



2017-2018

ANNUAL REPORT



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Message from the Executive Director and Board Chair



What is the ACCEPT Advantage?

Exceptional services to students and families, educators, and districts with attention to:

- High-quality teaching and learning
- Responsiveness to evolving needs
- Outcomes-focused and cost-effective delivery
- Supporting district capacity and expertise
- Unlocking student potential and achieving success



Dear ACCEPT Community,

This letter gives us the opportunity to pause and reflect on the past year. Looking back, and removed from the hustle and bustle, we realize we have just completed a remarkable span of time. The inaugural year in the new Center for Learning and Growth, a 36,000 square foot school dedicated to ACCEPT's school and extended school year programs, as well as a headquarters for offices, transportation, and professional development, has far exceeded our expectations. "Wow!" is often the response from students, visiting parents, and our staff. The space is vibrant and welcoming and offers unlimited opportunities for student growth, learning, and independence.

Our inclusion programs also got a boost this year by being together in a single district. The Medway Public Schools welcomed ACCEPT students and staff at the Burke Elementary School, Medway Middle School, and Medway High School. The physical proximity has increased staffing efficiency but more importantly has allowed us to offer our students greater support than when programs were scattered among various districts.

The 2017-18 school year was one of growth. The Collaborative experienced a nearly 20% increase in overall utilization of programs and services while maintaining the quality for which ACCEPT is known. Our tuitions and fees for home-based, consultation and evaluation, and transportation remain well below the average costs of private programs and services. Exceptional programs and services at competitive rates is the definition of value; we are dedicated to providing continued high value for districts.

We established a year-long theme of Civility to focus our activities and guide our actions. We have always prided ourselves as a community that respects the differences among its members and acts accordingly. Since Civility requires restraint and an ability to put the interest of the common good above self-interests, treating others with decency, regardless of our differences, it seemed like the logical theme to embrace as we moved into a central location.

As we approach our 45th year, we remain committed to the ACCEPT Advantage: utilizing our expertise in meeting districts' evolving needs in innovative responsive ways while remaining student-focused.

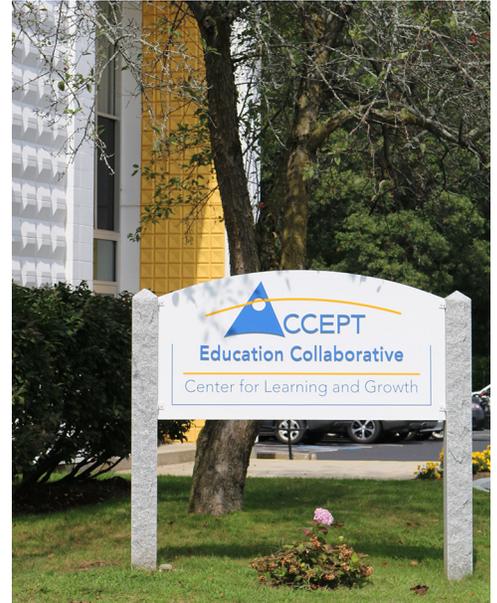
Daniel E. Gutekanst, Ed.D.
Chair, Board of Directors,
ACCEPT Collaborative
Superintendent, Needham Public Schools

Marcia Berkowitz, Ed.M, M.Ed.
Executive Director,
ACCEPT Collaborative

ABOUT ACCEPT EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE

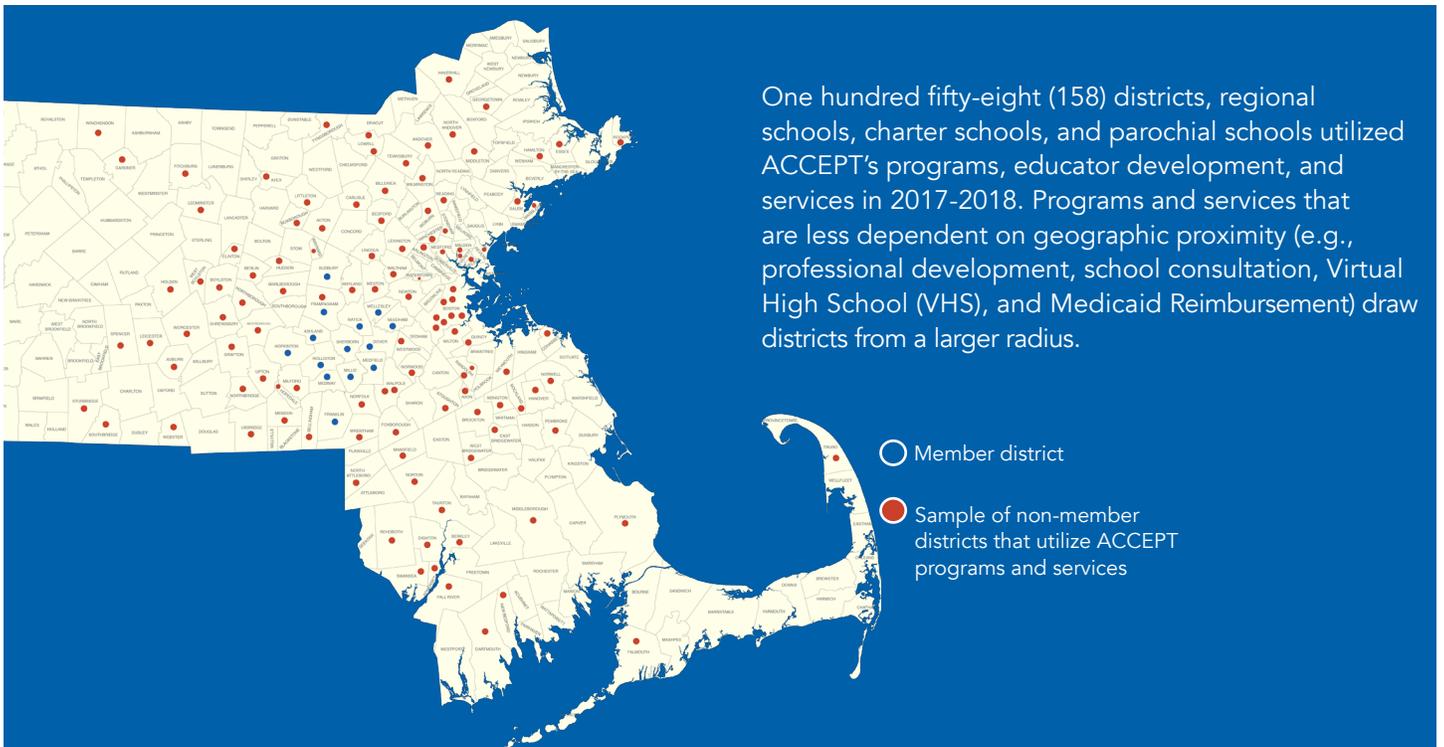
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Since 1974, ACCEPT has provided excellence and innovation in educational practice for school districts in Metrowest Boston. ACCEPT, a non-profit, is governed by the Superintendents of the sixteen member school districts and an appointed representative of the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. ACCEPT is a multi-service, entrepreneurial public school partner.



