

The FLLAC Educational Collaborative 2016-2017 Annual Report

**FLLAC Educational Collaborative
Central Office
2 Shaker Road, Suite D215
Shirley, MA 01464
www.fllac.org**

Leadership at FLLAC Educational Collaborative

FLLAC Executive Board Members

(Appointed Representatives and Superintendents of the Member School Committees)

Supt. Gary Mazzola, Ashburnham-Westminster RSD	Supt. Mary Malone, Ayer Shirley RSD
Supt. Terrance Ingano, Clinton Public Schools	Supt. Andre Ravenelle, Fitchburg Public
Supt. Mark Pellegrino, Gardner Public Schools	(Chair)Supt. James Jolicoeur, Leominster Public
Supt. Loxi Jo Calmes, Lunenburg Public Schools	Supt. Maureen Marshall, Quabbin RSD
Supt. Elizabeth Schaper, West Boylston Public Schools	Supt. Steve Haddad, Winchendon Public

FLLAC Executive Board Sub-Committees

Budget:	Supt. James Jolicoeur, Supt. Gary Mazzola, Supt. Andre Ravenelle
Personnel:	Supt. Loxi Jo Calmes, Supt. Elizabeth Schaper
Governance:	Supt. Loxi Jo Calmes, Supt. Andre Ravenelle
Space:	Supt. Loxi Jo Calmes, Supt. Terrance Ingano
Warrant Committee:	Supt. Loxi Jo Calmes, Dr. Gary Mazzola, Supt. Elizabeth Schaper

FLLAC Advisory Board

(Directors of Special Education)

Ms. Kathy Veroude, Ashburnham-Westminster RSD	Ms. Tara Bozek, Ayer Shirley RSD
Ms. Kathy Buchanan, Clinton Public Schools	Ms. Roanne Demanche, Fitchburg Public Schools
Mr. Joyce West, Gardner Public Schools	Mr. Edward Pratt, Leominster Public Schools
Ms. Julianna Hanscom, Lunenburg Public Schools	Ms. Kristin Campione, Quabbin RSD
Ms. Sherri Traina, West Boylston Public Schools	Ms. Kristina Mecelicaite, Winchendon Public

FLLAC Administration

Dr. Richard Murphy, Executive Director	Ms. Julie Bragg, Caldwell Elem. Program Supervisor
Ms. Terri Burchfield, Business Manager	Mr. Gary MacCallum, Caldwell Alternative Principal
Mr. Steve Bicchieri, ASD/DD Program Supervisor	

Mission Statement

The mission of FLLAC Educational Collaborative is to meet the current and evolving needs of our member school districts.

Vision

The focus of the Collaborative is to develop and provide high quality, cost effective, educationally related programs, professional development and other services that strengthen and enhance the educational offerings of our member districts.

The overall objectives of the Collaborative include, but are not limited to, the following and are subject to the approval of the Board:

- To improve the academic achievement of all students in the least restrictive environment.

FLLAC programs offer rigorous curriculum and instructional practices that are tailored to meet the unique needs of each student and to comply with all elements of a student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP). FLLAC services are provided by appropriately licensed and trained staff in the least restrictive environment as determined by the student's IEP team. The FLLAC ASD/DD programs are located in public school settings and all students are provided opportunities for interaction with students in the general education settings as appropriate for the student's needs. Students in the Caldwell Elementary and Caldwell Alternative Public Day programs are provided educational and counseling services to provide them with the skills and knowledge required to return to less restrictive settings whenever possible.

- To develop and offer a variety of quality professional development opportunities to general and special education teachers, paraprofessionals, school administrators and related service providers that are designed to enhance instructional practices.

Each year FLLAC Professional Development is offered based on the needs of our member districts and FLLAC staff, as identified by the FLLAC Advisory Board (Special Education Administrators), our staff and by our Board of Directors (Superintendents). In

the past FLLAC has offered legal trainings provided by an experienced and respected school attorney, Mental Health First Aid training to FLLAC and district staff, training on psychiatric and legal issues for school administrators, ABA training for related service providers, educators and paraprofessionals, restraint trainings to district and FLLAC staff and classroom management training. FLLAC continues to remain responsive and proactive in addressing the specialized training needs of our member districts.

- To provide other educationally related programs, supports and services to our member districts and surrounding communities that are of high quality and cost effective, as directed by the FLLAC Board of Directors.

The FLLAC Collaborative continues to provide educationally related programs, supports and services by offering both public day programs and substantially separate programs in public schools. FLLAC also continues to offer extended year services for students. The collaborative provides extended evaluation services at the Caldwell and Caldwell Elementary programs.

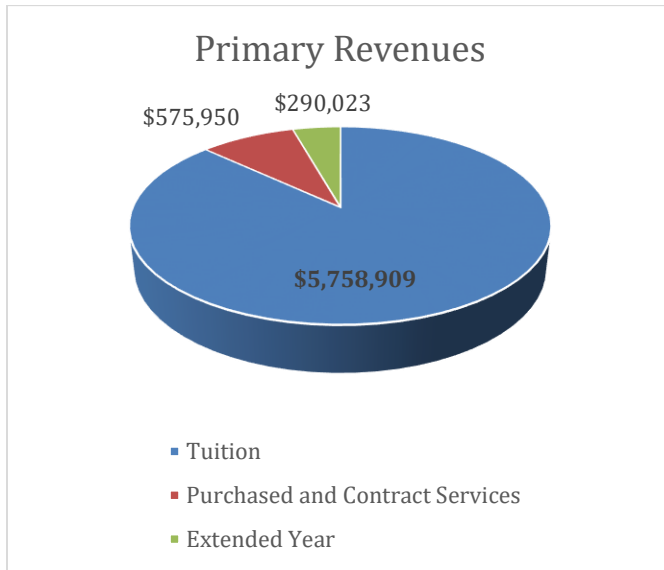
FLLAC remains flexible and responsive in meeting the needs of our districts by providing high quality professional development offerings that are local, are cost effective and are presented by knowledgeable and respected experts. We are able to meet the needs for both short and long term related service providers of our districts and provide licensed, skilled and experienced occupational and physical therapists, teachers of the visually impaired and orientation and mobility therapists. FLLAC remains responsive to our districts needs for in home ABA and tutoring services to meet the needs of students who are unable to attend school.

During the 2016-2017 School Year FLLAC helped our districts realize significant savings on electricity and natural gas costs through a natural gas and electricity cooperative purchasing agreement and on the costs of virtual education services through a bulk purchasing agreement with Edgenuity.

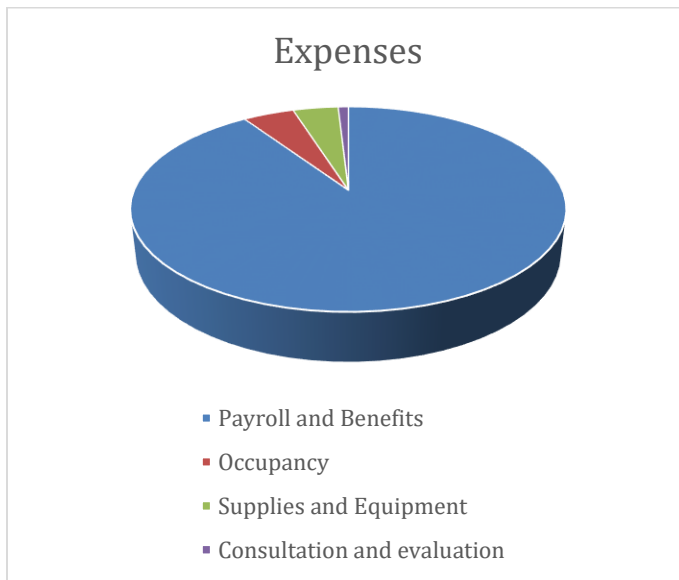
Guiding Principles

- We believe our programs and services should be of the highest quality and should continue to be responsive to the changing needs of our member districts
- We believe that our students should be provided with the highest level of quality programs and services that will allow each of them the opportunities to reach their highest potential and demonstrate ongoing, measurable progress and independence.
- We believe that all students should be challenged to learn in a caring, inclusive environment that respects diversity and values life-long learning.
- We believe all students should be provided educational programs and services in the least restrictive environment and work closely with each district to return students to their home district whenever it is appropriate.
- We believe high quality, ongoing and relevant professional development is essential for growth and the success of the educational process.
- We recognize the need to involve and support families in order to facilitate the educational process.
- We believe student assessment and program evaluation are essential for continuous improvement.
- We recognize the need to support the social and emotional well-being of our students.
- We embrace collegiality and a sense of shared commitment and recognize that we accomplish more collectively than separately.
- We recognize and celebrate the unique contributions and accomplishments of each individual in our collaborative community.
- We encourage and accept a diversity of opinions to stimulate innovative and creative ideas and effective solutions.

