North River Collaborative
2016 Annual Report

North River Collaborative
Joanne Haley Sullivan, Executive Director
198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370
781-878-6056
www.northrivercollaborative.org
December, 2016
Intentionally left bank.
November 4, 2016

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

I am pleased to present to you the 2016 Annual Report for North River Collaborative. The report summarizes the highlights of the past school year, in which we focused our efforts on our core mission of providing high-quality, cost-effective educational programs and services for students, districts, partner organizations, and communities.

In this report you will find:

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

FY16 was a milestone year for North River Collaborative, our 40th Anniversary. We incorporated a number of activities in celebration, most notably the development of our 40th Anniversary Video which captures the essence of who we are and what we do. If you have not had a chance to see the video I am including a copy to each district with this Report and welcome you to view it in that format, or visit our website, www.northrivercollaborative.org.

NRC was pleased to add Stoughton as a new member in FY16. Through an amendment to the Collaborative Agreement, their membership in the collaborative begins July 1, 2016 and we welcome their participation.

NRC had a highly successful year focused on several initiatives. One primary focus was assisting school districts in their work to support social/emotional learning and behavioral health of students. North River Collaborative’s Elementary Counseling Grant placed 5.2 social workers in member district schools and provided mental health training for faculty.

NRC was awarded $1,586,877 in grants for FY16. We supported nine school districts to improve services for English Language Learners through our Title III Consortium grant. Additionally, we provided support to 42 kindergarten classrooms in 8 schools through a Focus on K2 Early Literacy grant.

In our existing programs, North River made substantial gains in the provision of instructional and assistive technology in our classrooms. Independence Academy received short-term funding to transport students to the program and to offer after-school and vacation week programming that led to an increase in enrollment. The transportation department expanded with the opening a satellite office in Stoughton this year from which we transported over 100 additional students, the total number of students NRC transported increased to 450.

North River is a fiscally healthy organization as you will see in the audited financial statement. We maintain a fund balance below the maximum allowable by statute, yet sufficient to support the Collaborative’s needs. Our Capital Fund supported maintenance and improvements to the North River School and Conference Center facility.

On behalf of the entire North River Collaborative staff, I would like to thank you. The work we do with and on behalf of our districts keep us moving forward as an organization. The participation of your administrators and staff is key to any success we may have.

Sincerely,

Joanne Haley Sullivan
Executive Director

North River Collaborative

Serving the public school districts of
Abington • Avon • Bridgewater • Raynham • East Bridgewater • Hanover • Rockland • Stoughton • West Bridgewater • Whitman-Hanson
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Purpose

NRC Satisfaction Survey Results 2016

Objectives

Objective 1: Provide programs for students with low-incidence disabilities

Programs

North River School
Learning Centers
Community Based Vocational Program
Summer Work and Learning Program

Services

Therapy Services
Behavior Consultation and Education Services

Objective 2: Provide professional development opportunities

Professional Development
Instructional Technology Integration Specialist

Objective 3: Provide programs and services in cost effective manner

Objective 4: Explore and pursue grant and other funding

Objective 5: Cooperative programs and services

Teachers of English Language Learners
Independence Academy
NRC Family Network
Social Work Internship Program
Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement
Southeast Transportation Network

NRC Audited Financial Statement
Section 1: Governance and General Information

North River Collaborative is governed by the member school committees of Abington, Avon, Bridgewater-Raynham, East Bridgewater, Hanover, Rockland, West Bridgewater, and Whitman-Hanson. Each school committee has a representative member who serves on the Board of Directors at its monthly meetings. In addition, there are regular advisory meetings of the Superintendents, Special Education Directors, and Curriculum Coordinators throughout the year to provide input and feedback about the programs and services as well as information about emerging needs in the districts. The tables below list the members of each of these groups for the 2015–2016 school year. North River Collaborative is grateful for their service.

**Board of Directors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abington</th>
<th>Avon</th>
<th>Bridgewater-Raynham</th>
<th>East Bridgewater</th>
<th>Hanover</th>
<th>Rockland</th>
<th>West Bridgewater</th>
<th>Whitman-Hanson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Bailey</td>
<td>Kathleen O’Reilly</td>
<td>Susan Prewandowski</td>
<td>Gordon McKinnon</td>
<td>John Geary</td>
<td>Daniel Biggins</td>
<td>Molly Smith</td>
<td>Susan McSweeney</td>
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**Superintendents’ Advisory Committee**

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<th>Abington</th>
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<th>Bridgewater-Raynham</th>
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<th>Hanover</th>
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<th>Whitman-Hanson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peter Schafer</td>
<td>Paul Zinni</td>
<td>Derek Swenson</td>
<td>Elizabeth Legault</td>
<td>Matthew Ferron</td>
<td>John Retchless</td>
<td>Patricia Oakley</td>
<td>Ruth Gilbert-Whitner</td>
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**Special Needs Advisory Committee**

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<th>Bridgewater-Raynham</th>
<th>East Bridgewater</th>
<th>Hanover</th>
<th>Rockland</th>
<th>West Bridgewater</th>
<th>Whitman-Hanson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dympna Thomas</td>
<td>Christine Godino</td>
<td>Carla Thomas</td>
<td>Danielle Carrigo</td>
<td>Joan Woodward</td>
<td>Linda Maniglia</td>
<td>Hope Hanscom</td>
<td>John Queally</td>
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**Curriculum Coordinators’ Committee**

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<th>Bridgewater-Raynham</th>
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<th>West Bridgewater</th>
<th>Whitman-Hanson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dympna Thomas</td>
<td>Christine Godino</td>
<td>Ryan Powers</td>
<td>Gina Williams</td>
<td>Deborah St. Ives</td>
<td>Jan Sheehan</td>
<td>Hope Hanscom</td>
<td>Ellen Stockdale</td>
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**North River Collaborative Administrative Team**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abington</th>
<th>Avon</th>
<th>Bridgewater-Raynham</th>
<th>East Bridgewater</th>
<th>Hanover</th>
<th>Rockland</th>
<th>West Bridgewater</th>
<th>Whitman-Hanson</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joanne Haley Sullivan</td>
<td>Edwin Walsh</td>
<td>Nancy Verseckes</td>
<td>Diane Baxter</td>
<td>Moira Leon</td>
<td>Beth Litchfield</td>
<td>Ryan Morgan</td>
<td>Annie Robinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asst. Executive Director</td>
<td>Asst. Executive Director</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independence Academy</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clarice Doliber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leslie Reilly</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>District Services</td>
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<td>NRC Family Network</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stephen Folino</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Annie Robinson</td>
<td>Kate Stevens</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Deni Howley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>OT/PT Supervisor</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Behavioral Health Initiative</td>
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<td>Learning Center</td>
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</table>

North River Collaborative
Section 1: Governance and General Information

2014-2016 Strategic Plan

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

Vision
North River Collaborative (NRC) provides innovative, flexible and diverse educational programs and services that engage students in participatory learning. Using state of the art technology, NRC provides educators and districts with the resources to increase student achievement and with the opportunities to collaborate.

Guiding Beliefs
- We believe that programs, services, and facilities should be of the highest quality and responsive to the changing needs of the member districts.
- We believe that all students should be provided with the opportunity and support to reach their potential for academic achievement and independent living.
- We believe that all students should be challenged to learn in a caring, inclusive and flexible environment that appreciates diversity, values life-long learning and prepares students to be successful citizens.
- We believe that high quality professional development combined with educator evaluation is essential for improving educational practice and maximizing student achievement.
- We believe that supporting the social and emotional well-being of our students is essential.
- We believe that through collegiality and shared commitment, we accomplish more collectively than separately.
- We believe that to facilitate the educational process, we need to support families.
- We believe that a variety of opinions will stimulate innovative and creative ideas leading to effective solutions.
- We believe that student assessment and program evaluation are essential for continuous improvement.

Strategic Goals
Goal 1: Provide a continuum of high-quality, educational programs and services in response to identified needs.

Goal 2: To leverage existing, emerging, and innovative technologies to meet the needs of NRC and the districts it serves.

Goal 3: To expand opportunities for cross district collaboration through which resources and expertise can be shared.
Section 1: Governance and General Information

**Collaborative Statistics**

### General Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in Service</th>
<th>Member Districts</th>
<th>Districts Served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Program Sites: 9 – East Bridgewater (2), West Bridgewater (1), Whitman-Hanson (3), and NRC sites (3)
- Vocational Sites (for CBVS & NRS): 16 – Abington, Bridgewater, Brockton, East Bridgewater, Hanover, Marshfield, Middleborough, Pembroke, Rockland, and Weymouth

### Service Locations

(There may be multiple services per location.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>BCES</th>
<th>Social Wk</th>
<th>NRCFN</th>
<th>BHI</th>
<th>Therapy &amp; ELL</th>
<th>Vision Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abington</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avon</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridgewater-Raynham</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Bridgewater</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hanover</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bridgewater</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitman-Hanson</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-member Districts</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
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### Staff Demographics

(June 30 count)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY13</th>
<th>FY14</th>
<th>FY15</th>
<th>FY16</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators/Coordinators</td>
<td>15.16</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>29.73</td>
<td>26.72</td>
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<td>Occupational Therapists</td>
<td>10.83</td>
<td>10.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Therapists</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>4.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speech Therapists</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aides</td>
<td>19.01</td>
<td>14.08</td>
<td>15.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavior Consultants: BCBAs</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Behavior Consultants</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavior Service Providers</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology Staff</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Coaches</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counselors/Social Workers</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>10.3</td>
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<td>School Psychologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nurses</td>
<td>6.57</td>
<td>5.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative Assistants</td>
<td>13.83</td>
<td>12.41</td>
<td>11.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitors</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation &amp; Mobility</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodian</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.25</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Staff (FTE)</strong></td>
<td><strong>192.78</strong></td>
<td><strong>184.79</strong></td>
<td><strong>196.65</strong></td>
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### Serving Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students Served in NRC Programs (FTE)*</th>
<th>FY15</th>
<th>FY16</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple disabilities</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>25.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autism/developmental disabilities</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>22.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional disabilities</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>51.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse and Dependence</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.65</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>115.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>116.5</strong></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students Served in NRC Services:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Based Vocational</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learners</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapies</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work Interns</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Health Initiative</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>450</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,984</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,147</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,099</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,263.5</strong></td>
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*Note: this may include a duplicated headcount due to students participating in multiple services.