A VALUE ADDED PARTNER FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Fiscal challenges and budget shortfalls are perennial challenges for school districts in Massachusetts. With annual costs rising faster than revenues, districts continue to value opportunities to stretch dollars, better meet the needs of their special education populations, and take advantage of new technologies, proven education practices, and cost-savings opportunities. This allows districts to be laser-focused on maximizing their investments in student 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 \$16.4 million.



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GOVERNANCE

What are Collaboratives?

Massachusetts collaboratives are educational services agencies that bring school districts together to form partnerships that create regional educational resources. Collaboratives benefit districts, students, families, educators, and taxpayers by maximizing efficiency through shared costs and expertise; play a leadership role in developing a broad range of innovative programming to meet emerging needs; provide training; enable the sharing of exemplary educational practices; and serve and educate directly many of our most vulnerable students across the Commonwealth. In 1974 Massachusetts legislation originally addressed demands for special education services. Since then, the 28 educational collaboratives statewide have grown to encompass a range of educational services and programs. (*Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives, 2016*).



The ACCEPT Education Collaborative is governed by a Board of Directors composed of the 16 superintendents of the member school districts. Member district staff who serve on the Special Education, Curriculum, and Business Operations committees make recommendations to the Executive Director relative to program development and service delivery (see page 26). ACCEPT is organized according to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40, Section 4e.

Board of Directors	Member Districts
Daniel Gutekanst, Chair	Superintendent, Needham Public Schools
Anne Wilson, Vice-Chair	Superintendent, Sudbury Public Schools
James Adams	Superintendent, Ashland Public Schools
Andrew Keough	Superintendent, Dover-Sherborn Regional School District
Robert Tremblay	Superintendent, Framingham Public Schools
Sara Ahern	Superintendent, Franklin Public Schools
Bradford Jackson	Superintendent, Holliston Public Schools
Cathy MacLeod	Superintendent, Hopkinton Public Schools
Carol Cavanaugh	Interim Superintendent, Hopkinton Public Schools
Jeffrey Marsden	Superintendent, Medfield Public Schools
Armand Pires	Superintendent, Medway Public Schools
Nancy Gustafson	Superintendent, Millis Public Schools
Peter Sanchioni	Superintendent, Natick Public Schools
Anna Nolin	Interim Superintendent, Natick Public Schools
Jonathan Evans	Superintendent, South Middlesex Regional Vocational Technical School District
David Lussier	Superintendent, Wellesley Public Schools



STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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ACCEPT Guiding Principles

- Respect for diversity and human differences
- Best practices
- Continuous improvement
- Open and honest communication
- Integrity



“ The job of Special Education Director has changed a lot. We need to focus more on higher level strategy and inspiring our teams. Our partnership with ACCEPT gives us a chance to share new approaches and learn from each other. ”

- ACCEPT Member District
Special Education Director



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.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND STRATEGIC MINDSET

ACCEPT's strategic planning work goes deeper than a set of initiatives for growth. ACCEPT has adopted a strategic mindset – one that guides staff in working smart and is adaptive to the changing needs of students and their families. Our strategic framework graphic illustrates how the puzzle pieces that include elements of the mission and guiding principles fit together and wrap around the central focus on learning for all students (see inside back cover). Being strategic, aligned, and coherent is everyone's business.

THREE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our strategic planning process in 2015-2016 identified three key anchors to guide smart growth and improvement over the next three to four years:

- Building Infrastructure to Support Growth by removing the factors that are limiting growth
- Communicating the ACCEPT Advantage and promoting a narrative that provides clarity and understanding of all that ACCEPT has to offer
- Expanding Programs, Specialized Expertise, and Services adding value to districts without straining ACCEPT's overall ability to perform

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STRATEGIC PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING PURPOSE

HIGHLIGHTS & NEW OR CHANGED 2017-2018

In our second year of Strategic Plan implementation, we are focusing on the priorities that will have the greatest impact on the strength and future of the Collaborative, and particularly the quality of programs for students and families. We are pleased to report on the many accomplishments to date.

Strategic Priority 1: Focus on Building Infrastructure to Support Growth

Human Resource Systems	Information Systems	Metrics and Dashboards	Space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire HR Professional • Use consultant recommendations to prepare work plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assessment of current information systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define success and quality for each program • Define metrics to measure that success • Pilot one easy-to-implement dashboard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate a space that could ideally house all offices, programs, and professional development

Accomplishments in 2017-2018

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR professional on board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT support is now a combination of outside contract and internal expertise • Website and design work in-house • IT student device management systematized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piloted district dashboard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center for Learning and Growth exceeding expectations • Continued grant support for curriculum/technology • Very positive feedback from districts, parents, staff • Enrollments up with potential for more growth • Expanded programming options
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OPENING OUR NEW CENTER FOR LEARNING AND GROWTH

Our most significant infrastructure success is the opening of our new Center for Learning and Growth, a 36,000 square foot facility at 4 Tech Circle in Natick. The beautiful, fully renovated building houses our non-inclusion and transition programs in 16 classrooms, a cafegymatorium, media center, outdoor play space with poured rubber surface, safe spaces and specialized therapeutic and vocational spaces, adjacent woods and trails, and a leased full-size gym in the neighborhood. The Center has far exceeded our expectations with specialized classrooms for academic, vocational, and therapeutic learning, plus a full array of technology, and easy access to community activities and vocational opportunities. The Center also houses our administrative offices, transportation hub, and includes 3 large professional development spaces. The functional layout maximizes teaching schedules and utilization of our full-time specialists for nursing, therapies, and specials such as music, art, and health and wellness.

ALL INCLUSION PROGRAMS CONSOLIDATED AT MEDWAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In addition to the classrooms at the Center for Learning and Growth, we now have all of our inclusion programs located in the Medway Public Schools. Burke Elementary, Medway Middle, and Medway High house a total of 9 ACCEPT classrooms. The consolidation of programs within a single district has yielded extensive benefits for students and for staff. A full array of specialists are available in Medway with reduced travel time, staff have collegial opportunities to share practice, and students feel at home as part of both the ACCEPT community and the Medway community.

NEW HUMAN RESOURCES AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES CAPACITY

Following recommendations from our human resources consultant for improvements in hiring, onboarding, processes, documentation, and more, ACCEPT will begin the 2018-19 school year with its first ever human resources professional who will hit the ground running and focus on ways to recruit staff and improve retention in an increasingly competitive labor market.

Information technology (IT) also got a boost with improved external and internal supports. Data, both student data and organizational data, increasingly drive our decision-making and priorities.

