a Social Emotional Learning Certificate program comprising four graduate courses
- Through the ELI Program, ACCEP has developed a new partnership with Fitchburg State University

## **PILLAR 3: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

**Strategic Objective 3: Establish robust, innovative programs and services to meet the needs of students, families, and school districts**

## **Initiative 3.1: Offer a standard scope and sequence academic curriculum with measurable benchmarks & clear vertical alignment to prevent gaps.**

### **Accomplishments in 2020–2021:**

- Extensive collaboration with the Medway Public School District’s Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction to align ACCEP’s general education curriculum with the Medway Public Schools curriculum.
- Implementation along with training of Dibels, Lexia, iReady and IXL continues as a means to improve student achievement
- Develop Transition & Life Skills Curriculum Guide
- Develop Math (K–12) Curriculum Resource
- Develop Health/SEL (K–12) Curriculum Resources
- Develop ELA (K–12) Curriculum Resources
- Develop Social Studies (K–12) Curriculum Resources
- Develop Science (K–12) Curriculum Resources
- Develop Curriculum Review Cycle for the purposes of maintaining relevant, engaging and rigorous curriculum and resources
- All program staff continue to receive professional development in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, lesson planning and multi-modal teaching strategies
- Program staff received training in standard assessments to establish baseline data points and to systematically track student learning progress during the school year to include academic, behavioral and social emotional data points
- Professional Development in Literacy informed by the Massachusetts Dyslexia Guidelines continues.
- Language–Based Learning Strategies Professional Development has been provided for the Language–Based Programs

### **Initiative 3.4: Develop a diversity, equity, and inclusion plan that impacts programs, services, partnerships, staffing, and professional culture.**

#### **Accomplishments in 2021–2022:**

- All Program staff participated in a book study on Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain by Zaretta Hammond
- Program staff were provided monthly curriculum information and professional development that is focused on diversity, equity and inclusion
- An organizational focus on diversity was developed through the ACCEPT Diversity Committee that informed our professional development
- Progress was made through work with school and community leaders to identify opportunities for more integration of ACCEPT students into programs, events and courses within our schools, Medway Public Schools and the community
- An increase of diversity and equity topics and practices were incorporated into daily classroom curriculum
- Provided targeted professional development to the ACCEPT Leadership Team and the overall ACCEPT staff in DEI following the guidelines of MASS REDI standards

### **Initiative 3.6: Develop external Professional Development offerings that reflect diverse and relevant topics related to teaching and learning**

#### **Accomplishments in 2021–2022:**

- In order to improve our offerings based on the needs of school districts, ACCEPT conducted a comparative analysis of all MA collaboratives and private organizations that provide programs and services similar to ACCEPT
- ACCEPT conducted a member school district survey to establish and produce the professional development needs of our member districts.
- ACCEPT developed a fluid strategic plan to produce professional development activities, workshops, and packages that reflect the needs of our families, general educators, school districts and community.
- Due to the growing Professional Development Department, it was necessary to hire a full time, qualified professional development coordinator to ensure a quality product and customer service
- Based on the input from our stakeholders, ACCEPT developed revised professional development offerings that represent the current needs of school districts

## **PILLAR 4: BUDGET, FINANCE, AND OPERATIONS**

**Strategic Objective 4: Develop and implement a collaborative and transparent process for budget development that identifies accurate revenue and expenses**



### **Initiative 4.3: Create a formal internal budget process, documents and schedule.**

#### **Accomplishments in 2021-2022:**

- Established a preliminary FY 23 Budget Timeline to meet the budget planning needs of the member districts with an anticipated first budget read date of November 16, 2022
- In consideration of the growth of ACCEPT and the budgetary needs, training of iVisions, a new financial software, began January 2, 2022 with implementation beginning July 1, 2022.
- A revision of the Internal Control manual was conducted and included updated best practices with recommendations from the auditors
- Begin a preliminary creation of an iVisions budget entry manual to be continued in the next fiscal year
- Conducted a preliminary training session about iVisions for Administrators and Administrative Assistants to be continued in the next fiscal year
- Conducted a preliminary training session for a new ePurchase Order process system

### **Initiative 4.4: Conduct an internal budget analysis that includes all ACCEPT departments**

#### **Accomplishments in 2021-2022:**

- Established a timeline for the internal budget analysis process and began meeting with select ACCEPT departments to include Professional Development, Virtual High School (VHS) and Transportation.
- A continuation of Professional Development in budget management is provided to the Leadership Team.
- The Leadership Team worked together in developing the FY22 budget and met regularly to enhance the understanding of the budgeting process.







# PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING PURPOSE

Since its formation in 1974, ACCEPT has established trusted partnerships with districts to achieve the objectives and purposes set forth in its Collaborative Agreement. The following table highlights progress in 2021-2022.

OBJECTIVES OUTLINED IN COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENT	PROGRESS TOWARDS THOSE OBJECTIVES IN 2021-2022
<p><b>ELEVATE STUDENT OUTCOMES</b></p> <p>Deliver efficient, cost-effective, and high-quality programs and services that minimize the impact of student disabilities and maximize student outcomes including achievement, independence, and participation in the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program staff were provided monthly curriculum information and professional development that is focused on diversity, equity and inclusion</li> <li>• An organizational focus on diversity was developed through the ACCEPT Diversity Committee that informed our professional development</li> <li>• An increase of diversity and equity topics and practices were incorporated into daily classroom curriculum</li> <li>• Favorable staff-to-student ratios are at the heart of the ACCEPT model</li> <li>• Extensive collaboration with the Medway Public School District's Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction to align ACCEPT's general education curriculum with the Medway Public Schools curriculum.</li> <li>• Implementation along with training of Dibels, Lexia, iReady and IXL continues as a means to improve student achievement</li> <li>• Develop Transition &amp; Life Skills Curriculum Guide</li> <li>• Develop Math (K-12) Curriculum Resource</li> <li>• Develop Health/SEL (K-12) Curriculum Resources</li> <li>• Develop ELA (K-12) Curriculum Resources</li> <li>• Develop Social Studies (K-12) Curriculum Resources</li> <li>• Develop Science (K-12) Curriculum Resources</li> <li>• Develop Curriculum Review Cycle for the purposes of maintaining relevant, engaging and rigorous curriculum and resources</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All program staff continue to receive professional development in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, lesson planning and multi-modal teaching strategies.</li> <li>• Program staff received training in standard assessments to establish baseline data points and to systematically track student learning progress during the school year to include academic, behavioral and social emotional data points.</li> <li>• Professional Development in Literacy informed by the Massachusetts Dyslexia Guidelines continues.</li> <li>• Language-Based Learning Strategies Professional Development has been provided for the Language-Based Programs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>RESPOND TO DISTRICT NEEDS WHERE COLLABORATION IS A SENSIBLE APPROACH</b></p> <p>Develop and implement programs and an array of services that increase educational opportunities for students, families, educators, and districts when it is determined that such programs and services can most effectively, efficiently, and economically be provided on a collaborative basis and complement, strengthen, and meet the evolving needs of member districts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased parent professional development offerings</li> <li>• In order to improve our offerings based on the needs of school districts, ACCEPT conducted a comparative analysis of all MA collaboratives and private organizations that provide programs and services similar to ACCEPT</li> <li>• ACCEPT conducted a member school district survey to establish and produce the professional development needs of our member districts.</li> <li>• ACCEPT developed a fluid strategic plan to produce professional development activities, workshops, and packages that reflect the needs of our families, general educators, school districts and community.</li> <li>• Based on the input from our stakeholders, ACCEPT developed revised professional development offerings that represent the current needs of school districts</li> <li>• Completed a number of in-district program evaluations and provided consultations to build capacity to keep students in-district for member and non-member districts</li> <li>• Expanded expertise in the area of trauma-informed services</li> </ul>



<p><b>EXPAND PROGRAMS TO MEET NEW NEEDS</b></p> <p>Expand program options in alignment with the mission and purpose of the Collaborative to help districts maximize cost-efficiency and program effectiveness through a collaborative effort.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Education Leadership Institute (ELI) Program began offerings to develop Principals and Assistant Principals through ACCEPT</li> <li>• ACCEPT developed asynchronous and synchronous educational professional development opportunities for districts</li> <li>• ACCEPT’s collaborative approach to special education services saves districts money (see Value and Cost Comparisons page 22)</li> <li>• Facilitated hybrid monthly job alike groups to support our professional learning communities: Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Director of Student Services &amp; Special Education, BCBA’s, Team Chairs and Preschool Directors.</li> <li>• Academic therapeutic programs for students Pre-K to age 22 years</li> </ul>
OBJECTIVES OUTLINED IN COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENT	PROGRESS TOWARDS THOSE OBJECTIVES IN 2020-2021
<p><b>TRANSPORT STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES</b></p> <p>Provide safe, reliable, and efficient transportation services for students with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 234 students transported to various programs and specialized schools</li> <li>• ACCEPT maintains a fleet of 68 vans providing flexibility and efficiency in dispatching drivers; ACCEPT continues to supplement capacity by contracting with local transportation companies</li> <li>• Expanded infrastructure to accommodate families and districts with longer office hours, monitored fleet usage and maintenance, provided driver/monitor with increased training and support</li> <li>• ACCEPT drivers delivered technology, academic packets and food to students and families during the school closure.</li> <li>• Bid for 15 new vehicles to replace our vans to ensure ongoing safety for our staff and students</li> </ul>