### Serving Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving Districts</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal Medicaid</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Writing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Health</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Development (PD)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>37</td>
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### Serving District Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving District Staff</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development – Total Participants</td>
<td>982 educators</td>
<td>1,626 educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development – Total NRC-PD Sessions PD</td>
<td>73 sessions</td>
<td>111 sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development – Class Hours Offered PD</td>
<td>321 hours</td>
<td>532 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Development – Total Training Hours PD</td>
<td>7,058 hours</td>
<td>11,624 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Health Training</td>
<td>235 educators</td>
<td>480 educators</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavior and Education Consultation</td>
<td>107 educators</td>
<td>97 educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistive Technology Consultation</td>
<td>110 educators</td>
<td>98 educators</td>
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</table>

*PD Does not include use of NRCC by outside organizations.

### Serving Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving Families</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Network</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior and Education Consult (direct service &amp; consults)</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Support Group</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Work Program</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Health Initiative – consultations to families</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>2,030</td>
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Section 1: Governance and General Information

Financial Information

FY16 Revenue: $15,586,632

- Transportation: $4,148,246 (27%)
- Special Ed Programs: $5,462,169 (35%)
- Therapy: $1,111,189 (7%)
- Behavioral Consult: $485,394 (3%)
- ELL: $593,665 (4%)
- Prof Dev: $118,497 (1%)
- District Staff: $210,591 (1%)
- Grants: $1,792,584 (11%)
- Pension Benefits: $1,530,791 (10%)
- Medicaid, Interest & Donations: $133,506 (1%)

FY16 Expenses: $15,490,847*

- Instruction: $7,247,776 (47%)
- Other Educational Services: $3,084,123 (20%)
- Taxes/Fringe & Rent: $3,041,997 (20%)
- Administration: $1,136,978 (7%)
- Capital Outlay**: $54,851
- Debt Service: $557,666 (4%)
- Operations and Maintenance: $367,456 (2%)
- Instruction: $7,247,776 (47%)

** excludes capital outlay of $711,305 approved in FY15 for FY16
* excludes refunds to member districts of $50,000
Section 2: Programs and Services

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

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

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

North River School

North River School’s DESE approved public day program is a highly structured individualized therapeutic learning environment for students in grades 5-12, based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, small group instructional settings and multiple vocational school-to-work opportunities. The therapeutic milieu includes counseling services, a behavior management system based on the principles of collaborative problem solving and natural consequences, functional behavioral assessments, and behavior intervention.

A strong home-school relationship is also a critical and an essential part of the program’s success. North River School assists students in developing the social/emotional, behavioral and academic skills needed to successfully return to their sending schools. Students receive academic credits toward graduation from their own school districts by completing the course of studies provided at North River School and passing MCAS. North River School provides vocational programming to students in a number of career preparatory areas.

North River Middle School provides a caring environment where students can learn in a safe and comfortable setting. The schedule helps students earn academic credits including core curriculum, life-skills, health and physical education, art, vocational exploration, transition skills and 8th grade transition to high school.

NRS continued the success of the Transition Skills Enhancement Program with assessments including rubrics-based report card, in-depth narrative assessment, and individual student competency profile. The program is designed for students who have completed their senior year but for a variety of reasons are deferring their diploma. This program enhances and develops transition skills necessary for life after high school. Past students have completed this program and received their delayed diploma.

North River Middle/High School
525 Beech Street, Rockland, MA  02370
Phone: 781/871-8320
Stephen Folino – Principal
Learning Center Programs

The **Learning Center for Students with Multiple Disabilities** serves students ages 3 to 22. Many of the students are in wheelchairs and require assistance with activities of daily living. Students frequently require communication programs to assist them with expressive and receptive language skills. Often, the students have visual or hearing impairments. Classrooms follow a functional, experiential curriculum based upon the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Significant Disabilities (2013). Classrooms are located in member district public schools allowing for placement of students in buildings with similarly aged peers and for access to age appropriate thematic materials. An Integrated Related Services Approach is used; therapists provide individual and small-group services as written in Individual Education Programs, and classroom staff applies recommended therapeutic strategies throughout the week in order to enhance learning.

The **Learning Center for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder** has open enrollment to serve students who would benefit from an integrated, eclectic approach that includes Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) techniques, such as Discrete Trial Teaching and Behavior Support Plans, Picture Exchange Communication Systems, and a total communication approach. The goal of the program is to enhance academics, social skills, behavioral regulation, self-care, and play/leisure skills. Instruction, aligned with the Massachusetts Common Core Curriculum Frameworks, is provided to students at their instructional level. An ABA Specialist is an ongoing member of the classroom team. Home/school behavioral support and consultation is available and provided through a team approach that utilizes the skills of the specialist most familiar with the area of need.

**Learning Centers for Students with Multiple Disabilities**

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

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

Kate Stevens – Coordinator

- **Learning Center Multiple Disabilities (Early Childhood 1 & 2, Primary)**
  - **Learning Center Autism & Developmental Disabilities (Primary)**
    - Maquan Elementary School (Rooms 102, 104, 106, 108), 38 School Street, Hanson, MA 02341
    - Phone: 781/618-7290

- **Learning Center Multiple Disabilities (Elementary)**
  - **Learning Center Autism & Developmental Disabilities (Elementary)**
    - Indian Head Elementary School (Rooms 101, 107), 726 Indian Head Street, Hanson, MA 02341
    - Phone: 781/618-7065

- **Learning Center Multiple Disabilities (Middle/High School)**
  - **Learning Center Autism & Developmental Disabilities Middle School**
    - Gordon Mitchell Middle School (Room 310), 435 Central Street, East Bridgewater, MA 02333
    - Phone: 508/378-0488

- **Learning Center Autism & Developmental Disabilities High School**
  - Whitman Middle School (Rooms 100 and 101), 101 Corthell Avenue, Whitman, MA 02382
    - Phone: 781/618-7590

- **Learning Center Autism & Developmental Disabilities High School**
  - East Bridgewater High School (Room 129), 43 Plymouth Street, East Bridgewater, MA 02333
    - Phone: 508/378-8214 x1290

- **Learning Center Autism & Developmental Disabilities High School**
  - West Bridgewater High School (Room 216), 155 West Center Street, West Bridgewater, MA 02379
    - Phone: 508/894-1220 x1216
Independence Academy (IA) is an alternative multi-service secondary school serving adolescents who struggle with issues related to substance abuse and dependence. The program is one of only five recovery high schools in Massachusetts. We enroll students from the southeast region of Massachusetts that have struggled with substance abuse and who understand that their greatest opportunity for success is in an environment that understands and focuses on their recovery and emotional well-being.

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

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

Independence Academy staff strives to provide students with positive adult role models and social supports in and out of school. Our school provides recovery programming and education that is interwoven into their daily routine. Students participate in both group and individual recovery work during the school day. Our counseling staff works closely with each student and their family/support network to educate, support and cultivate resources within the community with the ultimate goal of continued and lifelong sobriety.

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

Completing its fourth full academic year in 2016, Independence Academy has enrolled over 80 students from over 30 different communities. Since opening in January 2012 the school has now helped more than 20 students realize their goal of obtaining their high school diploma.

Independence Academy
460R Belmont Street, Brockton, MA  02301
Phone: 508/510-4091
Ryan Morgan – Principal
Section 2: Programs and Services

Community Based Vocational Program

The North River Collaborative Community-Based Vocational Program serves students 16-22 years old who are in need of vocational and transitional training. The Community Based Vocational Program opens new doors for students attending the program. For many, this is their first introduction to the world of work. Students are matched to appropriate community-based worksites for job training. Students work as interns one or more days per week, accompanied by a qualified job coach who remains on site throughout the day. Students are well supervised, but are encouraged to enhance their independence in their respective community-based vocational sites. The job coach oversees the quality of all work and expands responsibilities as students progress. Students are evaluated by their job coaches and program coordinator regarding work readiness skills and work performance skills.

Vocational/Transitional Assessments include Interest Inventories, Adaptive Behavior Scales, Functional Skills Assessments, Work Assessments and Self Determination Scales. Transportation to and from the program is provided in NRC vehicles by NRC job coaches with 7-D licenses who are trained to work supportively with the students of the Community-Based Vocational Program. Established sites for Vocational Exploration include: Animal Care, Warehouse Supports, Maintenance, Food Service, Collating, Customer Service and Television and Radio Production.

Community Based Vocational Services

East Bridgewater Junior/Senior High School,
143 Plymouth Street, East Bridgewater, MA 02333
Phone: 781/871-1589
Moira Leon – Coordinator

Summer Work and Learning Program

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

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

Summer Work and Learning

The Almshouse, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370
Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 114)
Edwin Walsh – Assistant Executive Director
Behavior Consultation and Education Services

Behavior Consultation and Education Services includes extensive training and ongoing support in the area of Developmental Disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Applied Behavior Analysis treatment and intervention approaches, community and school based support services. Staff has extensive experience in service delivery to students with ASD, other disabilities and typical students experiencing difficulties with behaviors that interfere with learning and social relationships. In addition to responsibilities of assessments and program design, Behavior Consultants (BCBAs) provide supervision and training to Behavior Service Providers and Assistant Behavior Consultants working directly with students, staff, families and community partners.

With input from other professionals, staff members focus on facilitating the development of each student’s skills in the area of communication, social/emotional, academics, receptive and expressive language, leisure/play, adaptive behavior, and activities of daily living. A strong emphasis is placed on the use of research based Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) strategies including Discrete Trial Instruction (DTI) and Natural Environment Teaching. Strategies and techniques incorporated may include: visual supports, social stories, and behavior support plans. When needed, home based services provide parents and other caregivers training in techniques to teach, promote, and manage skills and behaviors at home and in the community.