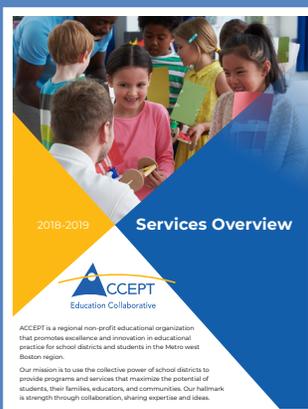
Strategic Priority 2: Focus on Communicating the ACCEPT Advantage

The ACCEPT Story	Make Marketing Everyone’s Job	Marketing Collateral
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define “The ACCEPT Advantage” Work with all staff to explore ways to incorporate messaging into everyday work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on high customer service culture and extend to marketing and communications Promote cohesive, unified approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing marketing materials through lens of The ACCEPT Advantage Revise existing materials portfolio
<h4>Accomplishments in 2017-2018</h4>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed year-long marketing and communications project with CES funded by Sudbury Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Messaging clarified Staff pre-and post-brand awareness survey completed Branding guidelines shared with staff Website content linked to Google for automatic staff updating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new brochures Website audit completed; new website launched June 2018

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY AND NEW WEBSITE

Thanks to the Sudbury Foundation’s support of a year-long communications and marketing consultation with the Collaborative for Education Services (CES), we have transformed the way we organize, deliver, and message our programs and services. With CES, we engaged in clarifying conversations that improved our strategy and resulted in a mindset shift about what we do, how we message it, why, and to what audiences, across the organization. The process helped us rethink and develop branding guidelines and translate those into new program brochures.

The capstone of this effort is our new website (www.accept.org) which contains information about all of our programs. The site is active rather than static and organized in an easy-to-navigate format that is functional across a range of devices. The website also provides a launchpad for utilizing social media.



Strategic Priority 3: Focus on Expanding Programs, Specialized Expertise, & Services

Special Education Programs	Educator Development	Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay ahead of district and student needs, designing quality solutions that are agile and evolving Acquire space to ensure stability and efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand online and blended learning options; expand job-alike groups Further evaluate demand for Assistive Technology consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate expansion potential for Home-Based services Gather data on health resource needs in districts, including mental health, trauma Transportation - focus on continuous improvement and equity of availability of transportation services Medicaid Reimbursement – determine current capacity for growth; market accordingly
Accomplishments in 2017-2018		
Programs and New Initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language-based strand Transition centers (2) Stable space	School Consultation and Evaluation Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AAC specialist LEAP trainer 	Home Based Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New billing protocols Consistent staff Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PTMS Outsourcing New drug screening protocol Medicaid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record reimbursement 2017-18

PROGRAM REORGANIZATION TO BETTER SERVE OUR STUDENTS

Another benefit of our year-long communications consultation was rethinking how we organize and describe our school programs. We now have three basic strands: Academic and Therapeutic; Academic and Life Skills; and new in 2017-18, Academic and Language-Based. The newly defined strands better represent the way our services are aligned across classrooms and allow us to be more agile in meeting student needs. (see p. 14 for descriptions of strands)

GROWTH IN STUDENT ENROLLMENTS

Overall the number of students enrolled in ACCEPT school-year based programs (136) increased by nearly 20%, up from 117 the prior year. About 40 new students enrolled during the school year, and about 20 students aged-out or successfully returned to their home district programs, resulting in a net increase of about 20 students.

GROWTH IN EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR, HOME-BASED SERVICES, AND VIRTUAL HIGH SCHOOL UTILIZATION

Our Extended School Year enrollment increased almost 25% in 2017-18, families receiving home-based services was up about 10%, and number of courses utilized in Virtual High School was up almost 30%.

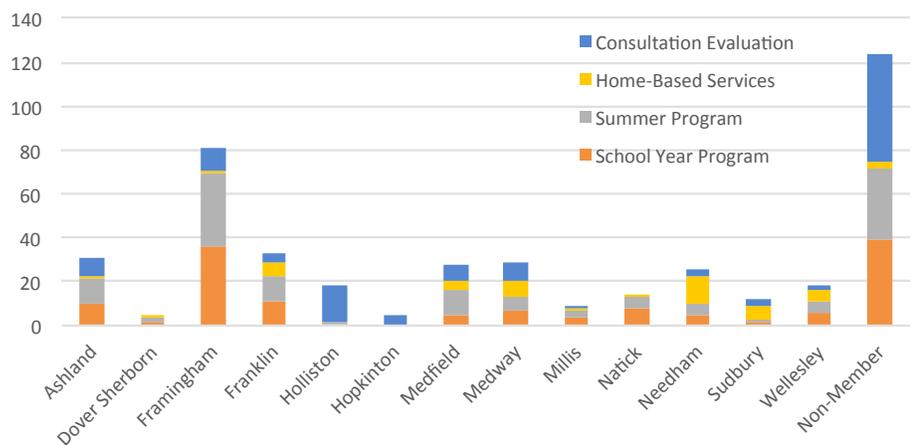
NEW PROGRAMMING – ADDITION OF PRE-K

Beginning in FY17-18, in response to requests by member districts and with space to accommodate the program, ACCEPT added two Pre-K classrooms at the Center for Learning and Growth.

ENHANCED HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND NURSING

Thanks to the leadership of ACCEPT nursing staff, our nursing capabilities and our student and staff focus on health and wellness has become integral to our routines and practices. Thoughtful nursing care means that students remain in the classroom, ready to learn. Our PATH (Positive Attitudes Towards Health) Fitness Program, which is fully integrated into our special education programs, means that students learn about routine exercise that is imperative to their daily mental health and physical longevity.

Number of Students Served by Program and by District - FY18



By the Numbers Students Served

136 students educated in school-based programs

128 students benefited from Extended School Year (summer) programs

71 students/families received home-based services

563 students transported

441 students enrolled in 774 ACCEPT/Virtual High School (VHS) classes

PARTNERSHIPS FOR LEARNING

Bailey's Team for Autism and Middlesex Savings Charitable Foundation

supported "Blended Online Life: Learning, Working and Playing" and the purchase of Chromebooks to allow students in our transition programs the opportunity to use online resources in the same manner as the general community. The Chromebooks were integrated into the five domains of Financial Literacy, Independent Living, Recreation and Leisure, Social Skills, and Transition to Next Steps.

The Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism Inc. funded the purchase and implementation of Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) which uses an evidence-based curriculum to identify students' good-fit options based on vocational skills, workplace soft skills, aptitude, and interests. The data-driven approach helps test students' levels of interest and aptitude using hands-on activities in a simulated work environment. The program has already boosted the enthusiasm of students for workplace experiences, improved internship and work placements, and guided students toward a more successful path to adult life and maximizing independence in the community.

Eversource donated energy efficient lightbulbs and power strips for students in our transition programs to use as a fundraiser. This activity offered students the opportunity to plan and implement a fundraiser from beginning to end, while at the same time learning about simple ways to protect the environment. Students sold 156 lightbulbs, raising enough funds to support the purchase of ACCEPT school spirit gear for every student.

Medway Public Schools warmly welcomed ACCEPT staff and students at Medway's elementary, middle, and high schools.

Mutual One Bank nominated ACCEPT for a grant awarded by The Massachusetts Bankers Association Charitable Foundation. ACCEPT received an Honorable Mention and monetary award.