Financial and Enrollment Information



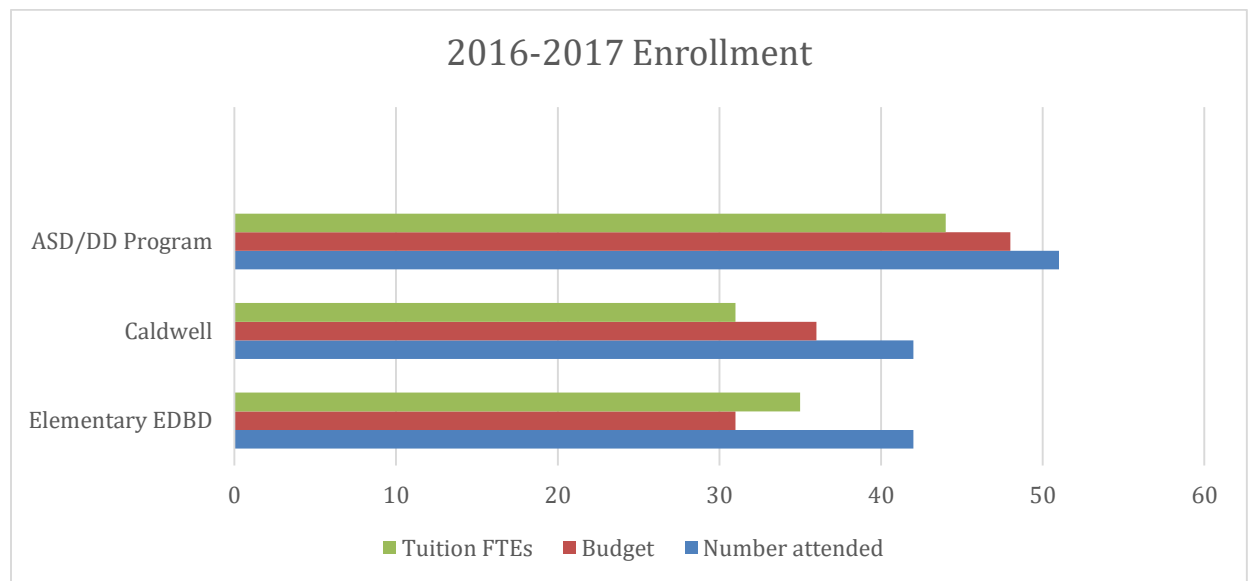
Tuition	\$	5,758,909
Purchased and Contract Services	\$	575,950
Extended Year	\$	290,023



Payroll and Benefits	\$	5,950,572
Occupancy	\$	297,377
Supplies and Equipment	\$	262,631
Consultation and evaluation	\$	59,956

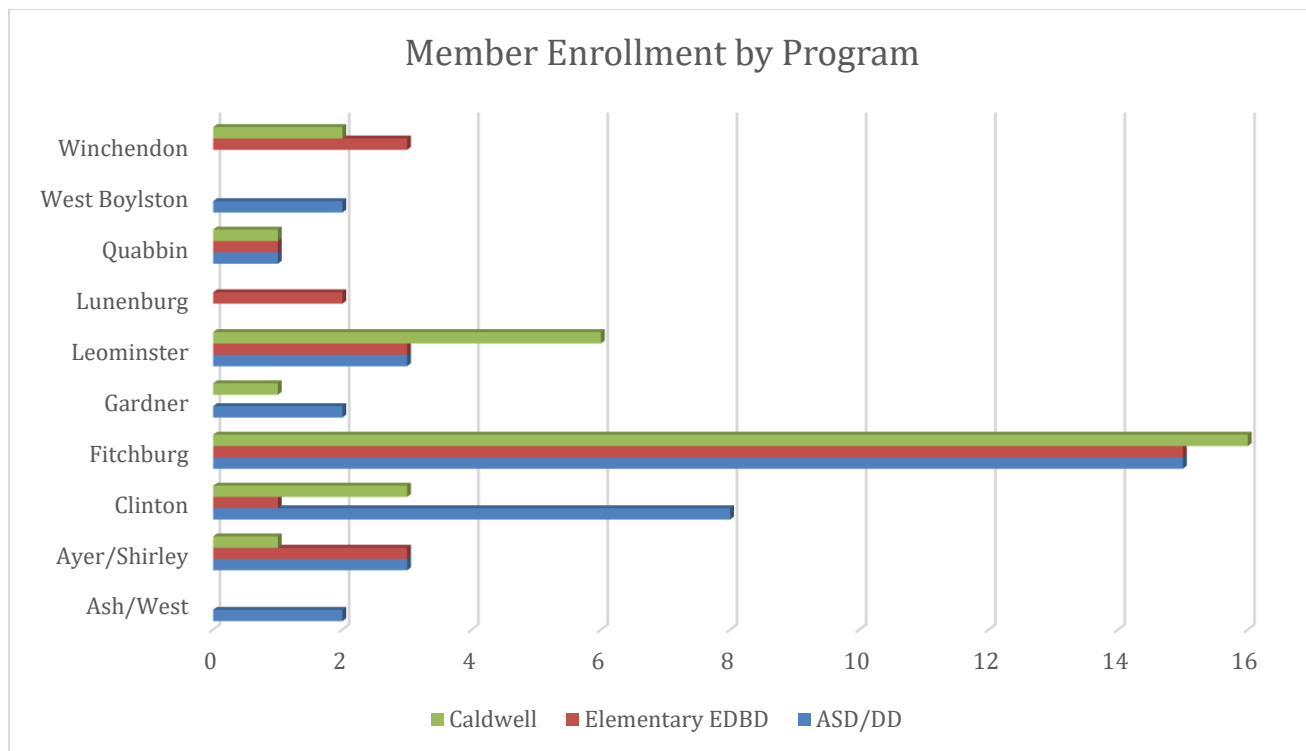
Better than 90% of Collaborative expenses continue to be related to staffing.

The heart of the organization is the educational programming provided through our programs.



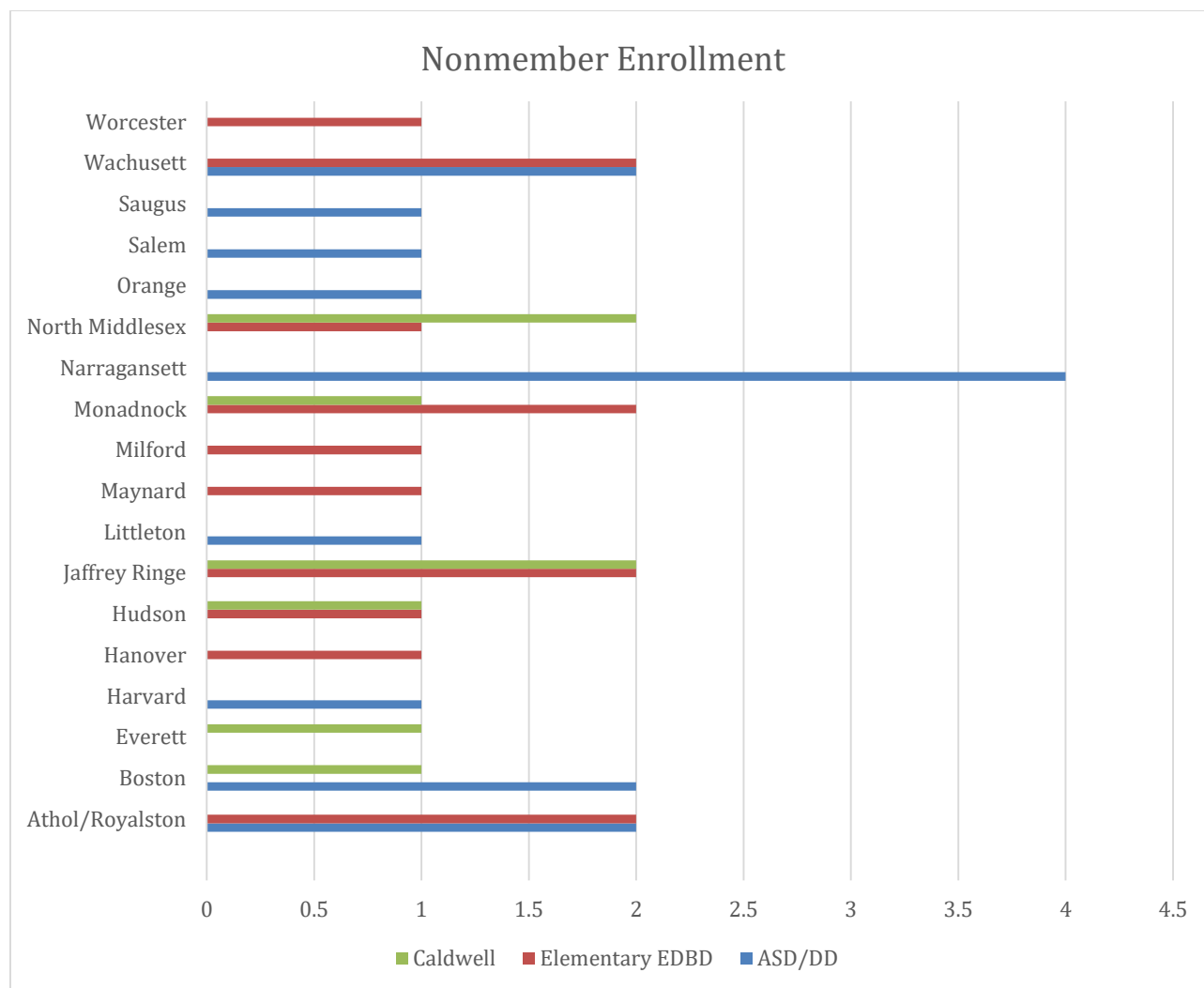
	Number attended	Budget	Tuition FTEs
Elementary EDBD	42	31	35
Caldwell	42	36	31
ASD/DD Program	51	48	44