**OFFER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CONTENT, SKILLS, AND SHARING OF PRACTICE**

Offer quality professional development opportunities to general and special education teachers, administrators, and related service providers, focused on closing achievement gaps, preventing unnecessary referrals to special education, and personalizing learning for students.

- ACCEPT hosted job-alike groups for Special Education Directors, Business Managers, Curriculum Directors, BCBA professionals, pre-school coordinators, and elementary and high school special education coordinators
- Developed personalized professional development offerings specific to individual district needs
- Incorporated the Principal & Assistant Principal Leadership Institute (ELI) that leads to a DESE Principal license
- Established relationships with Bridgewater University, Fitchburg State University and began discussions with Regis College
- Developed Diversity, Equity and Inclusion book studies and professional development offerings
- Implemented various academic
- An increase of diversity and equity topics and practices were incorporated into daily classroom curriculum
- Provided targeted professional development to the ACCEPT Leadership Team and the overall ACCEPT staff in DEI following the guidelines of MASS REDI standards



TODAY  
is a GOOD DAY

BE  
happy

BE  
CREATIVE

BE  
KIND

LEARN

WORK  
HARD

SHINE





## PARTNERSHIPS FOR LEARNING

Thank you to the many generous organizations, businesses and individuals in the MetroWest area whose partnerships ACCEPT students and staff have benefited from in 2021-2022.

**MutualOne Charitable Foundation** has been a valuable partner and provided generous grants for the purchase of iPads in the past and continues supporting the full implementation of our Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) program, providing otherwise non-verbal students the ability to communicate with others.

**Natick Public Schools Food Service** provides our students at the Center for Learning and Growth breakfast and a hot lunch daily. Natick Food Service delivers the meals, and students in our Transition programs learn food service vocational skills including customer service, maintaining high standards for food handling, and tracking of lunch payments and meals delivered.

**Medway Public Schools** has warmly welcomed ACCEPT's staff and students at Medway's Middle and High Schools again this year. A big thank you to Medway for their collaboration and helping to make ACCEPT inclusion programs outstanding.

**Wellesley Public Schools and Bridgewater Public Schools** donated gently used IT equipment for classroom use that would have otherwise been recycled.

**ACCEPT outstanding parents, colleagues, and friends** honored staff by generously contributing funds to enrichment activities for students. Our staff appreciated the contributions as an alternative to teacher gifts.

**Casual for a Cause** is a tradition at ACCEPT, raising funds and awareness for many causes, organizations that align with our mission. During the school year several days are dedicated to "Casual for a Cause," where donations are requested and the staff enjoy a casual dress down day. In the past year ACCEPT has supported, Muscular Dystrophy Association's Deno's Dash 5K, Boston Children's Hospital's Miles for Miracles Team for Jillian, and the Boston Marathon Jimmy Fund Walk and the Staff generously contributes to the ACCEPT Helping ACCEPT Fund and the Holiday Giving Tree to help our students and families as well as collecting personal supplies for the Shadows Shelter for Women during the holiday season.





# Collaborative Offerings Our Expert Staff

Master's level educators | Reading specialists | Board Certified Behavior Analysts | School

Psychiatrist for consultation | Licensed Mental Health Counselors | Licensed Social Workers

Occupational Therapists | Physical Therapists | Registered Behavior Technicians

(Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives, 2016)





## Staff Includes:

and clinical psychologists  
ers | Speech pathologists  
icians (RBT)  
6).

### SPECIAL EDUCATION (PRE-K - TRANSITION)

Academic and Therapeutic  
Academic and Life Skills  
Academic and Language-Based  
Transition  
Extended School Year

### EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

Professional Development for Educators  
Customized Training for Districts  
Online Learning  
Special Education Leadership Institute

# SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

At ACCEPT, we work with parents and districts to design individualized, evidence-based programs for each student addressing academics, behavioral and therapeutic needs, life skills, and specialized services based on the IEP. The goal is to build strengths and self-confidence, and to maximize potential for students in elementary, middle, and high school grades.