Natick Public Schools Food Service provided 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.

NearPod partnered with ACCEPT to pilot the use of their curriculum for students with disabilities. Using iPads, students and teachers have benefitted from this cutting-edge technology. Nearpod differentiates and individualizes learning for students, with thousands of pre-built lessons in a variety of content areas, and built-in tools for teachers to assess learning immediately. It's a fun, hands-on, interactive experience that allows students to take control of their learning.

Sudbury Foundation funded a year-long communications and marketing consultation with Collaborative for Educational Services (CES).

Since its formation in 1974, ACCEPT Education Collaborative has established trusted partnerships with districts to achieve its objectives and purposes set forth in its Collaborative Agreement. The following table highlights progress in 2017-2018.

Objectives outlined in collaborative agreement	Progress towards those objectives in 2017-18
<p>ELEVATE STUDENT OUTCOMES 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"> • Adoption of a co-teaching model utilizing a special educator and behavior specialist (BCBA) has been expanded beyond K-6 to include middle school. The co-teaching model strengthens the learning for students as behavioral strategies and proactive measures are fully embedded and practiced throughout the school day. • High value and high student outcomes are at the heart of the ACCEPT model. For example, a record eight students successfully returned to their home districts, and another four students transitioned to a less restrictive environment. • Responding to research about the link between health and wellness and living a fulfilling productive life, ACCEPT expanded the nursing, health, and wellness, elements of student programs.
<p>RESPOND TO DISTRICT NEEDS WHERE COLLABORATION IS A SENSIBLE APPROACH 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"> • In 2017-18 ACCEPT opened the new Center for Learning and Growth, expanding capacity for districts and offering exciting new vocational and educational spaces for students. • Medway Public Schools is now the host district for all off-site ACCEPT programs. Collaboration with a single district offers a deeper partnership that benefits students and staff. • ACCEPT's collaborative approach to special education services saves districts money. (see Value and Cost Comparisons page 16-24)
<p>EXPAND PROGRAMS TO MEET NEW NEEDS 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"> • Language-based strand added for Pre-K to age 22 programs. • Pre-K programs added at the Center for Learning and Growth. • ACCEPT communications initiative, funded by The Sudbury Foundation, led to restructuring of program options, a user-friendly website redesign, and a re-positioning of ACCEPT programs as extensions of district options.
<p>TRANSPORT STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES Provide safe, reliable, and efficient transportation services for students with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 563 students transported to 122 locations. • New transportation routing and dispatching software implemented. • Beginning in 2017-18 ACCEPT explored ways to improve current service and expand seats to meet member district needs. ACCEPT continues to supplement capacity beyond its 125 vans by contracting with local transportation vendors.
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACCEPT hosted job-alike groups for Special Education Directors, Business Managers, Curriculum Directors, pre-school, elementary, and high school special education coordinators, and BCBA's. The BCBA job-alike group met capacity at 65 participants from over 30 districts. The pre-school group has expanded to 20 participants. A new Elementary Coordinators job-alike was added in 2017-18. • The 15th Annual Institute for New Special Education Directors received excellent reviews again in Summer 2017 (see page 19).

Executive Director

Marcia Berkowitz

Special Education Programs

Elementary School Programs

Middle School Programs

High School Programs

Transition Programs
Ages 18-22

Extended School Year Programs (summer)

Educator Development

Professional Development for Educators

Customized Trainings for Districts

On-Line Learning

Special Education Leadership Institute

Services

Home-Based Therapeutic Program

Consultation and Evaluation Services for Districts

VHS Online (Virtual High School)

Special Education Transportation Services

Medicaid Reimbursement Services for Towns

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SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

By The Numbers

136 students educated in school-based programs

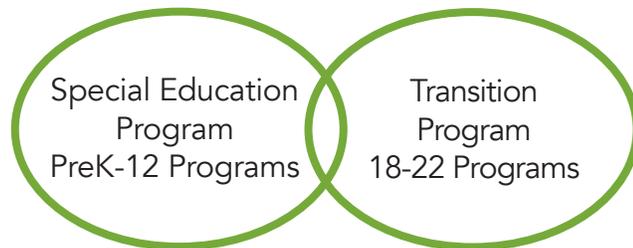
128 students benefited from Extended School Year summer programs



Our Expert Staff Includes

- Master's level educators
- Reading specialists
- Board Certified Behavior Analysts
- School and clinical psychologists
- Psychiatrist for consultation
- Licensed Mental Health Counselors
- Licensed Social Workers
- Speech pathologists
- Occupational Therapists
- Physical Therapists
- Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT)

ACCEPT special education programs provide customized learning environments to meet the unique needs of students.



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.



ACADEMIC AND THERAPEUTIC

The programs in the therapeutic strand bring together clinical, therapeutic, and behavioral services with rigorous academics, and supports to strengthen life 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 supports.
- 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.

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. All of ACCEPT's special education programs offer:

- Continuum of programs and services PreK-12 and to age 22
- Favorable teacher-to-student ratios
- Individual and group instruction
- High academic expectations
- Activity-based learning
- Specialized therapeutic supports
- A team of experts to provide positive behavioral interventions and supports
- Healthcare team of registered nurses that support the physical, behavioral and social health of our students
- Access to art, music, physical activities, health and wellness, technology, and pre-vocational learning
- Technology integrated into learning opportunities
- Ongoing district and family communication
- Extended year option

We would like to thank the many community organizations and businesses who provided vocational experiences and community outings.

- American Cancer Society – Framingham
- Ashland Pizza Palace
- Belmont Council on Aging
- Belmont MassAudubon
- Bethany House – Millis
- Blessing Barn – Milford
- Courtyard Marriott – Westborough
- Cross Service Group – Natick
- Drumlin Farm and Wildlife Sanctuary – Lincoln
- Framingham Council on Aging, Callahan Senior Center
- Framingham Hope Food Pantry
- Hampton Inn – Natick
- Hopkinton Lumber
- Kindred (Gentiva) Hospice – Marlborough
- MA Horticultural Society – Wellesley
- Medfield Animal Shelter
- Medfield Council on Aging
- Medfield Public Library
- MetroWest Medical Center – Framingham
- MetroWest Wellness Center – Framingham
- MetroWest YMCA – Framingham
- Milford Meals on Wheels
- Natick Morse Institute Library
- Nick's Pizza – Ashland
- Powisett Farm – Dover
- Putts n& More – Holliston
- Royal Pizza – Medfield
- St. Joseph's Church – Medway
- Sunrise Assisted Living – Wayland
- Supreme Pizza – Medway
- TC Scoops – Medway
- TLC Cleaners – Medway
- Tower Hill Botanical Garden – Boylston



Celebrating Success – Our Students

At ACCEPT, the annual awards ceremony and frequent celebrations of success reinforce achievement and confidence-building. One prized award is the Michael J. Palladino Award presented to a student who exemplifies the Collaborative's commitment to minimizing the impact of a disability and maximizing opportunities in the community.