Tuition program budgets were set based on anticipated enrollments as delineated by the area Special Education Directors, and previous usage. In the chart above, the 'Number Attended' refers to the total number of students who passed through a program. Some of those students attended only part of the year, for a variety of reasons; aging out, transitioning back to district or due to participation in the Extended Evaluation assessment placements available at the Caldwell Elementary and Caldwell Alternative programs. 'Tuition FTE's' refer to the total attendance as reflected by tuitions collected. This lets us anticipate where we might need to initiate spending holds as we recognize potential revenue shortfalls.



Fitchburg continues to be the primary source of referrals to our special needs programs.

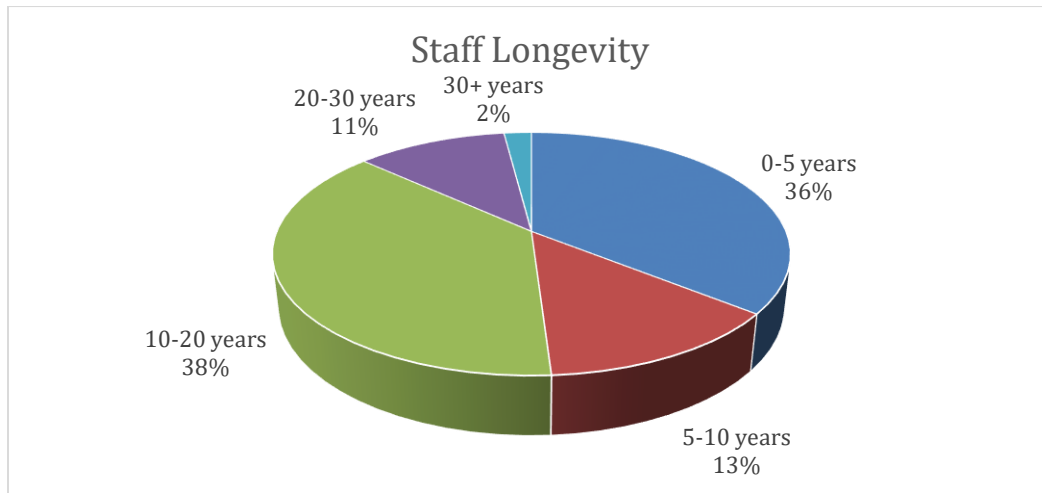




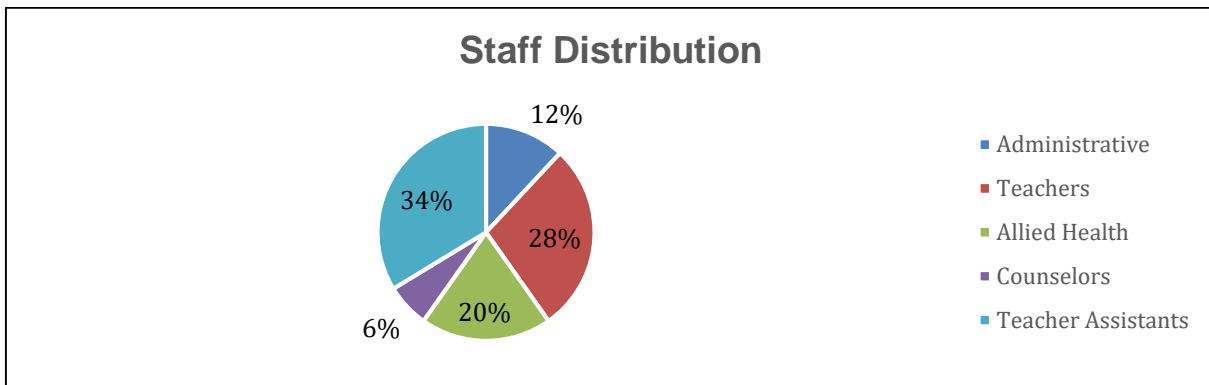
While some placements are from member or regional districts, we have noted an increase in the number of out of region placements. This trend appears to be tied to area residential programs for students who require alternative placements.

Staff Information

As the chart below illustrates over half of FLLAC staff have been working for the collaborative for ten years or longer. FLLAC is fortunate to have such a dedicated and experienced group of educators who are committed to serving the students in our programs.



The vast majority of FLLAC staff work directly with students, as illustrated in the chart below.



Allied Health Professionals include Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Speech/Language Pathology and Nursing staff.

88% of Collaborative staff have direct and daily contact with students in our programs, or in the public schools where we provide specialized staff including PTs, OTs, Teachers of the Visually Impaired and Orientation and Mobility Instructors.

Effectiveness

FLLAC has a reputation for providing high quality, cost effective programs and services to our member districts. We provide an annual cost comparison survey to our Board to demonstrate cost effectiveness and conduct a satisfaction survey of our Special Education Administrators every fall to determine the extent to which they are satisfied with our programs and services and to determine how responsive the collaborative has been to district needs. We are committed to measuring the effectiveness of our professional development offerings and provide evaluations to all participants. Feedback from our Professional Development evaluations is overwhelming positive.

Cost Comparisons

FLLAC Special Education Programs remain highly cost effective relative to private special education programs serving students with similar special education needs. Every year FLLAC does a cost comparison with similar private special education programs serving similar students located within one hour of north central Massachusetts (when possible). Before these comparisons are made the schools FLLAC compares itself to are reviewed by the FLLAC Special Education Advisory Board to ensure that comparisons are fair and represent private schools that districts would have to send students to if FLLAC programs were not available.



FLLAC Collaborative 10-2-17		Cost Comparisons	
<u>Program/Population</u>	<u>FLLAC Tuition</u>	<u>Private School Avg.*</u>	<u>Savings</u>
	<u>Member</u>		
Developmental Disabilities/Life Skills	\$55,341	\$76,385	\$21,044
PDD/Autism	\$55,341	\$82,171	\$26,830
Caldwell Elementary Emotional/Behavioral	\$54,277	\$66,348	\$12,071
Caldwell Alternative Emotional/LD	\$50,866	\$51,294	\$428
Extended Evaluation Program	CE \$13,569	\$16,587	\$3,018
	CA \$12,425	\$12,823	\$106

OSD Rate Sheet 9/28/17

*Private School Costs are determined by averaging the tuition of 3 approved private day schools within 1 hr. of Central MA (if possible) serving students with needs similar to those of the FLLAC students.

Costs are based on day rate x180 days or 45 days if compared to FLLAC Extended Evaluation Program.

Life Skills/DD: Cotting School, \$76,598. Kennedy Day School \$71,892. B.C. Campus, \$80,653.

Autism/PDD Programs: HMEA Darnell, \$74,333. Nashoba Learning, \$88,267. Crossroads, \$83,916.

Caldwell Elementary Program: Franklin Perkins, \$54,140. Walker Home, \$72,742. Lighthouse, \$72,164.

Caldwell Alternative School: Mclean Arlington Academy, \$63,077. Wayside Academy, \$45,313. Victor School, \$45,562.

Special Education Administrator Satisfaction Survey Results

FLLAC conducted a satisfaction survey of our member district Special Education Administrators in October of 2017 using Survey Monkey. Since the majority of the work we do is in support of special education programs and services, feedback from Special Education Administrators is critical to determining our overall effectiveness as an organization. Eight out of eleven of our member district Special Education Administrators replied to the survey.

The results of this survey indicate that in 2016-2017 there was a high level of satisfaction with our special education programs and services and, equally important, that FLLAC continued to be a caring, responsive and effective organization that met the demands of districts for efficient, effective and local options.

When asked whether:

- FLLAC programs and services were effective in meeting the needs of the students they serve, 100% of respondents strongly agreed (25%) or agreed (75%).
- FLLAC programs and services were cost effective, 86% agreed.
- “It is important to me that FLLAC provides programs that are located in my district or in a district nearby”, 100 of the respondents agreed (37%) or strongly agreed (63%) with the statement.
- FLLAC staff were experienced, skilled and knowledgeable in meeting the needs of the students they serve, 88% of the respondents either agreed (63%) or strongly agreed (25%) with the statement.
- FLLAC Program Staff were responsive to my needs, 100% of the respondents either agreed (50%) or strongly agreed (50%) with the statement.