Our programs address autism spectrum disorders, emotional/behavioral needs, global impairments and medically involved disabilities, cognitive/intellectual disabilities, language disorders, ADHD/ADD, and nonverbal learning disability. ACCEPT programs are supported by a highly trained, specialized team of teachers and specialists, who are hired for their hearts and for their minds.

PROGRAM	TYPE OF DISABILITY
Academic and Therapeutic	Emotional, Autism, Neurological
Academic and Life Skills	Autism, Communication, Developmental Delay, Intellectual, Neurological, Health, Multiple Disabilities, Physical
Academic and Language-Based	Autism, Communication, Neurological, Specific Learning, Emotional, Health, Intellectual
Transition	Full range of disabilities

## ACADEMIC AND THERAPEUTIC

The programs in the therapeutic strand bring together clinical, therapeutic, and behavioral services with rigorous academics, and support to strengthen skills. We use an integrated team model that seamlessly blends individualized clinical services within the practices and routines of the school day to help students learn the skills they need in the places they will use them, with more practice opportunities. Each student participates in all classroom activities, and teachers and therapists can focus on skills that are immediately useful leading to better generalization of the skills. The academic curriculum is challenging and engaging, aligned with Massachusetts Curriculum frameworks.

Individualized clinical services include:

- A therapeutic milieu providing consistent routines and clinical support.
- Embedded group social skills instruction and counseling, individual counseling and clinical check-ins, and coping strategy practice.

## ACADEMIC AND LIFE SKILLS

The programs in the life skills strand blend academics, daily living, personal/social and occupational skill development with behavioral and social supports in a highly individualized program, tailored to the student's unique profile, based on the IEP. This makes every day an opportunity for students to develop self-confidence, self-control, and the life skills to pursue their passions. The program is a great fit for students who have complex language and learning difficulties, have issues with behavior or coping, and need moderate to significant modification to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in order to make effective progress.

Features include:

- Academics and life skills curriculum tailored to the needs of each student.
- Consistent and predictable routines and structures, shared with families and home providers for adaptation to the home.
- Expected classroom and community behaviors that are communicated, practiced, and reinforced throughout the day.
- Individual and small group explicit instruction, which may include Social Thinking techniques, video modeling and feedback, self-rating scales, and more.

## ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE-BASED

The programs in the Language-Based strand prepare students for a successful elementary school experience by addressing moderate language and learning difficulties. Comprehensive academic, behavioral, and clinical service supports center on developing oral, social, and written language skills to enhance communication and comprehension of academic content. Each student's program is individualized and based on the IEP, with curriculum aligned with Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Individual and small group instruction with low student-to-teacher ratios targets communication and social skills, academics, executive functioning skills and compensatory strategies to increase student independence.

## TRANSITION PROGRAMS – AGES 18-22

Transition programs prepare students for a successful passage to adult living. We view each student as the unique individual they are and, using their IEP and results from transition and vocational assessments, develop a personalized transition plan to maximize independence, vocational potential, participation in the community, and help students meet their postsecondary vision. At the heart of our transition programs is an integrated team model that seamlessly blends functional academics, community experiences, social skills development, specialized services, vocational training, and independent living skills.

## Value and Cost Comparisons – School Year

LOCATION	Type of program	Member Tuition	Non-Member Tuition	Member Savings	Average Private School Tuition	Average Savings Over Private School
ACCEPT CENTER FOR LEARNING AND GROWTH OR MEDWAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	Academic and Therapeutic	\$48,214	\$57,857	\$9,643	\$105,532	\$57,318
	Academic and Life Skills	\$48,214	\$57,857	\$9,643	\$112,775	\$64,561
	Academic and Language-Based	\$48,214	\$57,857	\$9,643	\$65,865	\$17,657
	Transition	\$53,331	\$63,997	\$10,666	\$98,782	\$45,456

## EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR (SUMMER)

The Extended School Year programs are designed to prevent substantial regression of skills and provide a bridge between academic years. Structured individual, small group, and classroom instruction is provided consistent with the students' Individualized Education Programs.