The 2017-18 recipient was **Danny Jones** from Millis. Danny attended ACCEPT programs from preschool age to his transition to an adult program. Danny's warm personality, caring nature, and easygoing, positive attitude that fueled his growth at ACCEPT were celebrated and affirmed by the Palladino Award.

“ We are so grateful to the brilliant and dedicated staff over the years who have helped turn Danny into the fine, funny and charming young man he is today. ”

*- Family of Palladino Award winner
Danny Jones*

Value and Cost Comparisons - School Year

Location	Type of program	Population/ Disability	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	Emotional, Autism, Neurological	\$45,892	\$55,066	\$9,178	\$80,597	\$34,705
	Academic and Life Skills	Autism, Communication, Developmental Delay, Intellectual, Neurological, Health, Multiple Disabilities, Physical	\$45,892	\$55,066	\$9,178	\$100,652	\$54,760
	Academic and Language-Based	Autism, Communication, Neurological, Specific Learning, Emotional, Health, Intellectual	\$45,892	\$55,066	\$9,178	\$57,238	\$11,346

Celebrating Success –Our Teachers

At the heart of ACCEPT and its quality programs are the professionals who, through training and experience, have the specialized expertise to identify student needs quickly and develop a plan of action to help them reach their potential. Each year ACCEPT honors one of our exceptional educators with the Susan S. Rees Award for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. This year two recipients, **Perrin Montalto** and **Wendy Danforth**, were selected by their peers. Perrin’s compassion, energy, and enthusiasm make her a valued and respected teacher who has been at ACCEPT for 17 years. Wendy is respected for her passion, and the creative learning environment she creates to inspire students to work to their highest potential.



“ Under the caring and gentle direction of Perrin and her dedicated team, our son...now stands at the threshold of a promising future. ”

- ACCEPT Parent

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EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR



A record 128 students participated in Extended School Year programs.

Each summer staff select selects a theme and plans curriculum, activities, and community outings with that in mind. The 2017 theme was *ACCEPT's Got Talent* with activities and celebrations focusing on discovering and sharing the unique and individual talents of every student.

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. In summer 2017 our transition and elementary students opened the new Center for Learning and Growth as its first students. In addition, we had elementary, middle school, and high school programs at Medway Public Schools.

Value and Cost Comparisons - Extended School Year (5 week summer program)

Location	Type of program	Population/ Disability	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	Emotional, Autism, Neurological	\$6,188	\$7,426	\$1,238	\$6,737	\$549
	Academic and Life Skills	Autism, Communication, Developmental Delay, Intellectual, Neurological, Health, Multiple Disabilities, Physical	\$6,188	\$7,426	\$1,238	\$6,737	\$549
	Academic and Language-Based	Autism, Communication, Neurological, Specific Learning, Emotional, Health, Intellectual	\$6,188	\$7,426	\$1,238	\$6,737	\$549

EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

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Our professional development experts include leading educators and members of the ACCEPT senior staff. Among our key distinguishing characteristics is our commitment to respond quickly and effectively to district needs. Continued growth in these areas is just one indicator of high quality and widespread satisfaction.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS, COURSES AND ONLINE OFFERINGS

ACCEPT believes that what matters most in student achievement is excellent teaching and learning. Professional development programs are designed to meet the instructional, management, and leadership challenges that educators face on a daily basis, and 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 offerings.

Professional Development Workshops

ACCEPT's high quality professional development courses and workshops are designed to meet the instructional, management, and leadership challenges that educators face daily. These programs target struggling learners, narrow the achievement gap, and improve outcomes for all students.

Sample in-district workshops offered in 2017-18:

- Nuts and Bolts for Team Chairs
- SEI Full Teacher Endorsement
- Legal Issues – Practical Resources
- Anxiety and School Avoidance in Youth

Professional Learning Communities

Professional learning communities, also known as job-alikes, bring together district administrators with similar jobs.

In 2017-18, ACCEPT facilitated three job-alike cohorts who also provide advice and input to ACCEPT on district needs and collaborative services. See page 26 for a list of participants in the Special Education, Curriculum Leadership, and Business Operations groups. ACCEPT also offered a series of job-alike groups for pre-school, elementary, and high school special education coordinators, as well as BCBAs.

Value and Cost Comparisons

ACCEPT's professional development offerings are high value, both in quality and cost. Post-workshop evaluations, as well as the number of educators who register for workshops and courses year after year, are indicators of the quality and practicality of our offerings in helping educators address their current challenges. ACCEPT offerings are at or below the cost of other workshops in the area. A review of offerings from Research for Better Teaching, Teachers21, and the Reading Institute shows a range of \$195 to \$300 per day for a workshop. The average per day cost for an ACCEPT workshop is approximately \$175.



ACCEPT has been a partner with Massachusetts Association for Applied Behavior Analysis (MassABA) since Sept. 2017, co-sponsoring our monthly workshop series "Professional Practices Symposium for Public School BCBAs." This is the largest network of public school BCBAs in the state, which currently represents 87 BCBAs in 40 districts across the Commonwealth.

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By the Numbers

1,359 educators took part in 33 workshops and courses

206 participants in “Differentiating in Inclusive Classrooms” workshops

224 Paraprofessionals from 5 districts enrolled in online training



In-District Professional Development

Customized, on-site, professional development workshops are tailored to each district’s specific needs. Our presenters, who are also highly-skilled practitioners, have expertise in a wide range of topics in the field of special education and inclusive practice. Both workshops and job-embedded coaching train educators to apply new skills in their districts.

Sample in-district workshops offered in 2017-18:

- Functional Behavior Assessment: From Conceptualization to Practice
- Registered Behavior Technician (RBT®) Training Course
- The Nuts and Bolts of Transition Planning
- DESE’s Low-Income Education Access Project (LEAP) Training
- How Do We Step Back? Fading Staff Support While Increasing Student Independence

Special Education Leadership Institute

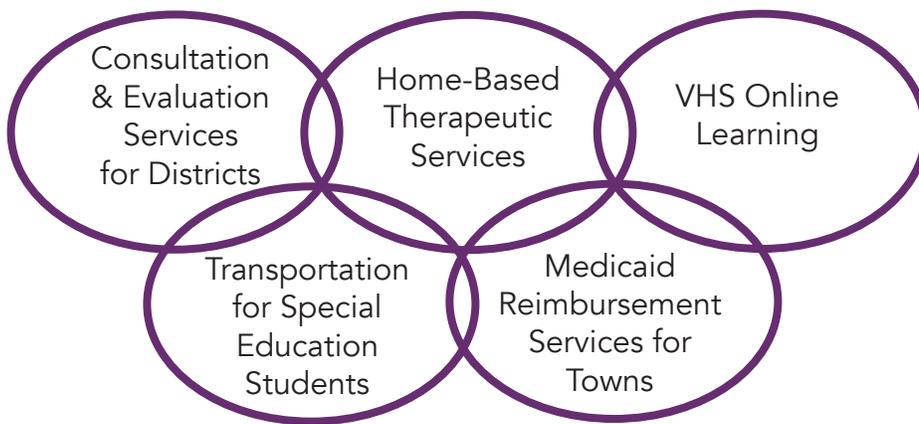
Twenty-five new Special Education Directors from across Massachusetts took part in the 15th year-long Institute. The intensive begins with a week-long summer institute that covers all the skill/knowledge essentials for new Directors as well as leadership training, followed by a year of mentoring by a seasoned special education director. Problems of Practice seminars give the cohort an ongoing professional learning community, and finally a capstone project using data and inquiry to improve an in-district practice completes participant training. Graduates of the Institute are invited to join the Problems of Practice seminars to continue their learning as well. The program is made possible by a grant from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