- FLLAC staff were effective when dealing with families, 100% of the respondents either agreed (50%) or strongly agreed (50%) with the statement.
- The FLLAC Administration was responsive to the needs of my district, 100% of the respondents either agreed (37%) or strongly agreed (63%) with the statement.
- FLLAC staff provided services in a caring and respectful manner, 100% of the respondents either agreed (50%) or strongly agreed (50%) with the statement.
- How likely were you to recommend FLLAC Programs to other district administrators 38% of respondents said they would be extremely likely to do so, 25% said they would be very likely to do so and 37% said they would be moderately likely to do so.

Recommendations:

- Vocational Program for Middle/High School.
- PD Opportunities for FLLAC Teachers that would improve their capacity to provide quality academic instruction.
- Vocational programming for high school and SP students.

Program Descriptions

In 2016-2017 FLLAC offered four programs designed to meet the needs of specific student populations. Our member districts identified students from these populations as needing services the districts could not provide within the individual district. Two programs, the Caldwell Alternative Middle and High School (gr. 7-12) and the Caldwell Elementary Program (gr. K-6), are DESE approved Public Day Programs and provide educational and therapeutic programming for students with learning disabilities, emotional issues, behavioral issues and, increasingly, complex mental health issues. All students in these two programs have been identified as needing special education services.

The FLLAC Autism Spectrum Disorders and Developmental Disabilities (ASD/DD) Program serves students who are aged 5-22 in public school, substantially separate classrooms located within member districts buildings. The programs serve students who have more complex, low incidence, intellectual, communication, related services, behavioral, academic and self-help needs that districts are unable to meet within their own district programs. All of the students in the ASD/DD Program have been found eligible for special education services.

The FLLAC Extended Evaluation Program provided extended evaluation services to students who were referred by school districts. Students in the program attend either the Caldwell Alternative Program or the Caldwell Elementary Program and receive academic and therapeutic services as part of the school program. In addition students in the Extended Evaluation Program receive evaluation and assessment services as identified by the student's educational team and as requested by the sending district.

Students who completed the program receive an evaluation package designed to help the district determine the appropriate placement and supports for that student. Students referred to the program may have previously been found in need of special education services but others have not been found to need such services. While in the program students are provided with educational evaluations, projectives, psychological, risk assessment and behavioral evaluations and other assessments as determined by the referring team.

Caldwell Alternative School

44 Wanoosnoc Road, Fitchburg, Massachusetts 01420

Program Phone: 978-345-5250 www.fllac.org Program Fax: 978-342-9583

Goals and Purpose

The mission of the Caldwell Alternative School is to provide an educational experience for students with special needs that fosters academic growth, social responsibility, and emotional health. Caldwell orients its programming and instruction around the three areas of ***safety, respect, and effective learning.***

Some students will return to their public schools depending on performance and needs; others may complete their education at Caldwell. For students entering Caldwell in their junior or senior year, our mission is to assist in the successful completion of graduation requirements of their sending school districts, and prepare graduates for a successful transition to college and/or the world of work.

Population

Students are referred to Caldwell Middle and High School as a result of being unsuccessful in general education, or as a step-down from a more restrictive setting. Students present with a variety of academic, social and behavioral challenges and/or emotional impairments requiring instruction in an adult-intensive, highly-structured setting with small class sizes and consistent support, encouragement and praise.

Typical conditions seen in the school population include: general and specific learning disabilities, attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder, suicidal ideation, depression, anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar, oppositional defiant disorder, Autism spectrum disorder or a combination of these.

Programs

Caldwell Alternative School enrolled 36 students between the Middle School and High School (grades 7-12).

Caldwell Middle School (grades 7 & 8) enrolled students in two classrooms, each staffed with a Teacher and a Teacher Assistant. Students move between the two classrooms to

receive instruction in the core content curriculum. Students leave the middle school for art, woodshop and physical education.

Clinical Services In addition to 1:1 weekly sessions with students, Caldwell Alternative School's two Counselors provided weekly social skills groups for all students. Groups are offered by grade level. The Social Skills curriculum includes language pragmatics, trust-building, self-advocacy, personal growth and social problem solving. School Counselors provided milieu crisis intervention and consultation to classroom staff.

Community involvement continues to develop with the addition of the **school van**. We now provide transportation of students to the Boys and Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster and to the Fitchburg State University Recreational Center for our winter physical education program. The van is also used to bring students to job training/internship sites, for shopping for the school store and field trips.

Extended Evaluation Program

Students enrolled in the Evaluation Program are assigned to Caldwell Alternative classrooms and participate in daily school program to facilitate assessment while with their peers. This program received 11 referrals for evaluations; 8 students were enrolled and 7 students remained enrolled at Caldwell after the evaluation process.

Referrals

Caldwell began the year with twenty-two (22) students enrolled and ended the year with thirty-six (36) students. During School Year 2016-17, referrals and dispositions are as follows:

<u>Referrals</u>	<u>Enrolled</u>	<u>Not Enrolled</u>	<u>Extended Evaluation Referrals</u>	<u>Enrolled</u>	<u>Not Enrolled</u>
35	17	Other program – 10 Declined Interview - 5 Moved from Dist. – 2	11	8	Other program– 3

Graduates/Transitions/Discharges

Caldwell graduated 3 seniors with diplomas. One was accepted at Mount Wachusett Community College, and 2 entered the world of work. Over the course of the academic year, 1 student returned to district, 1 transitioned to more restrictive school settings, 1 transferred to another day school and 1 dropped out.



Opportunities for academic improvement and satisfactory completion of graduation requirements

- *MCAS prep activities in ELA, Math and Science and Technology*
- *Writing Workshop and Writing Portfolios*
- *IXL online math and English Language Arts education aligned with Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*

Career and social learning opportunities: Caldwell continues to maintain relationships with local agencies and institutions to supplement student learning and skills:

- *Health groups with Pro-Health,*

- *College Fairs and campus visits to Fitchburg State University and Mount Wachusett Community College*
- *Development of transition planning and career education, community job sites/internships*
- *Wood shop and production crew*
- *Student run school store*
- *Coordination of group initiatives, sports/games tournaments, community meals and recreation/music events, allows students the opportunity to practice techniques learned in social skills groups:*
 - *Talent Show*
 - *Pepperell Fire Station*
 - *Kayaking*
 - *Hayride and apple picking*
 - *Winter Feast and Pancake Breakfast*
 - *Field Day*
 - *Volunteer to feed the homeless at Cozy Corner Coffee Shoppe*



Reading Program

Caldwell continues to prioritize enhancing reading skills within our student population. A primary academic class for students is reading. Upon enrollment students are assessed for placement in our reading program. The program seeks to address and teach to deficit areas as well as to encourage reading as a leisure time activity. Reading interventions are as follows:

Tier I - Novel-based reading

Tier II - LANGUAGE! - a total literacy program for students with deficits

Tier III - LANGUAGE! Read Naturally, and individual pull-out instruction.

Staff Professional Development/Consultation

Caldwell has benefitted greatly with the addition of ongoing psychiatric consultation with Dr. Kerry Wilkins who provides staff professional development opportunities, clinical and programmatic consultation as well as individual critical case reviews of identified students.

Lori Stevens, Instructional Technology Specialist, has been invaluable in streamlining information management systems for a variety of reporting requirements. In addition the Instructional Technology Specialist provides training to staff in computer literacy and researching and recommending instructional applications, software programs and equipment to facilitate student learning.

Staff training focused on continuing to evolve our understanding of the nature and needs of the student population based on current research and scientifically based effective instructional practices. Topics included:

- *Engaging Students in Differentiation of Learning*
- *The Collaborative Classroom in a Trauma Sensitive Environment*
- *Technology in the Classroom*
- *The Angry Smile: Working with Passive-Aggressive Behavior in the Classroom*
- *Writing Measureable Behavioral Objectives*
- *Student Discipline: Statutes, Regulations and Procedures*

Caldwell Elementary School – EDBD Program

66 Brookline Road, Townsend, MA 01469

Program Phone: 978-812-4161 www.fillac.org Program Fax: 978-812-4190

Philosophy

We believe that every child can learn and acquire the social skills required for success in school and in the community. We further believe that each child is unique and that each child has the potential to make progress academically and emotionally.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Caldwell Elementary School is to help each child discover his or her strengths, improve coping mechanisms and develop social and academic skills. The goal of the program is to provide each student with the behavioral and academic skills required to return to a less restrictive educational setting.