## Value and Cost Comparisons – Extended School Year

LOCATION	Type of program	Member Tuition	Non-Member Tuition	Member Savings	Average Private School Tuition	Average Savings Over Private School
ACCEPT CENTER FOR LEARNING AND GROWTH OR MEDWAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	Academic and Therapeutic	\$6,696	\$8,035	\$1,339	\$12,316	\$5,620
	Academic and Life Skills	\$6,696	\$8,035	\$1,339	\$12,806	\$6,110
	Academic and Language-Based	\$6,696	\$8,035	\$1,339	\$9,164	\$2,468
	Transition	\$7,407	\$8,888	\$1,481	\$11,649	\$4,609





At the heart of our programs is an integrated team model that seamlessly blends functional academics, community experiences, social skills development, specialized services, vocational training, and independent living skills.

Programs are individualized depending upon each student's unique needs and may be a hybrid of one or more of the three strands at the left.

# EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT



Our professional development experts include leading educators and members of the ACCEPT senior staff who make it their mission to stay ahead of trends and respond quickly to district needs.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS, COURSES, AND ONLINE OFFERINGS

ACCEPT believes that what matters most in student achievement is high quality teaching and support that takes into account the whole student. Professional development programs are designed to meet the instructional, management, and leadership challenges that educators face. Our innovative workshops and courses are offered in a variety of formats including online, hybrid, and in-person options. Our website is updated regularly to reflect our full listing of Fall/Winter and Spring offerings.



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

ACCEPT focuses on professional development to improve critical areas of practice. Our sessions utilize experts in the field and contain high levels of collaboration, critical thinking and activities that are applicable to practice.

Workshops offered in 2021–22 focused on topics that were most meaningful to the everyday practice of a wide variety of educational professionals. These workshops included:

- BSEA Decisions & Legal Issue Updates
- Dyslexia Workshop With Sara Stetson
- Dancing the Dance: Co-Teaching Moves to Increase Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes
- Creating Inclusive Schools and Classrooms: While Embracing Higher Learning Standards for All
- Practical Trauma- Informed Strategies to Reduce Anxiety in Students

## CUSTOMIZED TRAININGS FOR DISTRICTS

ACCEPT has developed programs that offer total flexibility, allowing districts to receive comprehensive instruction utilizing multi-modal teaching techniques including reading materials. Customized professional development workshops are tailored to each district's specific needs. Our presenters and facilitators, who are highly skilled practitioners, have expertise in a wide range of topics. For example, ACCEPT has provided customized district training for administrators that focuses on evaluation calibration strategies.

## VALUE AND COST COMPARISONS

ACCEPT's Educator Development offerings are high value, both in quality and cost. Post-workshop evaluations, as well as the number of educators who register for ACCEPT workshops and courses year after year, are indicators of the quality and practicality of offerings in helping educators address their current challenges. ACCEPT offerings are at or below the cost of other workshops offered in the MetroWest area. A review of offerings from CREST Institute, The Reading Institute and The Collaborative, shows a range of \$190 to \$300 per day for a workshop. The average cost of an ACCEPT workshop range between \$90 and \$200.





**Collaborative Services** As an extension of the close, intimate knowledge of their challenges and readily customize services to meet a specific need. Our demonstrated ability to respond to the evolving regulatory and regulatory changes are true differentiators of ACCEPT services.



district we have  
services to meet the  
ing environment  
ices.

**HOME-BASED THERAPEUTIC PROGRAM**

**CONSULTATION AND EVALUATION  
SERVICES FOR DISTRICTS**

**VHS ONLINE (VIRTUAL HIGH SCHOOL)**

**TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

**MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT SERVICES**

# HOME-BASED SERVICES

ACCEPT Home-Based Services are provided in the home and/or in the student's community, and are tailored to address each student's individual needs. The focus is on training the family/parents to better support their child as well as to improve the students' independent living skills across the home and community. Parents and families are an active part of every session. The ultimate goal of services is for the parent/family to carry out programs so that the student is successful in their natural environment and to supplement and facilitate the child's educational progress. These services provide an opportunity to integrate the effective strategies being used at school into the student's home and community.

To determine the scope and sequence of services, initial assessments may include:

- Home Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA)
- Adaptive Living Skills Assessment (Home and Community)

Assessment results guide the selection of service delivery models:

- Direct service model
- Parent training
- 8-Session parent training

## VALUE AND COST COMPARISONS

ACCEPT's home-based service rates for member districts are 10% – 55% lower than the rates of comparable private agencies. Some area agencies charge \$250 per hour for a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) compared to ACCEPT member district rate of \$126 per hour. A typical FBA requires 14-16 hours so the savings for a district can be as much as \$1,984 for a single assessment.