“ Presenter had great knowledge and enthusiasm.
Her videos and activities were great. ”

- Professional development participant

SERVICES

We offer a range of services to our member districts. As an extension of the district we have intimate knowledge of their challenges and readily customize services to meet the specific need. Our demonstrated ability to respond to the evolving environment and regulatory changes are true differentiators of ACCEPT 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

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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 \$90 per hour. A typical FBA requires 14-16 hours so the savings for a district can be as much as \$2,500 for a single assessment.



By the Numbers

71 families received one or more home-based service

65 direct services

15 home assessments

11 parent trainings

22 families successfully transitioned from home-based services and **14** families reduced services as a result of significant progress

11 of ACCEPT's **16** member districts and **2** non-member districts utilized home-based services.

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CONSULTATION AND EVALUATION SERVICES

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.



By the Numbers

116 contracts with **37** districts for consultation and evaluation.

Of those **11** were member districts and **26** non-member districts

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.

Consultation and evaluation services continue to expand to meet the growing needs of member and non-member districts. Our consultation staff provide services in behavioral/educational consultation, vocational consultation, curriculum consultation, instructional technology consultation, and related services consultation (PT, OT, SLP) as well as a variety of student-specific and program-wide evaluations.

School Consultation

- District Special Education Program Evaluations & Technical Assistance (e.g., inclusive preschool programs, Autism programs, Transition programs, etc.)
- Transition Specialist Consultation
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Specialist Consultation
- Low-Income Education Access Project (LEAP) Consultation
- Job Coaching/Transition Tutoring

Student Evaluation Services

- Comprehensive Transition Assessments
- Vocational-Only Assessments
- Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA)
- Trauma-Informed Evaluations
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Evaluations
- Speech/Language Evaluations
- Psychological Evaluations

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 accommodate the individual learning needs of each student. The VHS modules are rigorous and meet graduation credit and syllabus requirements.

More information is available at vhscollaborative.org

Some of the courses include:

- Biotechnology
- Business and Personal Law
- Business Math
- CAD
- Climate Science
- Contemporary Issues in American Law and Justice
- Engineering Principles
- Entrepreneurship
- Environmental Science
- French, German, Italian, Latin, and Spanish Language & Culture
- History of Photography
- International Business
- Java Programming
- Journalism in the Digital Age
- Kindergarten Apprentice Teacher
- Marketing and the Internet
- Modern Middle East
- Music: Fundamentals of Composition
- Personal Finance
- Pre-veterinary Medicine
- Sports and Society
- Video Game Design

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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.



By the Numbers

774 seats in **120** innovative online courses

441 students (413 high school and 28 middle school) benefited from courses

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TRANSPORTATION

By the Numbers

563 students transported to 122 locations

126 vans, 98 drivers, 31 monitors transport students safely from home to school and back every day



VALUE AND COST COMPARISONS

ACCEPT utilizes an assessment model to price transportation for member districts. This allows districts to pay a fee equivalent to the actual cost of providing special education transportation services to the students in their district. Assessments are calculated annually, providing districts with the data necessary to budget accurately and allowing ACCEPT to meet its costs, an advantage not available from for-profit transportation vendors. Further, efficiencies are maximized and cost savings are enhanced by the districts and ACCEPT working in partnership.

ACCEPT Education Collaborative has provided specialized transportation services for our member school districts for more than 40 years.

ACCEPT's robust transportation program, with a fleet of over 125 vans, provides specialized transportation to more than 560 students daily.

ACCEPT vans can be spotted all across Metrowest communities, and throughout eastern Massachusetts, every weekday. Each van transports 1-4 students to and from their home and special education school program at ACCEPT or other schools in Massachusetts. All students have individual needs that impact scheduling and routing. For most students, transportation is provided for the school year as well as their Extended School Year (summer) program. Additionally, classroom teachers and teaching assistants use ACCEPT vans to transport students in our Transition Program to and from internships and community activities.

Managing transportation is a major logistical challenge. Routes can change daily and student needs can shift with minimal notice making communication key. With no room for error, two dispatchers keep track of the daily schedule, including any changes for each student, van, driver, and monitor at all times. Transportation routing software, GPS systems, cameras, and mobile devices all enhance safety and efficiency.

Our vision, short-term, is to boost our current program with more robust systems for efficiency of routes, communication with districts, schools, and families, and invest in infrastructure to support our current needs and future growth.

In recent years, with tightening job markets, it has been increasingly difficult to recruit new drivers, and accommodate the demand for more services from districts. Long-term our goal is to recruit and retain quality staff to meet that demand.

Looking forward to FY19, ACCEPT will be taking a holistic look at all aspects of transportation. We will be focusing on those features of transportation that are of the highest value for districts. We know we need to enhance our infrastructure to support the daily experience of drivers and students/families. We are reviewing our compensation packages to ensure we can be competitive in the employment market, attracting drivers and monitors who are hard-working, patient, compassionate, and represent the ACCEPT Advantage.

“ We are all here for the kids and we need to make sure they are getting here and getting home and feel safe on the vans. ”

- ACCEPT Driver

MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT

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In 1994, ACCEPT Education Collaborative established the School-Based Medicaid Reimbursement Program (formerly Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement) for member and non-member districts to recoup money spent on school-based health and related medical services. Over the past 24 years this program has returned over \$62 million to participating cities and towns.

Our Medicaid Reimbursement Services include:

- Program set-up and 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

ACCEPT works with school districts to claim every possible dollar, maintain confidentiality, and keep the necessary records required by districts, towns, and the Medicaid Division of Medical Assistance.

