

# **The FLLAC Educational Collaborative 2017-2018 Annual Report**

**FLLAC Educational Collaborative  
Central Office**

**2 Shaker Road, Suite D215**

**Shirley, MA 01464**

**[www.fllac.org](http://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. Steven Meyer, Clinton Public Schools	Supt. Andre Ravenelle, Fitchburg Public Schools
Supt. Mark Pellegrino, Gardner Public Schools	Supt. Paula Deacon, Leominster Public Schools
Supt. Loxi Jo Calmes, Lunenburg Public Schools	Supt. Joan Landers, North Middlesex RSD
(Chair) Supt. Maureen Marshall, Quabbin RSD	Supt. Elizabeth Schaper, West Boylston Public
Supt. Steve Haddad, Winchendon Public Schools	

### FLLAC Executive Board Sub-Committees

Budget:	Supt. Mark Pellegrino, 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. Mary Malone
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	Mr. Brad Brooks, North Middlesex RSD
Ms. Kristin Campione, Quabbin RSD	Ms. Sherri Traina, West Boylston Public Schools
Ms. Kristina Mecelicaite, Winchendon Public Schools	

### 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
Ms. Megan Ritter, 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 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.

- 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 pro-active 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.

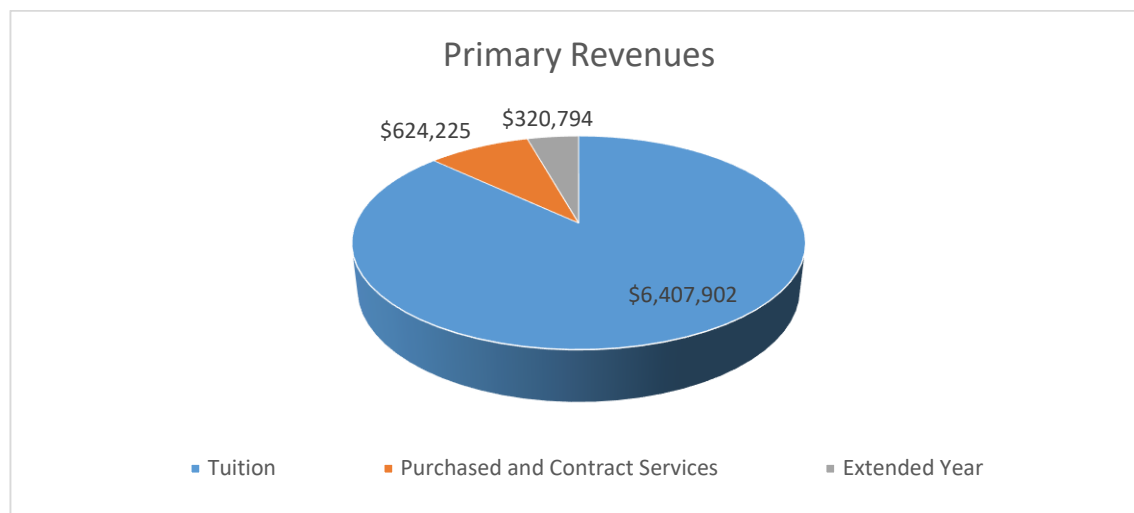
During the 2017-2018 School Year FLLAC helped our districts realize significant savings on electricity and natural gas costs through a natural gas and electricity cooperative purchasing agreement and on the costs of virtual education services through a bulk purchasing agreement with Edgenuity.

FLLAC also introduced telepresence learning devices (VGo robots) to the districts allowing them to provide telepresence learning options to students unable to attend school for extended periods. FLLAC also acted as the fiscal agent for a number of school districts participating in the Early Literacy Innovation Zone of North Central Massachusetts. By doing so FLLAC allowed participating districts, and their communities, to access the Footsteps to Brilliance early literacy application and to access funding from the United Way of North Central MA and the Community Foundation of MA.