# CONSULTATION AND EVALUATION SERVICES

ACCEPT offers a variety of consultation options and technical assistance to help school districts build their capacity to meet the needs of diverse student populations. Our team of expert consultants works with member and non-member districts to improve and enhance a range of special education programs and services with a strong emphasis on collaboration and long-lasting partnerships.

Our school consultation team provides both student-specific and program-wide consultation services focusing on evidence-based interventions for specialized student populations, assessment methods, implementing specialized curricula, and development of behavioral supports. A variety of evaluation services are also available, including student-specific and program evaluations.

## **Consultation Services**

- Program Consultation for Special Populations (e.g. Autism programs, Therapeutic programs, Transition programs)
- Trauma-Sensitive Schools Consultation
- Behavioral Consultation
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Specialist Consultation
- Transition Specialist Consultation
- Job Coaching

## **Program Evaluation Services**

- Special Education Program Evaluations: e.g. Autism, Therapeutic, Inclusion, Transition, Alternative Education Programs

## **Student Evaluation Services**

- Transition Assessments
- Functional Behavior Assessments/Trauma-Informed FBA
- Psychological Assessments
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Assessments
- Speech/Language Assessments
- Occupational Therapy Assessments
- Physical Therapy Assessments

## **VALUE AND COST COMPARISONS**

ACCEPT's consultation and evaluation services rates for member districts are 25% – 30% lower than the rates of comparable private agencies. For non-member districts, rates are 10% – 15% lower than private agencies.

# VHS (VIRTUAL HIGH SCHOOL)

VHS provides districts with a wide range of high quality online courses that offer flexible credit recovery, opportunities for accelerated students, unique electives, career-focused coursework, summer courses, and more.

VHS is also well-suited to the needs of students at ACCEPT High School Academy. ACCEPT teachers customize the courses utilizing blended learning that accommodates the individual learning needs of each student. The VHS modules are rigorous and meet graduation credit and syllabus requirements. Students from Middle School through age 22 participated in these courses. More information is available at [vhscollaborative.org](http://vhscollaborative.org).

Some of the courses include:

- American Sign Language III
- Biotechnology
- Business and Personal Law
- Business Math
- Constitutional Law
- Engineering Principles
- Entrepreneurship
- Environmental Science
- French, German, Latin, Mandarin Chinese Language & Culture, and Spanish Language & Culture
- International Business
- Java Programming
- Journalism
- Kindergarten Apprentice Teacher
- Marketing and the Internet
- Meteorology
- Modern Middle East
- Music: Fundamentals of Composition
- Nuclear Science
- Number Theory
- Personal Finance
- Pre-veterinary Medicine
- Science in Space
- Shakespeare in Film
- Sports and Society
- Video Game Design

## VALUE AND COST COMPARISONS

As part of the Consortium, teaching membership districts paid \$150 per VHS seat. Rates for districts who purchase seats only range from \$250-\$400 depending upon the number of seats purchased. These rates compare very favorably to a district's costs for in-school classrooms, especially in classes with lower enrollments. In addition, a high quality online course is an efficient solution for students who have individual needs that do not fit the usual school offerings and calendar.

ACCEPT has provided specialized transportation services for member districts for more than 40 years.

Each day more than 234 students are picked up at their homes, delivered to over 73 destinations, either their special education program at ACCEPT or other schools in Massachusetts, and safely returned home at the end of the day. A fleet of 88 vans and 62 drivers and 15 monitors meet the individual needs of each student ensuring a comfortable and positive experience.

Each van transports 1–4 students creating a complex system of routing, varying by start and end times of programs, pick up and drop off locations, and daily variations due to absences, snow days, differences in school calendars location by location. Communication is an ongoing challenge, with no room for error. Transportation routing software, GPS systems, cameras, and mobile devices all enhance safety and efficiency. We are currently in the process of restructuring the department in hopes of being better able to serve our families and districts.

## Value and Cost Comparisons

ACCEPT utilizes a cost per mile model to price transportation for member districts. Estimates are calculated annually, providing districts with the data necessary to budget for the year. The cost per mile model allows districts to more easily submit for transportation reimbursements. The driver and vehicle shortage continues to impact our transportation services limiting our ability to provide anything more than out of district transportation services. We will monitor the changes in the industry and seek efficiencies that will help maintain high-quality service while also reducing costs where possible.





# MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT

Since 1994, ACCEPT Education Collaborative has been assisting both member and non-member districts with recouping money spent on school-based health and related medical services through the School-Based Medicaid Program (SBMP). Over the past 28 years, this program has returned over \$77 million to participating cities and towns.