Districts are eligible to claim:

- Costs of eligible direct services as well as some administrative costs
- Out-of-district tuitions paid for eligible students, both residential and day
- Reimbursement for medical ABA services provided to eligible students with Autism

VALUE – DISTRICT-BY-DISTRICT REIMBURSEMENT DETAIL

During Fiscal Year 2018 these districts received a total of \$4,197,079 in Direct Service and Administrative Activity Claiming

School District	Direct Service Reimbursement	Admin Billing Reimbursement	Total Payments FY18 Payments
Ashland	\$55,763	\$72,138	\$127,901
Auburn	-	\$66,592	\$66,592
Bedford	\$35,252	\$31,477	\$66,728
Carlisle	-	\$5,518	\$5,518
Foxboro	\$53,256	\$48,444	\$101,701
Framingham	\$1,388,686	\$607,492	\$1,996,178
Franklin	\$158,488	\$138,287	\$296,774
Holliston	\$85,641	\$44,853	\$130,495
Hopkinton	\$20,967	\$21,952	\$42,919
Lincoln/Sudbury Reg.	-	\$35,836	\$35,836
Littleton	\$33,855	\$30,124	\$63,979
Medfield	\$24,597	\$27,656	\$52,251
Medway	\$60,336	\$34,763	\$95,099
Millis	\$34,949	\$24,947	\$59,896
Natick	\$297,087	\$136,851	\$433,937
Northern Berkshire Reg.	-	\$19,645	\$19,645
South Middlesex Reg.	\$17,529	\$21,521	\$39,050
Walpole	\$449,551	\$113,030	\$562,580
TOTAL	\$2,715,957	\$1,481,126	\$4,197,079



By the Numbers

\$4,197,079 returned to 18 municipalities in Medicaid reimbursements

Annual direct service reimbursements ranged from **\$17,529** to **\$1,388,686**

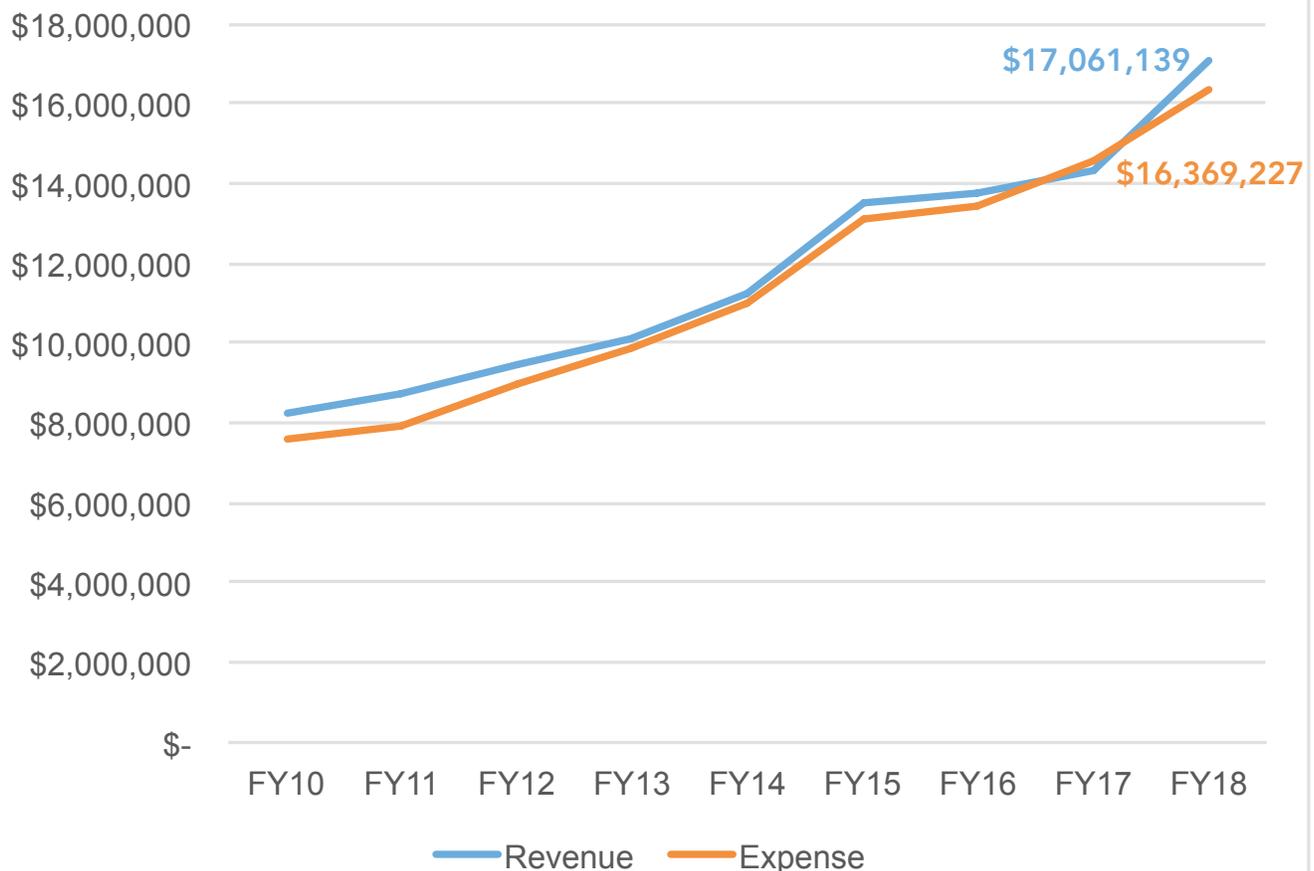
Annual administrative reimbursements ranged from **\$5,518** to **\$607,492**

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FINANCIALS

FISCAL YEAR 2018	Revenue	%	Expense	%
School Year Tuition & Services	\$7,049,608	41.32%	\$6,867,995	41.96%
Transportation	\$7,675,637	44.99%	\$7,450,968	45.52%
Home-Based Services	\$544,587	3.19%	\$516,990	3.16%
Professional Development	\$76,360	0.45%	\$95,693	0.58%
School Consultation/Evaluation	\$319,935	1.88%	\$330,423	2.02%
Extended Year Tuition & Services	\$802,362	4.70%	\$634,560	3.88%
Medicaid Reimbursement	\$273,296	1.60%	\$138,412	0.85%
Administration	\$80,732	0.47%	\$103,821	0.63%
Technology	\$238,622	1.40%	\$230,365	1.41%
	\$17,061,139	100.00%	\$16,369,227	100.00%