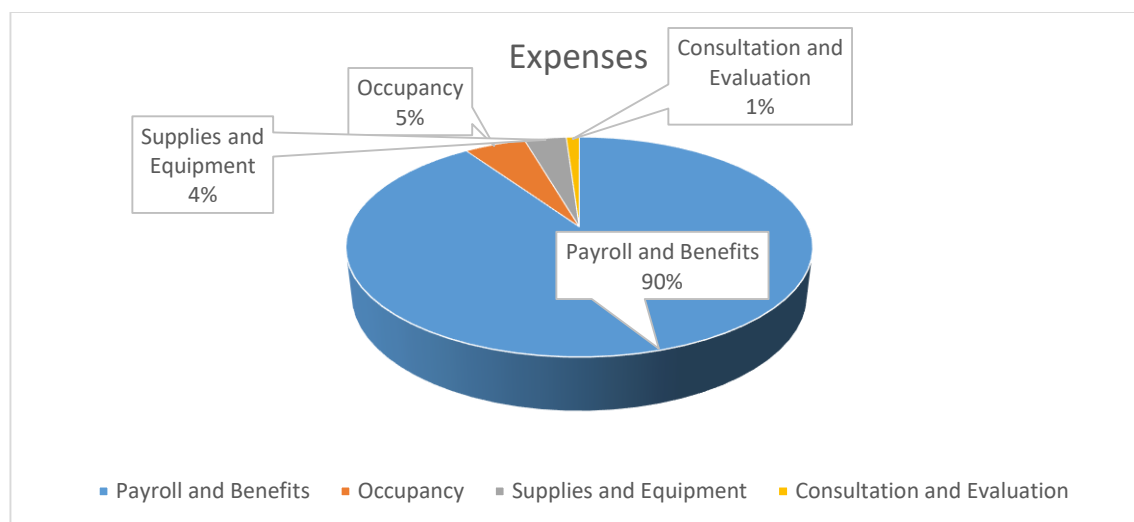
## **Guiding Principles**

- 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



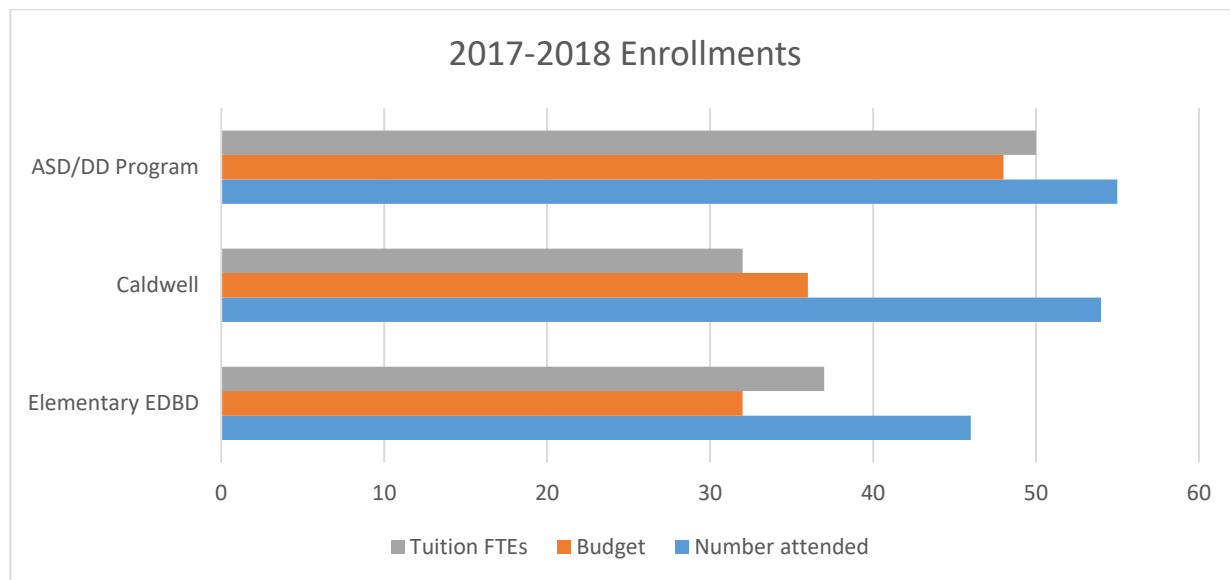
Tuition	\$ 6,407,902
Purchased and Contract Services	\$ 624,225
Extended Year	\$ 320,794