Student Population

The Caldwell Elementary Program's strengths are in its small size and high staff/student ratio. Students are placed in multi-age classrooms according to their developmental needs and academic skills. Students are referred to the program because they demonstrate challenging emotional and/or behavioral concerns. Students also present with learning and psychological challenges including ADD/ADHD, Learning Disabilities, PTSD, PDD and Oppositional Defiant Disorder.

Referrals

Referrals are made to the Program through the Special Education Directors of the sending school districts. Students may be enrolled in the Program or sent for an Extended Evaluation.

Caldwell Elementary began the year with twenty eight (28) students enrolled and ended the year with thirty-nine (39) students.

Total Long-term referrals for 2016-2017: 6 Students

Students enrolled: 2 Students

Parents chose other program: 4 students

Extended Evaluation referrals for 2016-2017 total: 16 Students

Students enrolled: 13 Students

Parents chose other program: 2 Students

Parents declined intake: 1 Student

Transitions from long-term placement 2016-2017 school year:

Back to district: 4 Students

Transitions to a more restrictive environment: 2 Students

End of school year transition back to in-district public school: 3 Students

End of school year transition to other FLLAC Program: 3 Students

Transitions from Extended Evaluation placement 2016-2017 school year:

Transition to long-term placement at Caldwell Elementary: 7 students

Transition to other FLLAC Programs: 1 Students

Transition back to in-district public school: 2 Students

Transition to a more restrictive setting: 0 Students

End of school year transition to other FLLAC Programs: 3 Students

School Staff

Each classroom is staffed with a certified teacher and an appropriate number (average = 2) of teacher assistants to allow for a low ratio of students to adults. There are two counselors on site to provide individual and/or group therapy to each student, as well as consultation to staff. The counselors act as a liaison to the sending school districts and are available to provide support to parents and guardians.

The program was located in the Passios Elementary School in Lunenburg but will be moving to the former Squannacook Elementary building in Townsend. The program has an onsite Licensed Practical Nurse available to students. The FLLAC Program Supervisor has overall administrative responsibility for the Caldwell Elementary Program.

Academics

Classes are taught in self-contained classrooms. All students are taught per their IEP and at their individual instruction level. The curriculum of the Caldwell Elementary Program is aligned with the MA Curriculum Frameworks with appropriate modifications and/or adaptations to meet the needs of individual students. Related services such as speech or occupational therapy are provided according to each student's IEP. Our students also participate in the MCAS process with appropriate modifications and/or adaptations for each student. Some students participate in the MCAS Alternative process as determined by the team.

Activities

The program offers community based field trips to promote the social integration of our students into the community while also incorporating academic material into self-guided visits and tours. Such opportunities offer the ability to develop focused connections between the curriculum and the field trip themes.

The program makes an annual visit to Lanni Orchards. The students always look forward to this trip. Students enjoyed hayrides, apple picking, pumpkin picking and learning about the Orchard's operations. The visit always concludes with a fresh glass of apple cider.

Caldwell Elementary ended the school year with a field trip to Pearl Hill State Forest. The students enjoyed a day of swimming, hiking and building sand castles and learning about various insects, birds and amphibians.



Behavior Management

Behavior Management at Caldwell Elementary School is based on respect for each individual, setting appropriate and consistent limits, and reasonable and positive expectations. Students will be given as much positive reinforcement as possible to promote pro-social behaviors. A variety of positive reinforcement strategies are employed including both tangible (stickers, toys etc.) and intangible (verbal praise, access to desired activities etc.) reinforcement. Students receive awards on both individual and group levels.

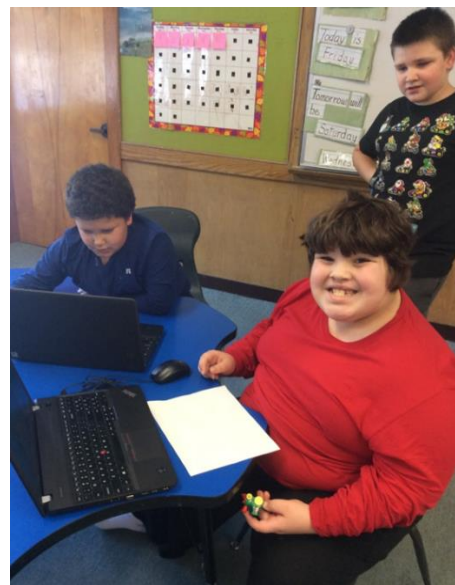
Each class has a daily behavior chart point system, which enables the student to earn points or stickers for appropriate behaviors in the areas of academics, behaviors and adult and peer interactions. If the student has achieved 80% of possible points or stickers for the day, he or she may choose a prize/activity.

If needed, individual behavioral support plans are developed by each child's team in consultation with the Program Supervisor and/or counselor. The services of a contracted Behavioral Psychologists are available on an as needed basis. Behavioral support plans and data are reviewed and updated routinely by the program staff and consultant.

Growth of prior initiatives

Technology-

The Caldwell Elementary Program continues to build their technology inventory and integrate this technology into the classrooms. The use of technology has resulted in increased student engagement. Our program currently has two technology carts with laptops, five iPads, and a learning center with several desktop computers for students to use to access the curriculum. Given the diversity of our population, technology has been found



to be an effective modality for differentiating instruction for our students. We have adapted books for students that struggle with reading and use specialized apps to incorporate online worksheets into our assignments. Our teachers are using Google Apps for Education for student research and writing assignments, as well as generating electronic forms for daily functions of the program.

Each classroom uses technology in a slightly different fashion, given the needs of the students. Some classrooms are learning basic computer skills through typing.com and spellingcity.com, while the older students have been putting together PowerPoint presentations on subjects they researched on the internet. Our program has made a great deal of progress in regards to our technology initiative through the hard work of the teachers and with consultation from the FLLAC Instructional and Information Technology Specialist, Lori Stevens.

Music Therapy-

Caldwell Elementary continues to incorporate music therapy within the program. Each classroom has a weekly music therapy session and some students access this therapeutic modality through individual sessions. Social and emotional goals, as well as academic skills identified in students' IEPs are addressed using music as a facilitator to meet these goals. In addition, some students have been able to unlock previously unknown talents. Many of the students have shared their talents in our annual Art and Music Extravaganza.



Mindfulness-

The students in our program continue to participate in mindfulness activities within their classrooms. Mindfulness activities include: breathing exercises, guided imagery, mindful movement and listening to music. Scholarly Research finds that mindfulness practice decreases stress and anxiety, increases attention, improves interpersonal relationships and strengthens compassion.

New Initiatives-

Caldwell Elementary has developed and proposed a position for a Prevention and Integration Specialist to add to its program. This Specialist would work alongside Licensed Clinicians and Special Education Teachers as part of the collaborative team. The main responsibilities of this individual would be to provide prevention techniques and tools to



support classrooms, provide crisis intervention and de-escalation strategies for dysregulated students, assist in the development of behavior support plans, and monitor data and the application of behavior support plans.

Space-

Caldwell Elementary has been pursuing appropriate space to house the program. North Middlesex Regional School District's Squannacook Elementary has been identified and FLLAC has entered into a lease agreement for this space. Caldwell Elementary plans to move to the space in August 2017. Caldwell staff are very excited about their move to the new space and feel that the new location will allow for a great deal of positive change and potential expansion of program services.

FLLAC EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE

ASD and DD Programs

150 School Street, Clinton, Ma. 01510

Program Phone: 978-368-1431 www.fllac.org Program Fax: 978-368-1507

The Autism Spectrum Disorder classrooms (ASD), Developmental Disabilities classrooms (DD) and Complex Medical Care classrooms (CMC) continue to provide specialized services to students with special needs, in the context of the public school setting. All referrals made to these classrooms come through the child-study process where it was determined that the student required a more intensive educational setting, in order to make effective progress.

Referrals:

The ASD and DD programs receive referrals from both member and non-member school districts.

2016-2017 total school year referrals: 21

2016-2017 students accepted for placement: 10

Reasons for non-placement

- Parent/District chose private day placement instead of Collaborative option
- Referrals consisted of students with unique behavioral and educational profiles that required clinical counseling supports
- Parent/District were seeking out an 18-22 vocational/behavioral/transitional program with college opportunities

Three-year trends in referrals have demonstrated the greatest number of students referred for placement have been elementary school aged with a primary diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. The next greatest number of referrals was for Middle School ASD placement.

Transitions/Discharges:

The ASD and DD Programs recognize that every student has the right to receive educational services in their home district. It is the objective of every classroom teacher

and related service provider to assist in the development of skills that each student will need in order to be successfully returned to their home school district.

2016-2017 school year transitions

Transitions back to in-district public school:	2 students
Transitions to adult services:	2 students
Transitions to a more restrictive setting:	2 student
Moved to a non-member district or out of state:	1 student

Census:

The ASD and DD programs receive budgetary support based on 48 students.

During the 2016-2017 school year the student census averaged 45 students.