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

Behavior Consultation and Education Services
The Almshouse, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA  02370
Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 107)
Clarice Doliber – Coordinator

Therapy Services

North River Collaborative provides Occupational, Physical and Speech Therapy Services within 34 public school buildings in nine school districts and to its Learning Center for Students with Multiple Disabilities, and Learning Center for Students with Autism and Developmental Disabilities programs. Therapy staff is dedicated to excellence in student service, committed to facilitating optimal curriculum access to all in our care, and to providing high quality consultation services to parents and educational staff in order to maximize student success. At each location, therapists are integral members of a multidisciplinary team which facilitates student progress through coordination of services. More than 24 licensed Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapists, most with advanced degrees and certifications, participate in monthly meetings and numerous professional development activities in order to enhance knowledge and stay current with the latest research. Therapists provide each student with service guided by the latest developments in therapeutic, rehabilitative, and educational practice.

Therapy Services
The Almshouse, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370
Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 107)
Clarice Doliber – Coordinator
Section 2: Programs and Services

Services for Students who are Visually Impaired

Teachers of the Visually Impaired

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

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

Orientation and Mobility

North River Collaborative provides consultative and direct services to students with visual impairments from an Orientation and Mobility Instructor. NRC works with member/non-member school districts to provide itinerant Orientation and Mobility services to students with visual impairments who are attending district schools.

Services provided by the Orientation and Mobility instructor may include: Functional Travel Assessments, consultation to staff and parent/guardian, travel instruction in school and community settings, compensatory skill development (e.g., low vision aids, use of other senses, spatial relationships) and life skills training (e.g., daily living skills, social interaction skills, recreation, and leisure).

Vision Services

The Almshouse, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370
Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 107)
Clarice Doliber – Coordinator

Social Work Internship Program

NRC’s Social Work Internship Program provides school-based social work services to help students and their families face a complexity of challenges in order to foster competency in all areas central to children’s lives – academic, social and behavioral. The consultation process establishes and implements interventions to meet students’ needs. Services include: individual and group counseling, crisis interventions, whole-class presentations, and consultations with teachers. This enhances the teachers’ effectiveness related to social/emotional development of children, and facilitates a functional “bridge” relationship between home and school. The interns attend Bridgewater State University, Boston University, Simmons College, Wheelock College, and Simmons online program.

Social Work Internship Program
The Almshouse, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370
Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 302)
Beth Litchfield – Coordinator
**Family Services**

**NRC Family Network**

The **NRC Family Network** recognizes that parents are their child’s first and most influential teacher. All of the activities are offered with the goal of helping parents build a warm, nurturing family that will support the child’s social and emotional growth. NRC Family Network helps parents enrich their child’s “learning through play” experiences by providing opportunities for parents and children to engage in creative play endeavors. Education workshops and information about local resources are provided to help parents understand the developmental needs of their children and enhance their ability to meet those needs. Additionally, family recreational activities and discussion and support groups help parents build connections with other parents so they can support each other in their parenting journey.

All of the programs are free and are held at the Family Center in Abington and at a variety of community locations in our member districts including local libraries, the Maquan Elementary School in Hanson, and the Central Square Congregational Church in Bridgewater. Our bi-monthly newsletter includes parenting tips, information about local resources, and a calendar of events. Newsletters are emailed directly to families on the e-mail list; paper copies are available at local libraries, Head Start programs, and WIC offices. The NRC Family Network is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care’s Coordinated Family and Community Engagement grant program through a contract with Self Help Inc. and Triumph Inc.

**NRC Family Network**
North School, 171 Adams Street, Abington, MA 02351
Phone: 781/681-9736
Leslie Reilly – Coordinator

**Teachers of English Language Learners**

North River Collaborative provides **English Language Learner (ELL)** services to districts. The teachers offer assistance to students, whose first language is not English, in the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. Referrals are made through the district’s ELL Coordinator.

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

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

NRC’s English Language Learner Program currently has seven ELL teachers and continues to grow to meet the communities’ growing needs. Our dedicated staff members keep current with knowledge in their field by participating in high quality professional development. ELL teachers participate in monthly staff meetings to facilitate communication and assist the classroom teacher in meeting the needs of students.

**English Language Learning (ELL) Services**
The Almshouse, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370
Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 107)
Clarice Doliber – Coordinator
Section 2: Programs and Services

Professional Development

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

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

Professional development training and support are provided to NRC and district educators in order to:

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

North River Conference Center
525 Beech Street, Rockland, MA 02370
NRCC Phone: 781/616-6086
Almshouse Office PD Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 102)
Deborah White – Coordinator

Southeast Transportation Network

The Southeast Transportation Network serves more than 450 students in 28 school districts of North River Collaborative, Pilgrim Area Collaborative, and South Shore Educational Collaborative. Given the fiscal challenges and the growing concern for student safety, North River Collaborative is coordinating this program to obtain cost effective, quality transportation for students with special needs who attend public and private special education programs in the greater Boston/Southeastern Massachusetts region.

Through the Network, NRC began providing transportation with the opening of school in September 2007. In-Service training is provided annually for all staff. on topics such as: Disability Awareness, First Aid/CPR, Defensive Driving, Securing Wheel Chairs, Bus Evacuation, and Winter Driving.

Southeast Transportation Network
The Almshouse, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370
North School, 171 Adams Street, Abington, MA 02351
Jones School, 137 Walnut Street, Stoughton, MA 02072
Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 160)
Ann Terrill – Coordinator
Collaborative Grant Applications

NRC has spearheaded the procurement of grant and foundation funding through agencies such as the Massachusetts Departments of Public Health, Massachusetts Department of Education, Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, the United States Department of Education, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, the Massachusetts Mechanics Charitable Association, and other public/private foundations and organizations. Below is a list of successful grants written and implemented by North River Collaborative on behalf of member districts:

**Elementary Counseling Grant**

An USED Elementary and Secondary Counseling Grant to support NRC’s “Behavioral Health Initiative” (BHI). BHI targets over 8,400 children (grades K–6), in 20 elementary schools across eight school districts. In response to critical needs for increased mental health services, behavioral interventions, and teachers’ mental health knowledge and skills, BHI provides a comprehensive three-tiered system of school-based services through three primary goals for targeted schools.

1. Increase the number of school social workers from 2.5 to 7.7 thereby increasing from 23% to 70% of the recommended social worker ratios;
2. Improve the school learning environment and increase safety by decreasing the number of disciplinary referrals by 25% through educator training and student interventions; and
3. Provide training and consultation to educators in the targeted schools to increase their capacity to meet the mental health needs of students.

Outcomes of BHI include increased access to mental health services for students to improve social-emotional functioning, and decreased disciplinary referrals. BHI supported schools to become places where positive behavioral strategies proactively address safety and disciplinary issues, where students have access to counseling by social workers, and where parents and teachers work together to benefit students. For the most complex issues, BHI staff help students resolve issues in a proactive, flexible manner extending case consultation, case management, and supports linked with community agencies to support families.

**Mass Commission for the Blind**

The VIP After-School Program serves South Shore students ages 5-14 who are legally blind and registered with Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. This program provides opportunities for students to socialize with other visually impaired peers. Activities such as horseback riding, swimming and exercise as well as special events (concerts, theater, and museums) are scheduled for after school, school vacations, and weekends. Professional staff (Teacher of the Visually Impaired) and volunteers provide a staff-to-student ratio of 1:4, maintaining a safe learning experience. The program is provided at no cost to school districts and the students they serve thanks to a contract that NRC has with the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

**Focus on Early Literacy**

NRC led districts from the Southeast Region to partner together and implement a curriculum through DESE’s Focus on Early Literacy grants (nearly $350,000). Forty-two full-day kindergarten teachers from eight schools in seven districts participated in four days of intensive professional development and implemented at least one ten-week unit. Seventy-two other educators participated in trainings overviewing components of Focus on K2. The project promoted a comprehensive, developmentally-appropriate, child-centered approach to early literacy through professional development, technical assistance/coaching, and curriculum materials. This program features a balance of active and teacher-directed learning of academic content and skills; integration of subject areas; authentic assessments based on observation; and a collaborative approach to planning by classroom staff, specialists and administrators.
Section 2: Programs and Services

**Title III Consortium Grant**

Through the support of the Title III Consortium Grant, districts are collaborating to improve services for Limited English Proficient students. Funding supported three key strategies: supporting parent/family communication, tutoring for ELL students, and professional development.

- **Parent support.** Parent support was provided in the format of a multicultural parent/child playgroup for families of young children for whom English was not the first language. In addition, parents were offered an opportunity to develop English language to support the development of their son/daughter’s English language learning.
- **Tutoring.** ELL students receive individual and small-group tutoring before/after school.
- **Professional development.** Teachers and administrators received the following training:
  - Introduction to the WIDA ELD Standards
  - Building Academic Language and Competencies in Non-core, Elective, and Specialty Courses
  - Academic English for ELLs in the Talk, Texts, Tasks of MS/HS Math and Science Classrooms
  - From Awareness to Best Practice: Tiered Instruction, Intervention, and the Special Education Referral Process for ELLs
  - Practical Approach to Teaching ELL through Sheltered English Instruction (SEI)
  - Administrator Support for Instruction of English Language Learners (ELL) through SEI

**General Education Supports and Services**

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

- Teachers of English Language Learners (ELL)
- Mental Health professionals (Behavioral Health Initiative Grant)
- Social Work Interns
- Early literacy instruction (Early Literacy Grant)
- Professional Development
- Instructional Technology Integration Specialist

**Clinical Evaluation Services**

North River School added a school psychologist to their program this year. The psychologist enhances the quality of Functional Behavioral Assessments provided by the school to assist teachers to understand student needs, leading to effective Behavior Intervention Plans. In addition, the psychologist is able to complete psycho-educational evaluations for students enrolled in the program upon request.

**Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement**

School Based Medicaid Billing has become a way for cities and towns to recoup dollars for money spent on special education programs if a student is receiving special education services and is eligible for Mass Health. Direct Services Claiming provides school districts an opportunity to be reimbursed for furnishing medically necessary services to eligible Mass Health students pursuant to an eligible IEP. NRC is familiar with both school and town governance and aware of confidentiality and privacy issues, including HIPAA and FERPA, as well as the necessary record keeping required by districts, towns, and the Office of Medicaid. An annual Cost Report reconciles 12 months of direct service and administrative actual cost.

**Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement**

The Almshouse, 198 Spring Street, Rockland, MA 02370
Phone: 781/878-6056 (Ext. 105)
Michael Laliberte – Director of Business and Finance
Section 3: Cost Effectiveness of Programs and Services

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

**North River School**

North River School’s tuition is $21,501 less than the average private school for a similar student profile.

**Learning Center for Students with Multiple Disabilities**

The Learning Center for Students with Multiple Disabilities’ tuition is $14,543 less than the average private school tuition for a similar student profile.
Section 3: Cost Effectiveness of Programs and Services

**Learning Center for Students with Autism**
The Learning Center for Students with Autism tuitions are $12,414 less than the average private school tuition for a similar student profile.

**Indepedence Academy**
North River Collaborative’s Independence Academy allows multiple school districts to provide a comprehensive Recovery High School alternative program to at-risk students with substance abuse and dependence diagnoses. This school is a regional program and allows school districts to access services that would not otherwise be available to their students. Funding for this program is provided through shared contributions by the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the local school districts. The DPH provides funding in the amount of $500,000 annually; the school districts’ contribution is the average per pupil expenditure as determined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. For a portion of this fiscal year, North River received $184,000 additional funding from the Department of Public Health to support transportation to/from school and extended day/year programming for students.

**Community Based Vocational Program**
North River Collaborative’s Community Based Vocational Program allows multiple school districts to provide a comprehensive program to students with disabilities by pooling resources and students in this program. A broad range of transition services are provided to each student and placement is available in 14 different job sites. If each district provided this program on its own, the range of job sites would need to be less extensive, student choice would be reduced, and options would be limited. By bringing these students into one collaborative program, the ability to place a student in a job site that matches his/her interest and skill level is highly enhanced.

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

The Behavior Consultation and Education Services program supports districts to address the needs of students with autism or other disabilities that require ABA services. The program increased district capacity and they report cost savings from including students in their own schools rather than placing them out of the district.

The hourly rate comparisons include private agencies that provide services to the NRC districts. The rates are provided by special education directors as costs they incurred. Some comparative rates date back to 2013 as no updated data was available. As shown below, the hourly rate for behavioral consultation services is $36 less than that of the average of other providers. In addition, there is considerable administrative support to the district to ensure that services match the needs of the students.

Therapy Services

The hourly rate comparisons include private agencies that provide services in the NRC region. As it was challenging to gather these rates, the chart below includes comparisons to rates that go back as far as 2011. The hourly rate for therapy services is considerably below that of the average of other providers even when older rates are compared. In addition, NRC provides considerable administrative support to the districts to ensure that services match the needs of the students.

Occupational Therapy Services

The Occupational Therapy Services hourly rate is $2.45 less than the average private agency rate which member district typically use for a similar student profile. Thus, if a district purchased the service from NRC for 5 days/week for the year, there is a savings of $2,138 per year.
Section 3: Cost Effectiveness of Programs and Services

Physical Therapy Services

The Physical Therapy Services hourly rate is $2.34 less than the average private agency rate which member districts typically use for a similar student profile. Thus, if a district purchased the service from NRC for 5 days/week for the year, there is a savings of $2,965 per year.

![Physical Therapy FY16 Hourly Rate Comparison](chart.png)

Speech Therapy Services

The Speech Therapy Services hourly rate is $2.16 less than the average private agency rate which member districts typically use for a similar student profile. Thus, if a district purchased the service from NRC for 5 days/week for the year, there is a savings of $2,766 per year.

![Speech Therapy FY16 Hourly Rate Comparison](chart.png)

Vision Services

The hourly rate comparisons include private agencies that provide services in the geographic region of North River Collaborative. The hourly rate for vision services is considerably below that of the average of other providers. One comparative rate is from 2014 as no updated data was available. The Vision Services hourly rate is $25.42 less than the average private agency rate which member districts typically use for a similar student profile. Thus, if a district purchased the service from NRC for 1 day/week for the year, there is a savings of $6,406 per year.
Section 3: Cost Effectiveness of Programs and Services

The Orientation and Mobility Services hourly rate is $27.67 less than the average private agency rate which member districts typically use for a similar student profile. Thus, if a district purchased the service from NRC for 1 day/week for the year, there is a savings of $6,973 per year.

![Vision Services FY16 Hourly Rate Comparison](image1)

**NRC Family Network**

North River Collaborative provides services to families with children birth through age five, at no cost. The NRC Family Network is funded by the MA Department of Early Education and Care’s Coordinated Family and Community Engagement grant program through a sub-contract with Self Help Inc. and Triumph Inc.

**Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement**

NRC coordinates the School Based Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement Program for member districts and many non-member school districts. Since the Collaborative began providing this service in 1994, more than $27 million has been returned to the participating cities and towns. In FY16, approximately $1.3 million dollars were returned to 18 districts.

**Southeast Transportation Network**

The Southeast Transportation Network provides transportation for special needs and other students as a cost effective service for districts. In most cases, NRC’s prices are given to districts on individual routes, and the districts choose to contract for only the routes which are cost effective when compared with prices from other providers. In other cases, North River has provided entire portions of districts’ transportation programs such as all in-district special education services, or all pre-school services. Thus, consolidated administrative and other supports are provided for the districts, resulting in efficiencies within their administration. For example, when North River Collaborative assumed responsibility for in-district special needs transportation in Whitman-Hanson, the district reported a savings of over $100,000 and this year it was over $96,000. NRC assumed responsibility in FY16 for more than half of Stoughton’s special needs transportation, the district reported a savings of over $50,000. Overall, North River’s average cost per vehicle per day for in-district and out-of-district is $180.77 for FY16, compared with the $215 state-wide average\(^1\). By providing appropriate ridership on vehicles (average 6.0 students per day), economies of scale are achieved. North River’s enrollment has continued to increase each and every year since inception in 2007, providing solid market driven evidence that school districts find its transportation cost efficient and highly reliable.

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1 Cavanaugh, Colleen A., Pupil Transportation Consulting, Inc., “Special Education Transportation Report 2012-13”
General Education Supports and Services

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

**Teachers of English Language Learners.** Some school districts in North River Collaborative have low numbers of students for whom English is not their first language. It is difficult for districts to maintain qualified teachers on their staff to address these less than predictable needs when there is no reasonable assurance of a job from year to year due to this fluidity of need. Because the North River staff is shared in an itinerant nature, school districts can be relieved of the costs of staff if needs change through the year(s). By contracting this service through North River, the districts can maintain that year-to-year fluidity and do not incur unneeded costs. In addition, the cohort of teachers who work through the Collaborative, along with their program coordinator, provide combined oversight and administrative support saving the districts some of the administration and coordination costs for these services.

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

**Professional Development.** Professional development offered through NRC is cost effective for districts.

- Grant funding supports PD for district and NRC staff. During FY16 a total of 532 hours of training were offered; 37.2% of the hours were supported through grant funding (e.g., BHI, ELL/SEI, Focus on K2).
- High-quality programs are offered that would be cost prohibitive for districts to offer individually. NRC programs allow districts to share the expense and enroll the number of staff they need to send, thus controlling their costs.
- Specific needs of local districts are addressed through the design and selection of programs (e.g., mental health, technology integration, educator evaluation, ELL/SEI).
- District capacity is expanded by NRC organizing appropriate and responsive training that is easily accessible for their staff members, usually at a lower rate than other public offerings.

**Collaborative Grant Applications.** North River Collaborative has a history of successfully implementing major federal/state programs to expand the capacity of member school districts at no cost. During FY15, the Collaborative was awarded funding from US Department of Education; the Massachusetts Departments of Public Health, Early Education and Care, Elementary and Secondary Education, and private foundations. The total amount awarded on behalf of districts equals **1,547,927**. Specific grants include: Recovery High School (Independence Academy), Elementary Counseling Grant (Behavioral Health Initiative), Family Network, Mass Commission for the Blind, Focus on Early Literacy, and Title III Consortium Grant. As a result, districts received the following grant funded supports and services:

- Transportation and extended day/year programming for students in recovery;
- 5.2 Mental Health professionals (Behavioral Health Initiative Grant);
- Professional Development in mental health;
- Parent support for families with young children;
- After school/weekend recreational program for students with visual impairment;
- Professional Development, coaching and materials for Early literacy instruction; and
- Tutoring, professional development and parent support for English Language Learners.
**Section 4: Progress Toward Achieving NRC’s Purpose and Objectives**

**Purpose**

The purpose of the Collaborative is to provide intensive educational programs and services for students with disabilities; to provide professional development to educators; to provide related services to students with disabilities in member and non-member districts, and to provide other high quality cost effective services to meet the changing needs of member districts. **North River Collaborative has been successful in achieving this purpose during FY16 as outlined below.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intensive educational programs and services for students with disabilities</th>
<th>NRC continued to provide specialized programs as noted in the sections of this report describing programs beginning on page 6. Student enrollment in programs is provided on page 4.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional development to educators</td>
<td>NRC continued to provide professional development to member and non-member districts (see pages 13, 21, and 34).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Related services to students with disabilities in member and non-member districts | NRC provided therapy services to over 462 students in 8 member and 7 non-member districts (see pages 18-19, and 32-33).  
NRC provided vision services (see pages 11 and 19-20).  
NRC provided behavior consultation and education services to 97 educators and 96 families, in 3 member and 3 non-member districts (see pages 10, 18, and 33).  
NRC provided transportation services for over 450 students in 6 member and 24 non-member districts (see pages 13, 20, and 43). |
| Other high quality cost effective services to meet the changing needs of member districts | NRC provided teachers of English Language Learners (ELL) services to 96 students in 4 districts (see pages 12, 21, and 38).  
NRC provided LICSWs who supervised 18 masters-level social work interns to 5 districts; supporting 444 students (see pages 11, 21, and 42).  
NRC provided a recovery high school (Independence Academy) for 18 students with diagnosed substance abuse and dependence (see pages 8, 17, and 39).  
NRC continued to seek grant-funding on behalf of NRC and member districts. NRC received federal, state funding in the amount of $1,547,927 to serve the districts and $38,950 in support of NRC programs (see pages 14-15, 21, and 36).  
NRC continued to provide Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement billing for 18 school districts, returning approximately $1.3 million (see pages 15, 20, and 43). |
Overview
North River Collaborative surveyed member district Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Special Education Directors, Curriculum Coordinators, and the Board of Directors about their satisfaction with NRC programs. Fifteen members responded to the survey representing each of NRC’s member districts.