In August 2021, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved the inclusion of work activities pursuant to state and federal public health initiatives and guidelines as eligible Administrative Activities in the SBMP. The expansion provides reimbursement for a portion of the work that LEA staff does in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including infection control, contact tracing, and time spent planning and collaborating on how to effectively adapt the delivery of Medicaid-covered services in response to public health guidelines. The approval was retroactive to October 1, 2020, and in FY22 ACCEPT amended FY21 claims to reflect the new eligible activities. This resulted in significantly higher reimbursements in FY22. As time spent on COVID-related activities decreases from the peak of the pandemic, we expect the impact of this expansion to decrease correspondingly in coming quarters.

ACCEPT's School-Based Medicaid Services Include:

- Program set-up & ongoing maintenance
- Quarterly identification of eligible students
- Submission of electronic claims for direct services
- Follow-up with out-of-district programs to obtain service documentation for students
- Preparation of quarterly administrative claims on behalf of the districts
- Calculation of annual Direct Service Cost Reports
- Ongoing assistance with understanding constantly evolving state regulations and program changes
- Creation of custom reports for districts
- Unlimited training for district staff on the Medicaid reimbursement process and systems
- Assistance for the district if selected for an audit

## DISTRICT-BY-DISTRICT REIMBURSEMENT DETAIL

During Fiscal Year 2022 these districts received a total of **\$6,600,990**  
in Direct Service and Administrative Claim Reimbursements

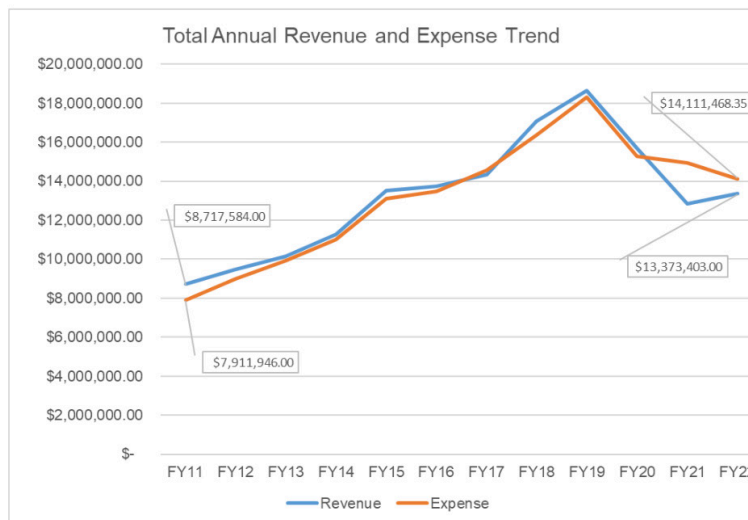
School District	Direct Service Reimbursement	Admin Billing Reimbursement	Total Payments FY20 Payments
Acton Boxborough Regional	\$127,123	\$520,400	\$647,523
Ashland	\$10,321	\$221,705	\$232,026
Bedford	\$111,887	\$225,187	\$337,074
Carlisle	-	\$63,288	\$63,288
Foxboro**	\$394	\$141,225	\$141,619
Framingham	\$421,994	\$1,355,884	\$1,777,878
Franklin	\$99,500	\$440,982	\$540,482
Holliston	\$28,783	\$210,252	\$239,036
Hopkinton	\$0	\$231,421	\$231,421
Lincoln/Sudbury Reg.	-	\$287,559	\$287,559
Littleton	\$7,280	\$147,078	\$154,358
Medfield	\$3,832	\$129,039	\$132,871
Medway	\$12,160	\$87,064	\$99,224
Millis	\$0	\$114,436	\$114,436
Natick	\$186,361	\$510,690	\$697,051
Northern Berkshire Reg.	-	\$20,149	\$20,149
South Middlesex Reg.	\$4,882	\$9,514	\$14,396
Sudbury	\$19,935	\$184,908	\$204,843
Walpole	\$196,443	\$469,312	\$665,755
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,230,896</b>	<b>\$5,370,093</b>	<b>\$6,600,990</b>

\*Includes amendments to Q2 and Q3 FY21 and original claims for Q4 FY21, Q1, Q2, Q3 FY22.

\*\*No longer working with ACCEPT for SBMP reimbursement.