Classroom census in June 2017:

Elementary ASD I Page Hilltop	4 students
Elementary ASD II Page Hilltop	5 students
Elementary DD Page Hilltop	5 students
Middle School ASD I Clinton	5 students
Middle School ASD II Clinton	4 students
Middle School DD Clinton	3 students
High School ASD Ayer-Shirley	10 students
High School DD Ayer-Shirley	8 students

Staffing:

The staff that supports the ASD and DD programs are professionally licensed, highly qualified, CPI certified and committed to our students and their families.

DESE licensed staff

- 1 Administrator
- 9 Teachers

Professionally Licensed Staff

- 6 Therapists
- 3 Therapy Assistants

- 1 Family Support Coordinator
- 1 Nurse (LPN)

Highly Qualified Support Staff

- 19 Paraprofessionals
- 1 Program Secretary

Program Initiatives:

The ASD and DD programs are committed to remaining current in the most effective practices employed in the substantially separate, special education classroom.

Teacher Training: All classroom teachers meet monthly and receive formal training in the policies and procedures of the FLLAC Collaborative as well as current topics in special education, i.e; Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction, Evaluation and Assessment of Students, Massachusetts frameworks and Core Curriculum, Time-on-Learning, IEP Development, Standard MCAS and MCAS-Alt Assessment, Behavioral Management, Teaching Team Management and Leadership Training.

Paraprofessional Training: All Paraprofessionals receive ongoing support through weekly teaching team meetings as well as formal training in related topics, i.e., Strategies to Support the Inclusion of Special Students, Classroom Behavior Management, Applied Behavioral Analysis and Crisis Prevention Intervention training.

Reverse Inclusion: All ASD and DD Classrooms have established opportunities for regular education students to participate in activities and lessons within the substantially separate special education classroom. These activities include Cooking Group, Music Therapy, Games Group, Social Skills Group, Book Buddies and Panther Pals.

Family Services: FLLAC Student and Family Services Coordinator, Kelly Vokey, has worked successfully and effectively with every family to develop systems of support and resources that include the Department of Developmental Services, the Autism Resource Center, the Department of Children and Families, Community Health Links, summer camp resources, vacation activity calendars, Challenger Sports Leagues, respite care, therapeutic mentors, and monthly Parent Support Group.

Vocational Services: The ASD and DD programs offer vocational training activities that support the development of a positive work attitude, job skills and work endurance. These activities include the FLLAC Dog Biscuit Company, Ayer-Shirley Mail Delivery and Honey Pot Bakers. Nineteen students have graduated to community work site experience that includes Tiny's Restaurant, Nashoba Park Assisted Living, Cell Treats at Phoenix Park, the Perkins School Laundry, All things Jeep, Ayer Police Station and the Ugly Omelet Diner.

Field Trips and Community Exploration: The ASD and DD programs have accessed community businesses and recreational venues in an effort to develop greater safety skills, community awareness, social exposure and career awareness. Community trips have included Red Apple Farm, Hannaford Supermarket, Dunkin Donuts, Ayer Police Department, Shirley Fire Department, Fitchburg Art Museum, the Butterfly Place, Acton Bowling, McDonald's, Davis Farmland and the Monty Tech Restaurant.

2017-2018 Initiatives:

- Continue to promote and bring in referrals for our complex medical care classroom.
- Launch an 18 - 22 Transitional Program.
- Develop more community based work sites for students aged 18 - 22.
- Hire a second Job Coach to service both of our high school classrooms.
- Provide more professional development activities for teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Work with Family support coordinator to provide more information and supports to our student's families.
- Increase the support and trainings parents receive to manage their children at home.
- Increase our association with allied agencies and providers.
- Launch our new educator evaluation protocol.
- Provide an effective mentorship/induction program to three new teachers and one new program director.

Individualized Programs / Classroom Accommodations



General Ed. Setting: Integration Opportunities



Vocational Training



Special Olympics



Prom



The FLLAC Extended Evaluation Program

The FLLAC Extended Evaluation Program served students from grades K through 12 and worked with a number of member districts as well as students from nonmember districts. Over the course of the 2016-2017 year the Extended Evaluation programs at Caldwell Alternative and Caldwell Elementary served approximately 21 students.

The students who were referred to the program continue to present with complex challenges. It is noteworthy that a large number of students were referred due to incidents in their schools that have led the districts to specifically request risk assessments. Some of these have been situations where students have been excluded from their district school due to violations involving offenses around drugs, weapons, assault on staff and pending felonies. Others have been initial evaluations where the students' needs were of such a high level that the district felt that an Extended Evaluation assessment was warranted in order to determine if the student qualifies for special education services. Some sending districts requested that the program collect data and observations in order to assist the district in making recommendations for appropriate educational programming and placement. The number of young students with significant social emotional, mental health and behavioral needs remained noteworthy. Based on ongoing feedback from districts the trend toward the program serving increasingly complicated students will continue to grow. During the spring of 2017 FLLAC assembled a team of educators, clinicians and agency staff to exam how FLLAC could develop additional supports for students with significant mental health issues as part of our strategic goal to develop additional programs and supports for our districts. The work of this MH Study Group will continue in the 2017-2018 School Year.

The Extended Evaluation Program continued to work with community agencies, including but not limited to, The Lipton Center, LUK, Health Alliance, The Spanish American Center, DCF, DYS, Juvenile Probation, and private counselors and physicians as well as STARR bed placements such as RFK and Cottage Hill. Ongoing communication with community providers enabled Extended Evaluations coordinators to make certain that information from all providers was considered while completing evaluations. The program has an

ongoing relationship with Dr. Caroline Cole who completes the majority of psychological evaluations and risk assessments. Dr. Kerry Wilkins, a child and adolescent psychiatrist, continued to consult to the programs during the 2016-2017 school year. She visits the Caldwell or Caldwell Elementary program once every three weeks. Dr. Wilkins continues to provide professional development, consults with teams and individual teachers and performs observations in the programs.

Feedback from sending districts regarding the Extended Evaluation program has been very positive. They continued to report that the program has been exceptionally responsive and accommodating and that the program provided thorough reports that are assisting them with making the best programming decisions for their students. Through the joint efforts of the program coordinators, teachers and outside providers the program continues to provide quality, local evaluations that meet the Extended Evaluation placement needs of sending districts.



Services and Supports

In order to fulfill our mission of meeting the ongoing needs of our member districts FLLAC provided a number of services to districts that complement and strengthen district programs and services. We assist districts by providing cost effective, long term and short term related services, working to help districts realize savings on utility costs, offering extended year services, coordinating a virtual learning effort, providing home and ABA support including the introduction of tele-presence learning robots (VGo) and providing ongoing, high quality, professional development.

Cooperative Purchasing

FLLAC had traditionally coordinated the joint purchase of electricity and natural gas as a cooperative purchasing agent for interested member districts and municipalities. During the 2016-2017 school year, The Gardner Schools, Ashburnham-Westminster Regional Schools, The Clinton Public Schools and FLLAC all participated in a contract for natural gas and electricity through Tradition Energy. The City of Leominster, the Town of Lunenburg and the Lunenburg Schools work with the FLLAC Energy Consultants, Tradition Energy, but on different contract dates and also realize savings through ongoing consultation and advice.

In 2016/2017 districts participating in the FLLAC coordinated energy purchasing agreement realized a combined savings, over market prices, for the purchase of electricity and natural gas with a total savings of \$18,835.

Staff Training and Consultation

FLLAC staff continue to be recognized for their expertise by area school districts. During the 2016-2017 School Year, FLLAC staff formally and informally provided support, consultation and evaluations to district staff on restraint and de-escalation, working with paraprofessionals, Mental Health First Aid, and developing effective strategies for reducing anxiety in the classroom. FLLAC staff in the ASD/DD program also participated in district sponsored trainings as members of individual district building staff. This fostered

greater communication between FLLAC and district staff and presented opportunities for ongoing job-alike activities and consultation.

Home ABA Therapy and Tutoring

FLLAC provides in-home tutoring and ABA training to a limited number of students in our districts on an “as available” basis. These supports are highly individualized and our flexibility in meeting the needs of district students has been appreciated by the districts. During the 2016-2017 year our ABA, and home tutor served 2 students either in their homes or directly in the schools. In addition one student in Clinton utilized the VGo Tele-presence learning robot to attend school while at home due to medical issues. FLLAC plans to expand the use of such robots, allowing district to try out their effectiveness for 3-6 month periods before they make a decision to purchase a robot if the need remains beyond the trial period.

FLLAC provided home ABA or tutoring services to two students. Rates for these services are based on the licensure and experience of the therapist/teacher as requested by the district; in both cases districts requested a Masters level teacher. FLLAC charged \$80/hr. Comparable rates for in home therapy or tutoring by a masters level clinician range from \$80-120/hr.