Are our member districts satisfied?
Overall satisfaction was assessed by combining responses to three questions: overall satisfaction, intention to recommend NRC to others, and continuing to use of NRC as a preferred provider. District ratings overall and by question, with “7” equal to “completely agree,” are displayed below.

Of 14 responses, 57% rated NRC at 7 points, 36% at 6 points and 7% at 5 points. The average is 6.5 points.

Of 14 responses, 64% rated NRC at 7 points, 29% at 6 points, and 7% at 5 points. The average is 6.57 points.

Of 13 responses, 77% rated NRC at 7 points, 8% at 6 points, and 15% at 5 points. The average is 6.62 points.
How satisfied are districts with NRC quality?

In a series of questions, member districts rated NRC in three broad areas of quality: responsiveness to districts’ needs, overall quality of programs and services, and receiving the anticipated end result. District ratings averages by question, are displayed below on a scale of 1-7. Comments are shown in italics text.

NRC member districts’ ratings on their satisfaction related to the responsiveness of NRC to districts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionalism of NRC staff</th>
<th>6.94</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competence of NRC personnel</td>
<td>6.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability of NRC personnel</td>
<td>6.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility of NRC personnel</td>
<td>6.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness of NRC personnel</td>
<td>6.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow through of NRC personnel</td>
<td>6.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity and effectiveness of communication</td>
<td>6.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timelines of NRC programs/services</td>
<td>6.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience of NRC programs/services location</td>
<td>6.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility of implementing NRC programs/services</td>
<td>6.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- NRC leadership and staff are professional, dedicated, and committed to making NRC a valuable resource to districts. NRC is a great go-to resource for our district and for me in my role.

NRC member districts’ ratings on the quality of NRC programs and services:

- Of the 15 responses, 67% rated NRC at 7 points and 33% at 6 points. The average rating is 6.67 points.

NRC member districts’ ratings on their satisfaction in receiving the anticipated end result of the NRC programs/services:

| Address low-incidence student needs | 6.62 |
| Support families                    | 6.67 |
| Deliver therapeutic supports to students | 6.54 |
| Prepare students to be college and career ready | 6.31 |
| Provide cost-effective programs and services | 6.60 |
| Make services available in district | 6.73 |
| Increase professional knowledge and skills for district staff | 6.50 |
| Improve classroom instructional practices to increase student learning | 6.25 |
| Increase capacity of district       | 6.38 |
| Enable school or district to meet state mandates | 6.50 |

- NRC is always on top of all initiatives and mandatory requirements set by DESE and personnel share their knowledge with the participating districts.
How do NRC programs and services address district needs?

NRC member districts’ ratings on NRC programs and services addressing important district needs:

Of the 15 respondents, 53% rated NRC at 7 points, 33% at 6 points, and 13% at 5 points. The average rating is 6.40 points.

NRC member districts’ ratings that NRC responds to emerging needs with new programs and services:

Of the 15 respondents, 53% rated NRC at 7 points, 40% at 6 points, and 7% at 4 points. The average rating is 6.40 points.

NRC districts’ ratings on whether NRC programs and services are provided at a reasonable price:

Of the 15 respondents, 100% rated NRC at 6 or 7 points. The average rating is 6.8 points.
Section 4: Progress Toward Achieving NRC’s Purpose and Objectives

Objectives

The overall objectives of North River Collaborative Agreement include to:

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

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

North River Collaborative provides programs for students with low-incidence disabilities in the least restrictive environment including: social-emotional, multiple disabilities, and autism. These programs are provided in age-appropriate public school buildings with inclusion opportunities provided. North River School is an alternative setting within the local district and works closely with school districts to align curriculum with that of sending districts to allow students to transition back to local schools when appropriate.

North River Collaborative provides services in member and non-member school districts that allow students to remain in their local community schools while receiving essential services to enhance access to the curriculum. In this way, instead of students leaving their districts, the services are brought to them and the educators that support their learning. These services include: occupational, physical and speech therapy; behavior consultation; and vision services including orientation and mobility, teacher of the visually impaired, and Braille-trained aides.

For transition-age students, North River Collaborative provides supports for students within community-based job sites through the Community Based Vocational program and Summer Work and Learning program.

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

Section 4: Progress Toward Achieving NRC’s Purpose and Objectives

NRC Programs

North River School

Program Enhancements FY16

- Served an average of 52 students from 24 districts. Four students successfully returned to their sending school districts. Nine students earned high school diplomas.
- Continued Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) for a third year. This assessment program in math and English grade 5-12 connects teachers with the power of growth data and instruction.
- Added a new school psychologist who completed sixteen (16) Interim Alternative Educational Settings (IAES) assessments.
- Hired a new vocational instructor for our new focus: horticulture/landscape design shop.
- Provided an Instructional Technology Integration Consultant as a resource and professional development trainer for our educators.
- Completed the annual student profile – a document that provides essential information regarding the students at NRS including length of stay, gender, enrollment, sending districts, ethnicity, grade, diagnosis, hospitalizations, medication and much more.
- Conducted professional development for staff in trauma sensitive schools, project based learning, student assessment, as well as Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (CPI) and CPR/First Aid.
- Established eligibility for the DESE National School Lunch Program Community Eligibility Provision that allows all students to receive free breakfast and lunch. This removes any stigma that may be attached to individual eligibility and ensures all students have access to quality nutrition.
- Reduced our numbers of suspensions.
- Hosted presentations by post graduate programs: Massasoit Community College, Peterson School, ITT Tech, and Porter and Chester Institute.
- Awarded grant from Massachusetts Mechanics for a high quality professional finish color printer for our Desk-Top Publishing shop.
- Updated website page with multi-language availability.
Parent Survey Results

North River School surveyed parents about their satisfaction with the program. Ten parents responded to the survey. Comments are shown in indented, italics text.

Are parents satisfied with their interactions with NRS staff?

Satisfaction with staff was assessed by combining responses to three questions: effective communication, problem solving, and promoting the social/emotional well being of students.

- 90% reported that there is a clear and effective system for ongoing communication between the staff (teachers, counselor, and nurse) and the parent, and 10% said it was mostly true.
  - Excellent communication.
- 90% reported that staff (teachers, counselor, nurse) is willing to work together with me to solve problems when difficulties arise, and 10% said it was mostly true.
- 90% reported that all program staff members are involved in promoting the social and emotional well being of my child, and 10% said it was mostly true.
  - Absolutely!!!!!!!!!!!!

Are parents satisfied with the IEP process at NRS?

Satisfaction with the IEP Team Process was assessed by combining responses to five questions: individualized IEP’s, effective progress, assessments, parent participation, and helpful exchange of information.

- 80% reported that their child’s Individual Education Program is based on his/her individual needs, and 20% said it was mostly true.
- 56% reported that I feel my child is making effective progress toward the goal of his/her IEP, 44% said it was mostly true.
- 90% reported that they understand the results of the child’s assessment(s), and 10% said mostly not true.
- 90% reported that at the TEAM meeting they are treated as an integral member of the TEAM and I am made to feel comfortable to ask questions, and 10% said it was mostly true.
- 90% reported that the TEAM meeting is a helpful exchange of information and ideas about my child that leads to a clear understanding on the plan for my son/daughter, and 10% said mostly true.
  - I feel as though [my daughter’s] needs are met, she is safe, receives great amounts of encouragement all of which is moving her forward in life.

Are parents satisfied with the NRS Program?

Satisfaction with the NRS program was assessed by combining responses to four questions about climate, school environment, time in academics, and transition skills.

- 70% reported the climate of the program is positive, respectful and supportive, and 30% said mostly true.
  - I couldn’t ask for a better group of staff!!!
- 80% reported the school site and equipment are maintained to ensure an environment that is healthy and safe; and 20% said mostly true.
- 60% reported that they are satisfied with the amount of time my child spends in the academic setting, and 40% said mostly true.
- 70% reported that they are satisfied with the transition skills their children learn through the vocational setting, and 30% said mostly true.
Learning Centers

Program Enhancements

- The Parent Support Group for Learning Center programs continues partnership with the BAMSI Family Support Services, and meets monthly at their Family Support Center in Hanover, MA. Activities provided this year included an in-service presented by the Department of Developmental Services in Plymouth with the following benefits and services: family support programs, after school programs, camp opportunities, respite, and transitioning at the age of 18.

- Technology upgrades have been provided for Learning Center programs included the addition of an iRover system to the Learning Center for Multiple Disabilities Early Childhood classroom.

- Provided an Instructional Technology Integration Consultant for Learning Center programs to enhance student communications and learning throughout all aspects of the student’s school day. Some of the areas addressed include providing:
  - Instruction to staff about existing technology use to enhance communication and instruction.
  - Professional development opportunities and follow-up through coaching of staff about the use of technology throughout the curriculum.
  - Classroom teams support to build capacity to meet the diverse needs of students.
  - Time saving strategies for teachers and specialists (free downloads, shortcuts, etc.)
  - Resources and materials designed to enhance technology use.
  - Enhanced technology use and integration throughout the day, and recommendations for technology repairs/upgrades/purchases.

- The Program Coordinator has worked in conjunction with the Coordinator of District Services to enhance the integration of related services into Learning Center Programs. Learning Center teachers and therapists participated in a one-day workshop presented by the Partnership for Advancement of School Service-Providers, LLC (PASS). The workshop focused on integration of related services within the functional context of the educational program in order for therapists to work collaboratively with classroom staff to develop, modify, and facilitate optimal access to the curriculum. Topics directly addressed embedding related services within the classroom: collaborative IEP development, evidence-based best practices, goals and data collection, curriculum development, measuring effectiveness and providing services within the Least Restrictive context of the school.
Parent Survey Results
The Learning Center Programs surveyed parents about their satisfaction with the program. Twelve parents responded to the survey. Comments are shown in indented, italics text.