Payroll and Benefits	\$ 6,281,246
Occupancy	\$ 352,380
Supplies and Equipment	\$ 240,675
Consultation and evaluation	\$ 74,776

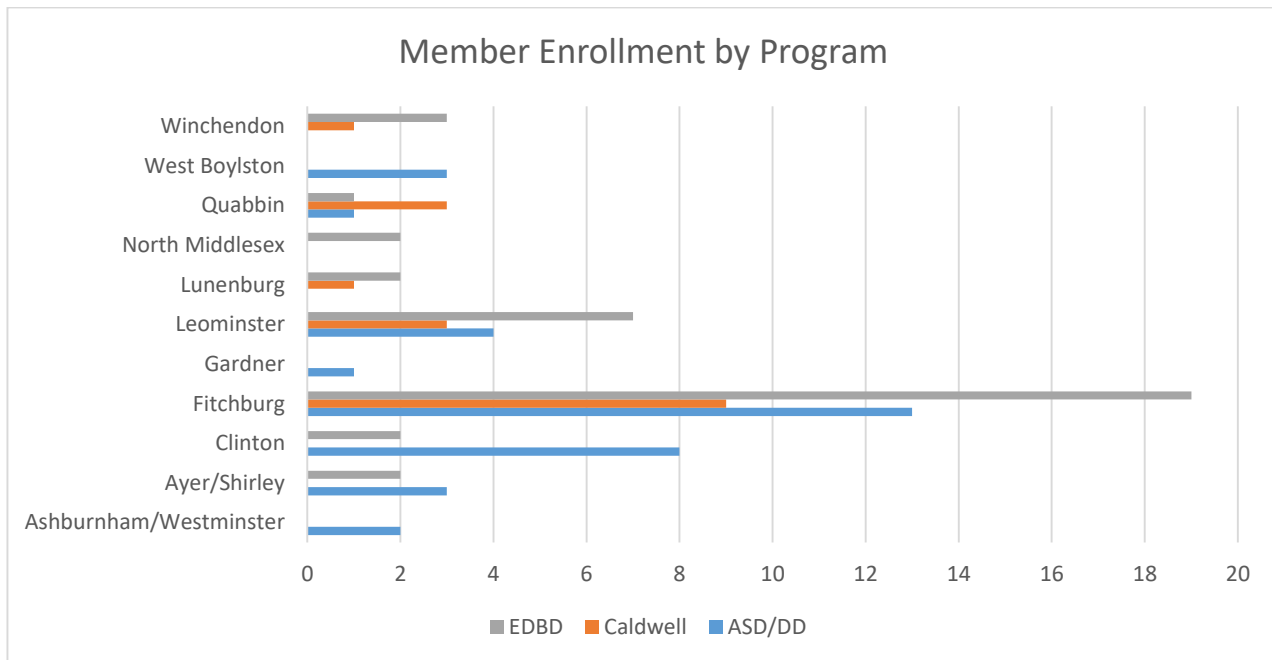
Better than 90% of Collaborative expenses continue to be related to staffing.