Extended Year Services

Many of the students FLLAC serves require extended year services. In order to maximize efficiencies and provide for greater activities we bring students from our ASD/DD programs and students from our districts together in the Ayer/Shirley Schools for a five week summer program. Students in our Caldwell Alternative Middle and High School and our Caldwell Elementary Programs attended summer programs in our Fitchburg and Lunenburg buildings respectively. The programs run from Monday through Thursday and provide ongoing academic instruction, related services and fun, yet functional, activities. Over the 2017 summer period FLLAC served approximately 45 students in the ASD/DD extended year program, 15 students in the Caldwell Alternative program and 25 students in the Caldwell Elementary Program. We expect to see the number of students requiring

extended year services to increase, especially for the students in the Caldwell Elementary Program.

FLLAC Extended Year Services are provided to any student from our districts who require the services of our programs and meet the criterion for acceptance, regardless of whether they attend a FLLAC program during the school year or not. Rates for the Extended Year Program are based on the day rates, pro-rated to a shorter day, and are less than rates for our school year programs. Districts realize the day rate savings over comparable private programs as illustrated in the tuition cost comparisons on page 12 of this annual report.

Related Services

FLLAC continues to provide related services to member districts in areas including, physical therapy, occupational therapy, vision and orientation and mobility. FLLAC related service staff, working in local districts, are able to supplement district related service providers, cover for short-term needs and, in some cases, provide all required services in a specific area required by the district. Over the course of the 2016-2017 year FLLAC related service providers worked in districts including Ayer-Shirley, Leominster, Gardner, Quabbin, Fitchburg and Clinton.

Using hourly rates of \$85/hour for therapists and \$40/hour for therapy assistants for comparison, the districts are saving an average of 24% by sharing positions and position costs rather than paying for contract services. For example, 2016 costs for Physical and Occupational Therapy staff billed to districts for work conducted in the districts totaled \$393,922. Had hourly rates been used, the total cost to districts would have been \$472,360 thus districts realized a savings of \$78,438.

Virtual Education

FLLAC continues to coordinate the Edgenuity Virtual Learning platform for districts participating in the regional virtual learning effort. FLLAC takes care of the billing with Edgenuity based on district usage and facilitates meetings with the designated district

administrators. During the 2016-2017 year nearly 300 students took advantage of Edgenuity courses. Below is a table showing the number of students participating, the districts they were from and the type of course or courses they took.

By participating in the FLLAC sponsored cooperative purchasing agreement with Edgenuity participating districts were able to offer courses they might not have the economy of scale to offer individually and retain students who might look at leaving the district because of unique academic needs such as athletes participating at a level requiring them to be absent for parts of the normal school calendar. In addition districts have been able to give staff experience teaching in a virtual environment and are acquiring the skills needed to manage larger numbers of students participating in virtual education.

Districts participating in the FLLAC Virtual Education Initiative realized significant savings through this cooperative purchasing initiative. For districts utilizing the per- semester or the full time semester enrollment realized a combined savings of \$15,450 over the retail price of the Edgenuity platform.

Instructional Services Program Options – For FLLAC Standard Pricing

1-200 enrollments: IS Teaching Services - per semester course enrollment \$275

IS Teaching Services - full-time semester enrollment \$1,600

Instructional Services Program Options – Standard Edgenuity pricing

1-200 enrollments: IS Teaching Services - per semester course enrollment \$325

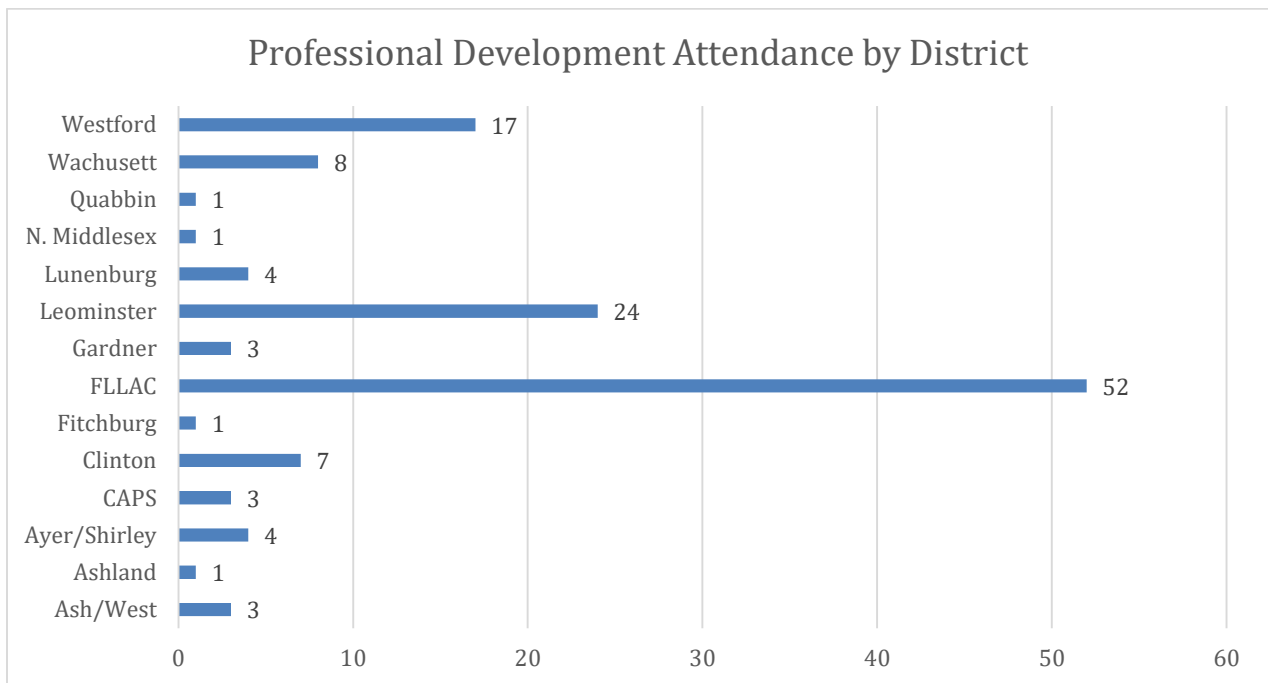
IS Teaching Services - full-time semester enrollment \$1,750

	<u>Semester Course</u>	<u>Full Time Student/Semester</u>
Ash/West	12	1
Ayer Shirley	0	33
Gardner	14	19
Leominster	4	197
West Boylston	8	15

Professional Development

FLLAC continues to provide professional development for our own staff and for staff from member districts and neighboring districts and private schools. By offering an economy of scale FLLAC is able to meet the needs of our member districts for highly specialized professional development. Over the course of the 2016-2017 school year FLLAC provided trainings on Legal Issues for School Administrators, Mental Health First Aid, CPI (restraint), Legal Issues for Educators and an “Effective Strategies for Dealing with Anxiety” train the trainer workshop. FLLAC Professional Development continues to receive outstanding feedback on evaluations.

FLLAC Professional Development is provided to educators based on the total costs of the presentation divided by an estimated number of participants. In most cases FLLAC meets or exceeds the estimated number of participants and is able to realize a modest gain. In some cases the estimated number of participants do not attend and FLLAC will take a loss on the presentation. Districts send staff to FLLAC PD because it is provided for the lowest possible price, is usually provided at the request of our districts and is provided locally and by high quality presenters.



Progress toward meeting the goals and objectives of the FLLAC Agreement

Improving the academic achievement of all students in the least restrictive environment:

FLLAC programs offer rigorous curriculum and instructional practices that are tailored to meet the unique needs of each student and to comply with all elements of a student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP). FLLAC services are provided by appropriately licensed and trained staff in the least restrictive environment as determined by the students IEP team. The FLLAC ASD/DD programs are located in public school settings and all students are provided opportunities for interaction with students in the general education settings as appropriate for the student's needs. Students in the Caldwell Elementary and Caldwell Alternative Public Day programs are provided educational and counseling services to provide them with the skills and knowledge required to return to less restrictive settings whenever possible. FLLAC students participate in MCAS or MCAS Alternative Assessments with accommodations as determined by their educational teams.

To develop and offer a variety of quality professional development opportunities to general and special education teachers, paraprofessionals, school administrators and related service providers that are designed to enhance instructional practices.

Each year FLLAC Professional Development is offered based on the needs of our member districts and FLLAC staff, as identified by the FLLAC Advisory Board (Special Education Administrators), our staff and by our Board of Directors (Superintendents). In the past year FLLAC offered two legal trainings provided by an experienced and respected school attorney, Mental Health First Aid training to FLLAC and district staff provided by a FLLAC MH First Aid certified trainer, a training on effective strategies for dealing with anxiety in the educational setting and numerous restraint trainings to a range of district and FLLAC staff by one of two CPI certified instructors. FLLAC continues to remain responsive and pro-active in addressing the specialized training needs of our member districts. FLLAC is a member of the Massachusetts Organization of Educational

Collaboratives (MOEC) and continually provides information to member districts on professional development offered by a range of other collaboratives in the region that are often jointly planned by MOEC regional committees.