# FINANCIALS

FISCAL YEAR 2022	Revenue	%	Expense	%
School Year Tuition & Services	\$6,607,431	49%	\$7,811,119	55%
Transportation	\$4,182,187	31%	\$4,044,071	29%
Home-Based Services	\$254,239	2%	\$347,940	2%
Professional Development	\$184,688	1%	\$128,446	1%
School Consultation/Evaluation	\$324,864	2%	\$335,488	2%
ELI	\$380,612	3%	\$358,175	3%
Summer ESY Tuition - not broken out in FY21	\$815,973	6%	\$659,078	5%
Medicaid Reimbursement	\$356,064	3%	\$134,981	1%
Administration	\$105,722	1%	\$105,722	1%
Technology	\$161,623	1%	\$186,447	1%
Unclassified/Restricted				
	<b>\$13,373,403</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$14,111,468</b>	<b>100%</b>





# ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Board Advisory groups are composed of district leaders in Special Education, Curriculum, and Business Operations and provide input into the development and implementation of ACCEPT programs and services. Members advise the Collaborative and work collaboratively as a professional learning community throughout the school year to support the Collaborative and each other as 21st century educational leaders.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

Donna Flaherty and Stephanie Child, ACCEPT Facilitators

Kathryn Silva, Ashland

Kate McCarthy, Dover-Sherborn

Laura Spear, Framingham

Ildefonso Arellano, Framingham

Paula Marano, Franklin

Kelly Camp, Holliston

Karen Zaleski, Hopkinton

Mary Bruhl, Medfield

Kathleen Bernklow, Medway

Nealy Urquhart, Millis

Tim Luff, Natick

Erin Miller, Natick

Julie Muse-Fisher, Needham

Mary Lammi, Needham

Michael Dolan, South Middlesex Regional

Stephanie Juriansz, Sudbury

Jeffrey Lapping, Sudbury

Sarah Orlov, Wellesley

Jennifer Parson, Hopkinton

Christine Power, Medfield

Gabrielle Abrams, Medway

Maureen Knowlton, Millis

Susan Balboni, Natick

Theresa Duggan, Needham

Rebecca Swasey, South Middlesex Regional

Kim Swain, Sudbury

Sandra Trach, Wellesley

## BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Barbara Durand, ACCEPT Facilitator

Chris Mathieu, Ashland

Dawn Fattore, Dover/Sherborn

Lincoln Lynch, IV, Framingham

Miriam Goodman, Franklin

Keith Buday, Holliston

Susan Rothermich, Hopkinton

Michael A. LaFrancesca, Medfield

Don Aicardi, Medway

Terry Wiggin, Millis

Peter Gray, Natick

Melissa Martel, Natick

Dorothy Sharek, South Middlesex Regional Vocational Technical School District

Anne Gulati, Needham

Donald Sawyer, Sudbury

Cindy Mahr, Wellesley

## CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP

Michael Caira, Ashland

Elizabeth McCoy, Dover-Sherborn, ACCEPT Facilitator

Amy Bright, Framingham

Linda Ashley, Franklin

Lucas Giguere, Franklin

Tina Rogers, Franklin

Joanne Menard, Holliston

# THANK YOU

To the many organizations & businesses who provided vocational experiences & community outings.

- ConnectEd & Inspired - Bellingham
- Cradles to Crayons- Newton
- Kidstrong Gym- Natick/Westborough
- Project Just Because- Hopkinton
- Needham Senior Center
- Framingham Public Library
- PetWorld- Natick
- Natick Morse Institute Library
- Medfield Public Library
- Blessing Barn - Mendon, Milford
- Medfield Council on Aging: Friends of the Elders
- Millis Library
- MetroWest Wellness Center - Framingham
- MetroWest Medical Center - Framingham
- Sunrise Senior Living - Wayland
- Putts & More - Holliston
- Belmont Council on Aging Meals on Wheels
- Milford Meals on Wheels
- Medway Council on Aging
- Framingham Council on Aging
- Cross Service Group - Natick
- Mass Audubon's Drumlin Farm and Wildlife Sanctuary
- Restoration Project, Belmont
- Mass Audubon's Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary
- Mass Audubon's Habitat Education & Wildlife Sanctuary, Belmont
- Project Just Because, Hopkinton
- Hopkinton Lumber
- Medfield Animal Shelter
- TLC Cleaners - Medway
- Natick Pegasus Community TV Station
- Medfield TV Station
- Fatima Shrine - Holliston
- Ashland Restore
- Pearl Street Food Pantry - Framingham
- Furry Friends Grooming - Upton
- Restoration Project Thrift Store - Belmont
- Emseal Corp., Westborough
- Curry Copy, Westborough
- Spellman Museum of Stamps & Postal History
- TC Scoops