Total Annual Revenue and Expense Trend



ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ANNUAL REPORT

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

SPECIAL EDUCATION

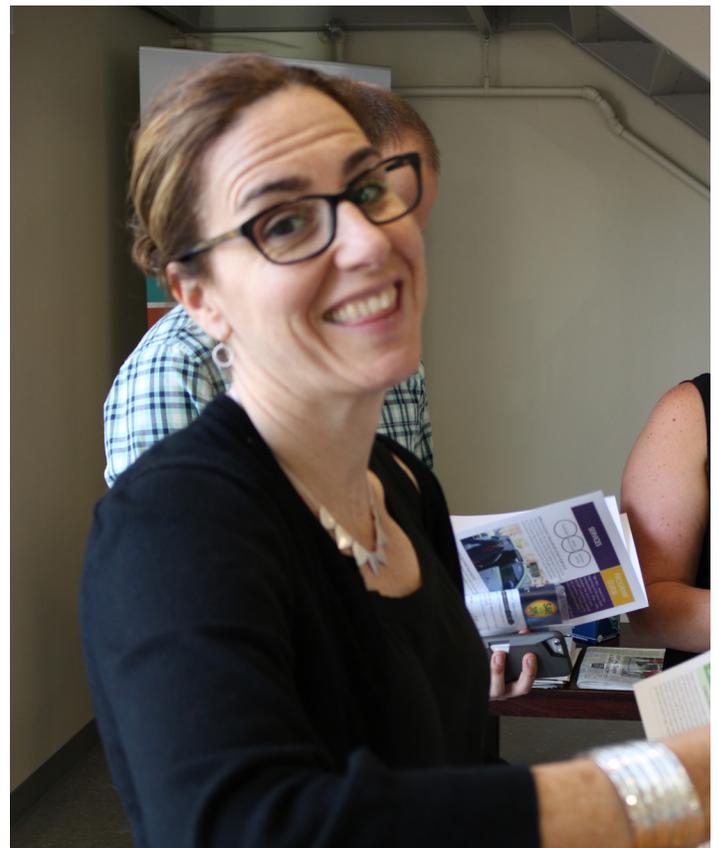
Marcia Berkowitz, ACCEPT Facilitator
Kathryn Silva, Ashland
Christine J. Smith, Dover/Sherborn
Laura Spear, Framingham
Ildefonso Arellano, Framingham
Deborah Dixon, Franklin
Meg Camire, Holliston
Karen Zaleski, Hopkinton
Gina Da Lan, Medfield
Kathleen Bernklow, Medway
Sue Anne Marks, Millis
Tim Luff, Natick
Mary Lammi, Needham
Michael Dolan, South Middlesex Regional
Barbara Cataldo, Sudbury
Lori Cimeno, Wellesley

CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP

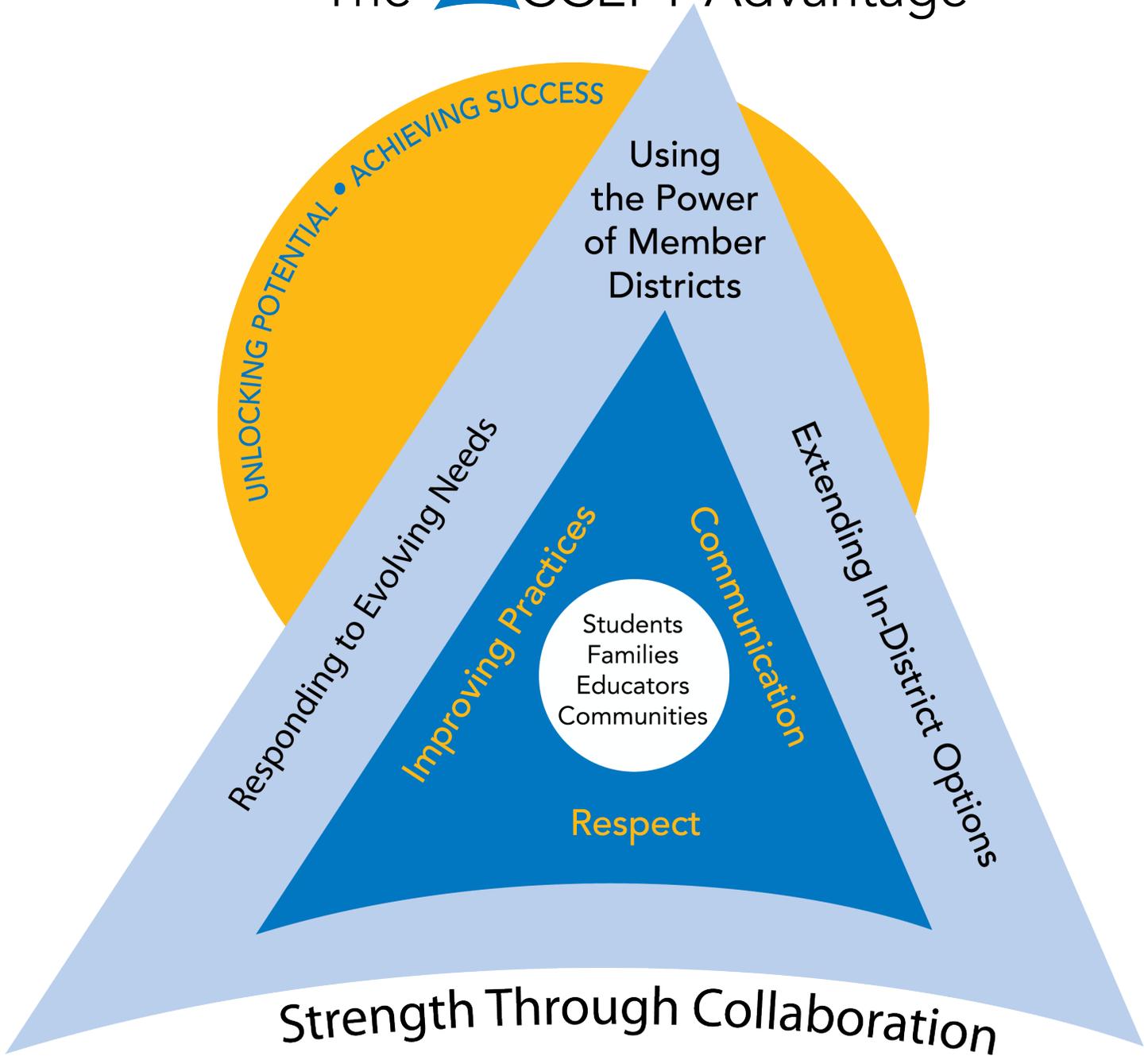
Marcia Berkowitz, ACCEPT Facilitator
Paul Vieira, Ashland
Elizabeth McCoy, Dover/Sherborn
Anne Ludes, Framingham
Amy Bright, Framingham
Joyce Edwards, Franklin
Peter Botelho, Holliston
Carol Cavanaugh, Hopkinton
Kim Cave, Medfield
Gabrielle Abrams, Medway
Joan Lynn, Millis
Anna Nolin, Natick
Theresa Duggan, Needham
Daniel Hudder, South Middlesex Regional
Kim Swain, Sudbury
Joan Dabrowski, Wellesley

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Cathy Ellis, ACCEPT Facilitator
Barbara Durand, Ashland
Dawn Fattore, Dover/Sherborn
Ed Gotgart, Framingham
Miriam Goodman, Franklin
Keith Buday, Holliston
Susan Rothermich, Hopkinton
Michael A. LaFrancesca, Medfield
Don Aicardi, Medway
April Yu, Millis
Peter Gray, Natick
Anne Gulati, Needham
Dolly Sharek, South Middlesex Regional
Donald Sawyer, Sudbury
Judy Belliveau, Wellesley



The CCEPT Advantage





ACCEPT
Education Collaborative

Center for Learning and Growth
4 Tech Circle, Natick, MA 01760
508-653-6776

www.accept.org

Questions?

Here are three ways to learn more:

- Visit www.accept.org
- Contact us via email at info@accept.org
- Call us at 508-653-6776

Unlocking Potential – Achieving Success