To provide other educationally related programs, supports and services to our member districts and surrounding communities that are of high quality and cost effective, as directed by the FLLAC Board of Directors.

The FLLAC Collaborative continues to make progress toward providing educationally related programs, supports and services by offering both public day programs, The Caldwell and Caldwell Elementary Programs both serving students with social emotional and learning disabilities, and substantially separate programs in public schools, the Autism Spectrum and Developmental Disabilities Programs (ASD/DD Programs) for students who are on the autism spectrum or for students who have significant intellectual or developmental disabilities. FLLAC continues to offer and extended year services for students. The collaborative provides extended evaluation services at the Caldwell and Caldwell Elementary programs. FLLAC has begun to explore how to best support our districts as they respond to the complex needs of students with significant mental health needs and has started a task force that includes representatives from area agencies, district staff, a psychiatrist and a school psychologist.

FLLAC remains flexible and responsive in meeting the needs of our districts by providing high quality professional development offering that are local, are cost effective and are presented by knowledgeable and respected experts. We are able to meet the needs for both short and long term related service providers of our districts and provide licensed, skilled and experienced occupational and physical therapists, teachers of the visually impaired and orientation and mobility therapists. FLLAC also helps to meet the needs of our districts for in home ABA and tutoring services, designed to address the needs of students who are unable to attend school.

During the 2016-2017 School Year FLLAC helped our districts realize significant savings on electricity and natural gas costs through a natural gas and electricity cooperative purchasing agreement and on the costs of virtual education services through a bulk purchasing agreement with Edgenuity. FLLAC also purchased a VGo tele-presence robot for use by our member districts. The VGo allowed students who were unable to attend school due to illness to participate in classroom activities by live tele-presence. FLLAC will continue to look at the need for this service and purchase additional VGo robots as needed and with Board approval.

Progress on Implementing the FLLAC Strategic Plan

On September 15, 2016 the FLLAC Board formally voted to accept the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan identified 5 Strategic Goal areas to be addressed over the next 3-5 years. They were:

- Program Development, specifically in the area of mental health supports and evaluation capacity
- Space, both immediate (Caldwell Elementary) and long term
- Staff Development, leadership training and succession planning
- Professional Development for FLLAC and District Staff
- Marketing and Branding

Work on implementing the plan began immediately and during the spring FLLAC was able to identify and obtain a five-year lease for space for the Caldwell Elementary Program at the Squannacook Elementary School in Townsend. We also obtained an initial and informal assessment of the Caldwell Alternative building in Fitchburg to determine if there were modifications that could be made to the building and to identify priority areas that would need to be addressed. Although the initial walk through did not identify any areas that could not be addressed it was determined that there would be significant costs involved in renovating the building to make it more suitable for the program. The Board asked that the space committee continue to explore costs and options for the building

before spending any significant money on improvements and to explore other options for housing the program.

FLLAC formed a Mental Health study committee consisting of district staff, a consulting psychiatrist, a school psychologist, a representative from the Department of Mental Health and FLLAC staff involved in our Extended Evaluation and alternative programs. The group held its first meeting on February 2, 2017 with the goal of identifying supports and services that FLLAC could provide that would strengthen the capacity of our member districts to serve this increasingly complex population. The group continued to meet through the spring and had identified several areas FLLAC should explore including providing family supports, case management and emergency short-term placement options. FLLAC also started a classroom specifically for students in our ASD/DD Program who were between the ages of 18-22 and required services geared toward the development of independent life skills and vocational skills.

FLLAC formed a leadership committee to explore staff professional development and to plan for the development of future leaders. The group recommended that FLLAC offer collaborative wide PD around social justice issues. Two dates were identified in the 2017-2018 calendar to provide collaborative wide PD and the Administrative Team began work to identify appropriate presenters.

Executive Director's Summary

The FLLAC Collaborative continued to work with our Board and our districts throughout the 2016-2017 school year to provide high quality, local, individualized, flexible and responsive programs and services. Our collaborative remains a stable and financially strong organization. Over the course of the 2017 fiscal year FLLAC was able to realize a gain of over \$173,000 which will be added to the collaborative fund balance following approval by the Board. Details of our financials are included in our FY 2017 Audited Report.

FLLAC made a concerted effort to increase career education and exploration opportunities for our students in both the Caldwell Alternative and ASD/DD programs. Transportation to and from job sites and job site development were handled by our Career Education Teacher at Caldwell Alternative and by our Community Experience Coordinator in the ASD/DD Program. The Caldwell Alternative Program leased a 12-person van that greatly aided our ability to bring students to job sites. Students worked at local job sites, attended college information sessions and visited a range of community/vocational resources over the course of the year. We anticipate that in the fall of 2017 we will add a classroom specifically for students in the ASD/DD Program who are between the ages of 18 and 22 that will focus on the development of independent care and vocational skills. The Ayer Shirley Regional Schools identified an additional classroom that they could make available to FLLAC for this purpose.

FLLAC programs have remained relatively stable in terms of space during the 2016-2017 year with public school classrooms in Ayer Shirley and in Clinton and our two public day programs in Fitchburg and Lunenburg. We were able to agree to an extension with the Town of Lunenburg to have the Caldwell Elementary Program remain at the TC Passios School for the 2016-2017 School Year. Over the course of the 2016-2017 school year we looked at a number of possible sites to house this program beyond August, 2017. We continued to work with our member districts, realtors and area school districts to find adequate space for the program and when the North Middlesex Regional School District (NMRSD) became a member of the Collaborative, we identified appropriate space at the

Squannacook Elementary School. FLLAC signed a five-year lease with NMRSD to move the program in mid-August of 2017. Modifications to the classrooms were made over the spring/summer of 2017.

At FLLAC we are continually looking to anticipate the needs of our member districts. Based on discussions with our Administrative Team, the Special Education Advisory Board, representatives from other collaboratives and providers in the community it was clear that there is a need for increased mental health supports and this need was articulated in the FLLAC Strategic Plan. These supports would be provided to students in our own programs and to member districts as we continue to work to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of students with complex mental health needs. The efforts of the FLLAC Mental Health Study Group began in February of 2017 and the group will continue to meet to identify specific services, supports and potential costs.

FLLAC continued our relationship with a consulting psychiatrist, Dr. Kerry Wilkins. Dr. Wilkins observes and consults to the FLLAC Caldwell Elementary and Caldwell Alternative programs and provides professional development and consultation to staff from FLLAC, CAPS and member districts. Dr. Wilkins is also a member of the Mental Health Study Group.

In March of 2017 our ASD/DD Program Supervisor, Steve Bicchieri announced that he planned to retire at the end of the summer program in August 2017. A committee was formed to hire a replacement for Steve and, after interviewing five very strong candidates, the committee selected Megan Ritter, a teacher in one of our ASD classrooms as the new Program Supervisor. Megan had participated in the leadership group throughout the 2016-2017 year and had participated in the MOEC Leadership Development Program in the fall and winter. Megan was fortunate to have access to Steve Bicchieri during the spring and her transition as the program supervisor took place smoothly. Steve Bicchieri was a valued member of our Administrative Team since starting at FLLAC nearly 16 years ago and his presence as a supervisor, colleague and contributor will be greatly missed.

As an educational service agency we continually face new challenges, however, with our caring, diligent and dedicated staff, our supportive boards and the encouragement and

support of our families and school committees, I feel FLLAC will be able to remain true to our mission of providing cost effective, local, responsive and high quality services. We will implement the recommendations of our Board to strengthen regional efforts, continue to address the collaboratives need for stable and adequate space and, guided by the Strategic Plan, to develop new supports and services to meet the needs of an increasingly complex student population. I look forward to working with the Board, our Special Education Administrators and our staff to implement the goals and priorities identified in the plan. We are, and strive to remain, able and available “to meet the current and evolving needs of our member districts”.

FLLAC remains committed to improving the academic, social, emotional and self-help skills of our students, to preparing students to live meaningful and productive lives and to provide all of our services in a caring, effective, responsive and professional manner. Throughout the 2016-2017 school year we provided exemplary services to students, offered economies of scale that allowed our districts to serve students in the least restrictive environment and provided the kind of cost effective supports and professional development required to collectively serve students that our member districts would be unable to serve individually.

I remain proud of and impressed with our staff and the work that goes on each and every day at FLLAC. I remain appreciative of the support we receive from our Board, our special education administrators, school committees, families and our community. I look forward to working with our staff, our districts, MOEC, the Department of Education and the community to implement the recommendations of the strategic plan and to provide every student we serve with the very best educational opportunities. FLLAC will continue to remain responsive to and support our districts as they seek to effectively educate students with increasingly complex educational, mental health and social emotional needs.

We will also continue to strive to be the collaborate of choice for our member districts and surrounding districts.

Richard W. Murphy, Ph.D.
Executive Director