Are parents satisfied with their interactions with staff at NRC Learning Centers?
Satisfaction with staff was assessed by combining responses to three questions: effective communication, problem solving, and promoting the social/emotional well being of students.

- 92% reported that there is a clear and effective system for ongoing communication between the staff (teachers, therapist, nurse) and the parent, 8% said it was mostly true.
  - Open door policy and very kind, attentive teachers/staff.
  - All staff meet and talk regularly to update.
- 100% reported that staff (teachers, therapist, nurse) is willing to work together with me to solve problems when difficulties arise.
  - We have been through major medical and behavioral challenges and the staff have been wonderful with accommodations and suggestions.
- 100% reported all program staff is involved in promoting their child’s social and emotional well being.

Are parents satisfied with the IEP process at NRC Learning Centers?
Satisfaction with the IEP Team Process was assessed by combining responses to five questions: individualized IEP’s, effective progress, assessments, parent participation, and helpful exchange of information.

- 100% reported that their child’s Individual Education Program is based on his/her individual needs.
- 50% reported that they feel their child is making effective progress toward the goal of his/her IEP. 42% said it was mostly true, and 8% said it was mostly not true.
- 92% reported that they understand the results of their child’s assessment(s). 8% said mostly true.
- 100% reported that at the TEAM meeting they are treated as an integral member of the TEAM and they are made to feel comfortable to ask questions.
- 100% reported that the TEAM meeting is a helpful exchange of information and ideas about their child that leads to a clear understanding on the plan for their son/daughter.

Are parents satisfied with the NRC Learning Centers Program?
Satisfaction with the NRS program was assessed by combining responses to three questions about climate, school environment, time in academics, and transition skills.

- 100% reported the climate of the program is positive, respectful and supportive.
  - The classroom is high energy, positive, loving and welcoming.
- 91% reported the school site and equipment are maintained to ensure an environment that is healthy and safe, 9% said it was mostly true.
- 92% reported that they are satisfied with the amount of time my child spends in the general education setting, 8% said it was mostly true.
Section 4: Progress Toward Achieving NRC’s Purpose and Objectives

Community Based Vocational

Program Enhancements

- Established new job sites including: Talking Information Center, and TIC Reading for the Blind at WATD, K9 Camp and Resort- Doggie Day Care, Early Learning Center Daycare, Savers, Central School.
- CBV students continue to learn job skills at: South Shore Hospital, Signature Hospital, Old Navy, Bridgewater Television Station, Subway, Ninety Nine Restaurant, Longhorn Steakhouse, PetSmart, New England Wildlife Center, Abington Sunoco, and Crown Automotive.
- Organized an internship resulting in the student obtaining her EEC Certification in June, 2017.
- Incorporated competitive Employment Exploration.
- Collaborated with South Shore Vocational Technical School to offer courses at SSVT for CBV students with the support of a Job Coach. An Auto Body course will begin in October, 2016.
- Supported a student with the transition to community college by accessing college supports.
- Held a fundraiser at the 99 Restaurant, which raised money for a field trip. Students practiced executive functioning and organizational skills while planning the details of the trip.
- Hosted an Open House for family, teachers and administrators, where each student presented a power point presentation and a tour of the classroom.
- Increased use of technology in the classroom.
- Added four new touch screen computers to the classroom.
- Established new job sites including: Subway, WATD Radio Station, PetSmart, Retail Store at the New England Wildlife Center, Bridgewater Television Station, and Texas Longhorn Steakhouse.
- Explored competitive employment with students when appropriate.

Summer Work and Learning

Program Enhancements

- New BASIC (Balance, Agility, Strength & Individual Competence) approach introduced into all health, fitness and recreation activities.
- New job sites utilized within walking distance of Rogers Middle School
- A student-centered highlight video was produced for all NRC stakeholders.
**Therapy Services**

**Program Enhancements**

- Staff attended *Collaborative Team Process: Providing Integrated Related Services* workshop and continued to enhance inclusive, participation-based services.
- Speech Pathologists enhanced use of switches with iPads with switch-ready apps to expand communication and learning opportunities for physically challenged students.
- Technology Integration Specialist: New role began this year for our Learning Center Programs which provided weekly embedded professional development supporting technology integration into the curriculum, formal in-service education, and staff resources. This role has been effective in enhancing classroom and therapist use of technology to enhance student participation.
- Developed and initiated use of Physical *Therapy Teacher Report of Function and Participation* (pre-K to grade 6).
- Occupational Therapy and Physical therapy evaluation templates revised for use in itinerant settings.
- Internships provided: Occupational Therapy Masters level students--two students from Worcester State University completed 20 hour placements, and one DPT student from Quinnipiac University completed 12-week, full-time final clinical placement. One Speech Therapy Clinical Fellow completed CFY year supervised by Speech and Language Pathologist.
- Greater use of Schoology in OT/PT departments and beginning use of Schoology in Speech/Behavior departments – including posting of evidence based research articles, therapy resources, forms, evaluation tools, PD opportunities and program specific information (Unique Learning Systems).
- Physical Therapists developed handout entitled *Incorporating Educational Objectives in Mobility Training and Motor Breaks* for staff working with students with extensive need for movement.
- Curriculum Map Guides for OT/PT facilitate increased collaboration between program staff.
- Occupational Therapists in NRC program classrooms developed student specific feeding protocols.

**Parent Survey Results**

Parents of students receiving OT and/or PT Therapy services were surveyed about their satisfaction with the quality of school-based services and communication about those services. Thirteen parents responded regarding PT services, and twenty parents responded related to OT services. *Comments are shown in indented, italics text.*
Are parents satisfied with the quality of NRC Therapy services?
Satisfaction with the services was assessed by combining responses to three questions: impact of therapy on school success, overall satisfaction and student enjoyment of sessions.

- 65% of respondents felt that OT facilitated their child’s success in the school setting. 30% mostly true, and 5% don’t know.
  - Combining life skills necessary to facilitate independence in school (e.g. tying shoes, buttoning/zippering, opening her locker) with classroom skills (cutting, coloring, spacing for letters and words and writing them between the lines, etc.) has facilitated her school success.
- 92% of respondents felt that PT facilitated their child’s success in the school setting, 8% don’t know.
  - It is making my child able to navigate through the school, helps with her safety on the playground in general.
- 65% of respondents reported that they were very satisfied with the quality of NRC OT services, 25% were satisfied, 5% were somewhat satisfied, and 5% were unsatisfied.
- 92% reported they were very satisfied with the quality of NRC PT services, 8% were somewhat satisfied.
  - I am very happy with my daughter’s therapist. She really cares about my daughter and works with us and her medical team to address her needs and help her towards her PT goals.
- 65% of respondents reported (or it appears) that their son/daughter enjoyed the OT sessions, 25% said it was mostly true, and 20% don’t know.
- 67% of respondents reported (or it appears) that their son/daughter enjoys the PT session, 25% said it was mostly true, and 8% don’t know.
  - My child is not very verbal but her progress and enthusiasm shows her love for PT.

Are parents satisfied with the communication from NRC OT and PT services?
Satisfaction with the communication from therapists was assessed by combining responses to three questions: whether the communication from the therapist was sufficient, whether home suggestions for reinforcement were provided, and whether the IEP goals were understandable and reasonable.

- 50% of respondents felt that OT communicated sufficiently about their son/daughter’s progress, 20% mostly true, 15% said mostly not true, and 10% said not at all true.
  - I truly appreciate the weekly updates that our therapist provides on what my child worked on during their session.
- 75% of respondents felt that PT communicated sufficiently about their son/daughter’s progress, 17% mostly true, and 8% said not at all true.
- 65% of respondents felt that the OTs IEP goals were understandable and reasonable, 30% mostly true, and 5% don’t know.
- 83% of respondents felt that the PTs IEP goals were understandable and reasonable, 17% mostly true.
  - He has made such wonderful gains in coordination, balance, and other age appropriate skills.
- 97% of respondents said that the OTs provided home suggestions to reinforce progress, 15% mostly true, 15% said mostly not true, 15% said not at all true, and 5% don’t know.
- 67% of respondents said that the PTs provide home suggestions to reinforce progress. 17% mostly true, 8% said mostly not true, and 8% said not at all true.
  - The notes allow us to extend the activities at home without relying on our son to explain.

Behavior Consult and Educational Services (BCES)

Program Enhancements

- Added 2.46 FTEs to meet growing district needs.
- Job descriptions and job titles revised for Educator/Lead Educator positions to Behavior Services Provider/Assistant Behavior Consultant to better define positions, qualifications and job duties.
- BCBA staff provided 3 Initial and 3 Recertification Quality Behavioral Solutions (QBS) Safety Care trainings for staff.
- BCBA staff provided mentoring hours to staff that are pursuing BCBA certification.
Objective 2: Offer a variety of quality professional development opportunities to general and special education teachers and administrators, and related service providers

Professional Development Program Offerings

A wide variety of professional development was scheduled during FY16 from workshops through graduate-level courses. Major initiatives included educational leadership and evaluation, curriculum content and pedagogy, behavior management, instructional technology integration, mental health and safe schools. A total of 1,626 educators participated in one or more training sessions. There were a total of 532 hours of instruction over 111 individual sessions. This calculates to a total of 11,624 hours of training received. In addition, the Behavior and Education Consultation staff provided training to 97 staff, and Assistive Technology Consultation was provided to 98 staff across multiple districts.

Administration, Leadership, & Evaluation
- Analyzing Teaching for Student Results
- Administrative Seminar: Legal Issues and Emotional Intelligence
- Educator Evaluation Mandated Training
- Marshall Memo Group

Instructional Strategies, Pedagogy & Curriculum
- Formative Assessment to Guide Teaching and Learning (Elementary, Secondary)
- Responsive Classroom Course
- Focus on K2: An Integrated Approach to Teaching and Learning (*funded through ESE Grant*)
- Job-Alike Study Groups: Reading Specialists; Elementary ELA, Reading & Writing; Inclusion Strategies in Regular Education

Special Education
- Integration of Related Services into the Educational Program
- Differentiating Instruction in the Inclusive Classroom
- Special Education Law and Issues for Building and District Administrators

Behavior Management
- Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) – Initial Certification and Refresher Certification
- Safety Care Behavioral Safety Specialist Training
- Responsive Classroom: Responding to Misbehavior

English Language Learning
(most funded through Title III Grant)
- From Awareness to Best Practice: Tiered Instruction, Intervention, and the Special Education Referral Process for ELLs
- Introduction to WIDA ELD Standards
- Building Academic Language and Competencies of ELLs in Non-core, Elective, and Specialty Content Courses
- Academic English for ELLs in the Talk, Texts, and Tasks of Middle and High School Mathematics and Science Classrooms
- Practical Approach to Teaching English Language Learners (ELL) through Sheltered English Instruction (SEI)
- Administrator Support for Instruction of English Language Learners through Sheltered English Instruction (SEI)

Mental Health & Wellness
(most funded with Elementary Counseling Grant)
- Positive Psychology
- Communicating with Parents
- Mental Health Issues: Identifying and Responding to Anxiety/Depression, Mood-Bipolar Disorders, and School Phobia
- Tiered System of Intervention for Students with Behavioral/Emotional Issues – Focus on Tier 1 (Grades K-6)
- Trauma Sensitive Schools (Secondary)
- Trauma Informed Care (Elementary)
- Mental Health First Aid
- CPR and First Aid
Instructional Technology Integration Specialist

This year, North River offered the support and services of an Instructional Technology Integration Specialist whose services were tailored to match the needs of participating districts.

Job-Alikes: The district technology directors met during the year. In addition, two meetings were scheduled to bring the technology directors, technology teachers and library/media specialists together to discuss common topics (i.e. Digital Citizenship and the new MA Technology Standards).

Professional Development: A major highlight of the year was providing professional development which included a variety of full-day and hybrid multi-week sessions. In the hybrid sessions, participating teachers joined a weekly online session in the evening using Google Hangout and completed several weekly online assignments using a Learning Management System.

Topics included:
- Introduction to iPads in Education
- Digital Citizenship
- Google Classroom
- Google Apps in Education
- Exploring the New DESE Technology Standards

In addition to providing technology training offered to all districts, focused trainings were also provided to districts as requested during staff professional development days for teachers and on additional times for Central Office staff.

Thank you for all the information. I look forward to putting this to work. I want to inspire my students even more!

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

Savings by NRC Programs Compared to Others

The chart below shows the savings by program to all districts by using NRC programs compared to other programs for which comparable rates were available. A discussion of how the savings were determined for each program begins on page 16 through page 21. For the analysis represented below, the amount saved per student or per hour was multiplied by the number of students served or hours contracted to determine the total savings for each NRC program. The total savings from NRC programs is $2,556,482.
Section 4: Progress Toward Achieving NRC’s Purpose and Objectives

Program Savings by Member District

The chart below shows the savings to member districts by using NRC programs compared to other programs for which comparable rates were available. A discussion of how the savings were determined for each program begins on page 16 through page 21. For the analysis represented below, the amount saved per student or per hour, was multiplied by the number of students enrolled or hours contracted by each district, to determine the total savings for each member district. The total savings for all member districts is $1,019,228.

![FY16 Savings by Member District](chart1)

![FY16 Program Savings by District](chart2)
### Objective 4: Explore and pursue grant and other funding to support identified needs of the districts

The following chart details the grant funding awarded to by North River Collaborative on behalf of school districts in FY15-FY16. Please see specific details of these grants on pages 14-15.

**Funded Grants and Contracts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grants on Behalf of Districts:</th>
<th>FY15</th>
<th>FY16</th>
<th>Grant continues through</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recovery High School (Independence Academy)</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>$640,000</td>
<td>June 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSAC</td>
<td>$59,900</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Network</td>
<td>$46,364</td>
<td>$46,364</td>
<td>annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Commission for the Blind</td>
<td>$35,929</td>
<td>$35,929</td>
<td>June 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title III Consortium Grant</td>
<td>$36,078</td>
<td>$61,305</td>
<td>annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Literacy Grant</td>
<td>$115,067</td>
<td>$349,668</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDM Leadership Grant</td>
<td>$29,999</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>June 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Health Initiative Grant</td>
<td>$366,605</td>
<td>$364,661</td>
<td>August 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Grants for Districts</td>
<td>$1,189,942</td>
<td>1,547,927</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grants to support NRC programs:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Ed Program Grant</td>
<td>$1,630</td>
<td>$1,060</td>
<td>annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Mechanics</td>
<td>$5,375</td>
<td>$31,270</td>
<td>annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DESE Nutrition Grant</td>
<td></td>
<td>$6,620</td>
<td>annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Grants for NRC</td>
<td>$7,005</td>
<td>$38,950</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Grants</strong></td>
<td>1,196,947</td>
<td>1,586,877</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

North River Collaborative provides a variety of cooperative programs to support low-incidence needs of students including: English Learners, behavioral health, and substance abuse. North River Collaborative provides ELL and social work services in member and non-member school districts that allow students to remain in their local community schools while receiving essential services to enhance access to the curriculum. Independence Academy is an alternative setting for students with diagnosed substance abuse disorders, which works closely with school districts to align curriculum with that of sending districts to allow students to transition back to local schools when appropriate.

North River Collaborative also provides cooperative services to school districts including Instructional Technology Integration Consultation, Municipal Medicaid reimbursement, and special education transportation.

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

Program Enhancements
- Added 2.46 FTEs to meet growing district needs
- Curriculum materials outline completed; additional textbooks obtained to improve continuity of instruction through grade levels; additional assessment tools purchased
- Enhanced ELL Resources component of online leveled reading program, Reading A-Z, purchased for staff use.
- Student progress report based on WIDA created.
- Title III grant obtained and provided funding for tutoring, professional development and literacy materials. Grant also supported implementation of a 10 week literacy playgroup for young children and parents for whom English is not their first language and a series of twelve Adult English classes to facilitate English literacy skills of the parents of students in participating districts.

Parent Survey Results
The ELL program surveyed parents about their satisfaction. Four of the parents responded to the survey. Comments are shown in indented, italics text.

Are parents satisfied with their interactions with ELL teachers?
Satisfaction with staff was assessed by combining responses to three questions: effective communication, problem solving, and promoting the social/emotional well being of students. It should be noted that the survey was translated for those parents who speak Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. All responses are from parents of students who have been receiving ELL services for 1 year or less.
- 25% reported that there is sufficient communication with parents, and 50% said it was mostly true, and 25% said they do not know.
  - [The teacher] routinely speaks with me via emails, meetings, or phone calls.
- 25% of respondents said that the teachers provided home suggestions to reinforce progress in learning English, 50% said it was not at all true, and 25% said they do not know.
  - Most definitely. [The teacher] provides me with many ideas for reinforcing [our daughter’s] progress. She provides worksheets, projects, pictures, books and other great learning tools.

Are parents satisfied with their quality of instruction from ELL teachers?
- 75% of respondents reported that their son/daughter enjoyed the ELL sessions, and 25% said it was mostly true.
  - [My daughter] loves to learn and enjoys the ELL sessions.
  - She loves the English classes
- 75% of respondents felt that ELL support facilitated their child’s progress in school, 25% said it was mostly true.
  - The progress I have witnessed in the last six months has been amazing. My daughter is eager to learn and excited to be in school.
- 100% of respondents felt that satisfied overall with the ELL program.

How have the ELL services been most helpful?
- Ways ELL services have been helpful:
  - They have helped to reinforce my daughter’s transition to this country. ELL has given her confidence to learn. ELL has helped her to enjoy being in school and learning new ideas.


**Independence Academy**

**Program Enhancements**

- Twenty-seven students enrolled during 2015-2016. We ended the school year with 24 students of which 13 had spent longer than 8 months with us.
- Two students received their diplomas through finishing their high school careers at Independence Academy in 2015-2016. Two other seniors graduated from their local high schools after having spent several years enrolled at IA.
- For the second year in a row, over 20 students participated in the after-school P.A.S.S. (Positive Alternative to School Suspension) program which services students who have alcohol/drug related offenses at school.
- Independence Academy applied for and was awarded additional funding from the Department of Public Health to provide transportation to all students at no cost.
- Our referrals from April – June exceeded the number of referrals in the 7 months prior to that time period. This was a result of transportation funding being made available on April 1st to all students.
- An after-school program was developed and fully funded which allowed us to build a music studio and an art studio as well as provide other recreational activities (ping pong, foosball) for students and hire a part-time musician. We took several field trips which included the Museum of Science, DW Field, Houghton’s Pond, K1 Racing, Medicine Wheel Productions, and Six Flags.
- We purchased two interactive Smart Boards along with 30 Chromebooks and established the school as a 1:1 student-to-device environment.
- Our partnership with High Point Treatment Center continued to be strengthened and we were able to bring Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach (pro-social) services to students at Independence Academy as well as provide insurance-based CBHI services (therapeutic mentoring, In-Home Therapy) to students who didn’t previously qualify.
- Students visited the CASTLE program in Brockton to do monthly commitments where they shared their own stories and efforts towards recovery with adolescents currently in in-patient treatment.
- The staff at Independence Academy participated in a yearlong Trauma-Informed Schools training which included a comprehensive self-assessment and goal development. Those goals will be worked on and the work will be implemented throughout the coming school year.
- Two staff members received training as Recovery Coaches through High Point Treatment Centers.
- Staff and students continue to be utilized as a resource to local school districts. We visited six schools this year to assist with students identified as “high risk” for issues with substance abuse and to raise awareness of the issues associated with substance abuse.
- IA presented testimony at the Massachusetts State House in support of funding recovery high schools as year round schools.

**Parent Survey Results**

Independence Academy surveyed parents about their satisfaction with the program. Six of the parents responded to the survey. *Comments are shown in indented, italics text.*

**Are parents satisfied with their interactions with IA staff?**

Satisfaction with staff was assessed by combining responses to three questions: effective communication, problem solving, and promoting the social/emotional well being of students.

- 100% reported that there is a clear and effective system for ongoing communication between the staff (teachers, counselors, principal) and the parent.
  - They are very supportive and more than willing to go above and beyond for both my son and assisting my family with any and all questions concerns.

- 100% reported that staff (teachers, counselor, principal) is willing to work together with me to solve problems when difficulties arise.
  - Couldn’t ask for a better support team. They truly believe in each student and respect them as an individual.
Section 4: Progress Toward Achieving NRC’s Purpose and Objectives

- 100% reported that all program staff members are involved in promoting the social and emotional well being of my child.
  - They are very personable and respectful.

**Are parents satisfied with the Recovery Counseling and Supports at IA?**

Satisfaction with the recovery counseling and supports was assessed by combining responses to five questions: individualized counseling program, effective progress, appropriate recovery supports, resilience skills, and helpful exchange of information.

- 100% reported that their child’s instruction/counseling programs are based on his/her individual needs.
  - Very supportive and extremely dedicated staff
- 33% reported that their child is making effective progress towards the goals of his/her instruction and counseling program, 50% reported it is mostly true, and one parent stated it is not at all true.
- 100% reported that IA staff and program provides appropriate supports for their child to move toward success in their recovery from addiction.
- 100% reported they are satisfied with the recovery/resilience skills their child learns through counseling.
- 100% reported that communications and meetings with IA staff provide a helpful exchange of information and ideas about my child that leads to a clear understanding on the plan for my son/daughter.

**Are parents satisfied with the academic program at IA?**

Satisfaction with the academic instruction and programs was assessed by combining responses to four questions: potential for achievement, preparation for graduation, time in academics, and assessments.

- 67% reported that they feel their child has the opportunity and support to reach his/her potential for academic achievement, 17% said it was mostly true, and 16% said it is mostly not true.
- 50% reported that they feel their child is making effective progress in his/her academic preparation for high school graduation, 17% said it was mostly true, and 33% said it was mostly not true.
- 67% reported that they are satisfied with the amount of time my child spends in academic coursework, 17% said it was mostly true, and 16% said it was mostly not true.
- 100% reported that the assessments completed by IA staff for their child are appropriate and clear.

**Are parents satisfied with the IA Program?**

Satisfaction with the IA program was assessed by combining responses to four questions about climate, school environment, independent living skills, and life-long learning.

- 100% reported the climate of the program is positive, respectful and supportive.
  - Always felt welcomed and never rushed or pushed aside
- 67% reported the school site and equipment are maintained to ensure an environment that is healthy and safe, 33% said it was mostly true.
- 83% reported that they feel their child is provided with the opportunity and support to reach his/her potential for independent living, 17% said it was mostly true.
  - IA was a true lifeline for my son. He was offered more academic and counseling support than at a regular public high school. I believe IA was very caring, understanding, supportive and a great resource for my son. This type of school is greatly needed to help struggling children.
- 83% reported that at IA their child learns in an environment that values life-long learning and prepares students to be successful citizens, 17% said it was mostly true.
Section 4: Progress Toward Achieving NRC’s Purpose and Objectives

**NRC Family Network**

**Program Enhancements**
- Offered a 10-week literacy playgroup for families with young children whom speak English as a second language.
- Restored 5 literacy hours for children ages 2-5 called "PJ Story Time & More."
- Offered a monthly parent support group.

**Parent Survey Results**
The NRC Family Network surveyed parents about their satisfaction. Forty-one parents responded to the survey, representing 10 towns. *Comments are shown in indented, italics text.*

**Duration of involvement.** 22% have been involved with NRCFN for three years or more, 25% for two years, 18% for one year, and 34% for less than one year.

**Activities of involvement.** Playgroups: 97%. Parent/child activities: 30%. Family social activities: 11%. Parent education workshops: 11%. Parent support group: 3%.

**How has participation in the NRC Family Network helped you and your family?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To play more with my child</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To understand my child’s development</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To talk with other parents about parenting issues</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To understand my child’s personality and unique needs</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To reduce isolation</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To use positive behavior management techniques</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make friendships that extend beyond the NRC Family Network</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To communicate more with my child</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To read with my child</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To talk with professionals about parent issues</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To find the resources that my family needs</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To participate in supportive activities for myself</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do you see as the most beneficial NRC Family Network activity, program, event or service?

**Connect with other Parents & Professionals**
- Playgroups are wonderful for getting parents out interacting with other families. It was a life saver after I had my first child

Playgroups for social interaction (16).
- It's very well organized. My three children have all participated in activities (playgroup, music and movement, let's get messy) and have loved all of them.

**Children learn new things**
- The playgroups are such a wonderful resource. It is a positive, happy environment that is perfect for introducing concepts like sharing, taking turns, participating in circle time and crafts.

**Socialization with other kids and parents**
- I think the playgroups are the most beneficial for my family as it encourages my children to be social and also work on my youngest communication skills with her peers.
Other comments about your family or your experience with the NRC Family Network:

**Great Staff**
- The happy energy she brings to the playgroups makes it such a fun environment. She makes moms feel comfortable when little ones don't want to participate, which is common for that age, but can be intimidating, especially for new moms. My daughter, age 2, asks to go to school with her every week because of the way she makes her feel so special. We are so happy that we landed in her group.

**Wonderful experience**
- I'm a caregiver of twin boys now but took my daughter when she was younger to the playgroups & she's 15 now!!!-Still love NRC playgroups-asset to the community for sure!!

**Adult Friendships**
- I have made some wonderful friends through the NRC that have supported me during good and bad times. We met through the playgroups and have watched our children grow and develop.

**Love Playgroups**
- This was the first playgroup that my son actually had fun and could enjoy. The set up and pace works well for the children. It is organized and fun.
- I have been going to playgroup for 7 years and absolutely love it.

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**Social Work Internship Program**

**Program Enhancements**

- The MSW Intern Program grew in capacity to support the placement of 18 interns across 5 districts within 16 schools serving students in grades K-12.
- The program was successfully introduced to one new district, Hanover, resulting in 2 new elementary schools. We partnered with Whitman-Hanson Regional High School’s new transition program and increased our role within several middle and high schools across our districts.
- The interns doubled the amount of whole classroom presentations and lessons from 231 sessions last year to 477 this year. These whole classroom lessons were designed to promote student social and emotional development and were well supported by classroom teachers.
- The number of referrals for students with anxiety and trauma doubled from 108 to 205 referrals this year alone. While social skills, behavior and anger management referrals all decreased.
- Boys continue to be referred more than girls, with boys at 202 referrals and girls at 168.
- In total, the interns provided 2989 documented individual, group and in-class and whole classroom interventions along with 1841 parent, teacher and outside collateral contacts. Collateral contacts included outpatient therapists, therapeutic mentors and DCF case workers.
- Interns worked with students and parents around mutually identified treatment goals and treatment plans in order to involve the parent in the change process, engage and empower the student and to evaluate and modify interventions and treatment successes.
- Outside speakers for Intern trainings included Youth Mental Health First, DCF and Child protection laws presented by DCF staff and Understanding IEP and 504 plans.
Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement

NRC coordinates the School Based Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement Program for member districts and many non-member school districts. Since the Collaborative began providing this service in 1994, more than $28 million has been returned to the participating cities and towns. In FY16, approximately $1.3 million dollars were returned to 18 districts.

North River Collaborative uses an internet based Medicaid billing enhancement that reduces the burden on districts’ administrative and direct care staff, and provides the potential to increase Medicaid reimbursement. The software allows easy access for direct care providers to assess student history and keep up-to-date with student caseloads. Additionally, administrative staff can monitor services and ensure reimbursement is maximized. Currently 18 districts are utilizing this software.

NRC currently serves 18 school districts through NRC’s dedicated School Based Medicaid staff. North River Collaborative:

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

Southeast Transportation Network

Program Enhancements

- Provided special education transportation to over 100 in-and-out of district students in Stoughton Public Schools.
- Prepared to provide services for all out-of-district special education transportation for Scituate and Cohasset Public School
- Increased and enhanced road observations of transportation program.
- Implemented system for replacing aging vehicles and purchased 17 new 7D vehicles.
- Piloted video monitoring in program.

Parent Survey Results

The Transportation program surveyed parents about their satisfaction. 105 parents responded to the survey representing students traveling to 51 schools in 25 towns. Selected comments are in italics text.

Are parents satisfied with the timeliness of transportation services?

- 68% reported that pickup and drop off times are consistent and on time, 29% said it was mostly true, and 3% said it was not at all true.
  - So very helpful. I have multiple kids going to school and mornings can be crazy and hectic.
  - Pick up and drop off is very reliable. The driver is very punctual, never late.
  - If there is a delay, I am always called and informed ahead of time.
- 55% of respondents said the transportation dispatch office lets them know if there is a delay of more than 10 minutes, 28% said mostly true, 9% said mostly not true, and 8% said not at all true.
  - They are very attentive and always keep me posted of changes.

Are parents satisfied with the safety and cleanliness of van transportation?

- 92% of respondents reported that the driver makes sure their son/daughter is securely fastened, 5% said mostly true, 2% said mostly not true, and 1% said not at all true.
  - Safety is the driver’s utmost concern. If my son gets upset, she is very calming, caring and helps my son move forward to get over what is upsetting him.
  - The children are always safe and always have seatbelts; the driver is very aware of this.
- 85% of respondents said that the exterior and interior of the vehicle are clean, 14% said it was mostly true, and 1% said that it was mostly not true.
  - Takes pride in the van; very pleased with the interior and exterior of van, very, very clean!
Are parents satisfied with the quality of the North River Collaborative drivers and monitors?

- 91% of respondents reported that the **driver is neat, courteous, and helpful**; 7% said mostly true; and 2% said mostly not true.
  - A+, she sure is! The driver is an important part of our daughter’s day. Her kindness is very appreciated. She is very kind and patient.
- 86% of respondents reported that they feel **their son/daughter is of utmost importance to the driver**,
  - 9% said mostly true, and 5% said mostly not true.
- 87% of respondents said that they feel **the driver responds to their son/daughter’s needs**,
  - 8% said mostly true, 4% said mostly not true, and 1% said not at all true.
  - My son looks forward to the bus ride because she is so kind to him and makes sure he is comfortable and feels safe.
  - The driver’s compassion, understanding and calming ways are just what my son needs. As a parent of a special needs child, the driver is a role model driver. NRC you hire the best.