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

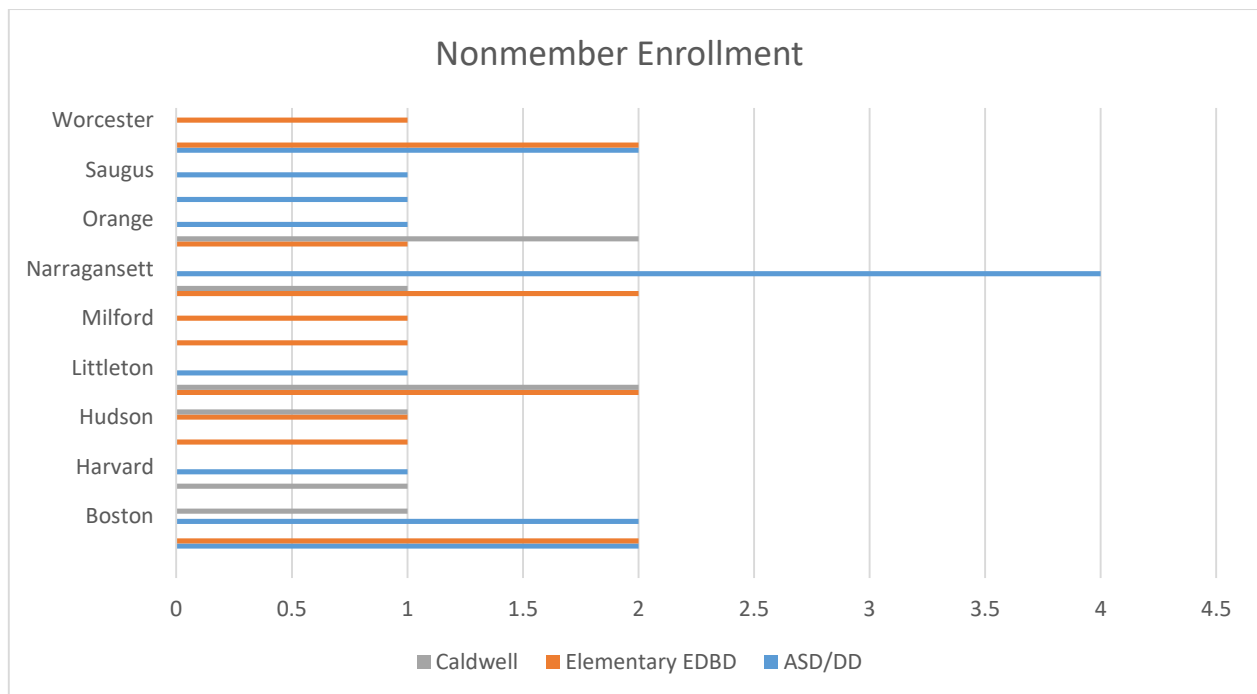


	Number attended	Budget	Tuition FTEs
Elementary EDBD	46	32	37
Caldwell	54	36	32
ASD/DD Program	55	48	50

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.



At the end of the school year, member districts had a total of 90 students enrolled in Collaborative programs. 41 students attended from Fitchburg.

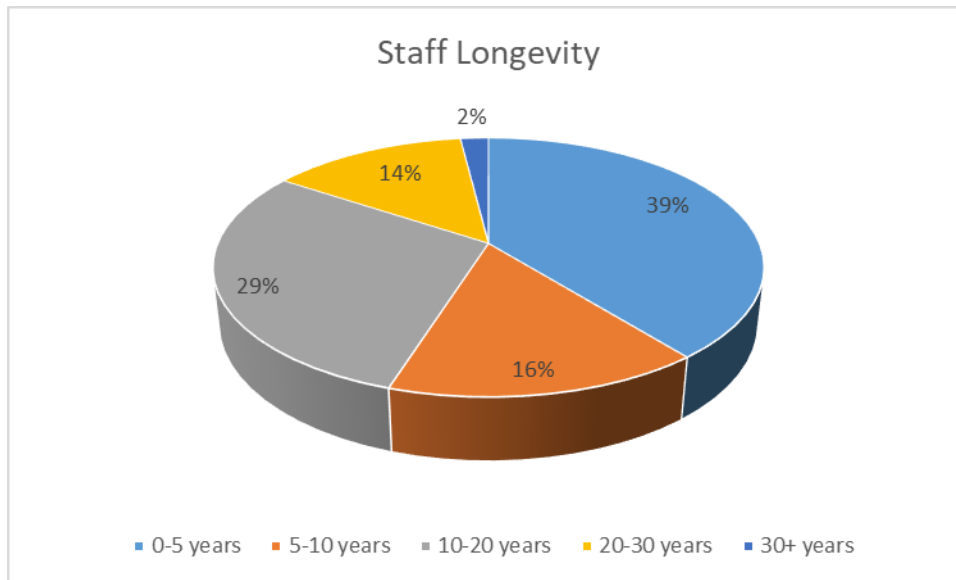


While some placements are from member or regional districts, we have noted an increase in the number of out of region placements. This trend appears to be tied to area residential programs for students who require alternative placements.

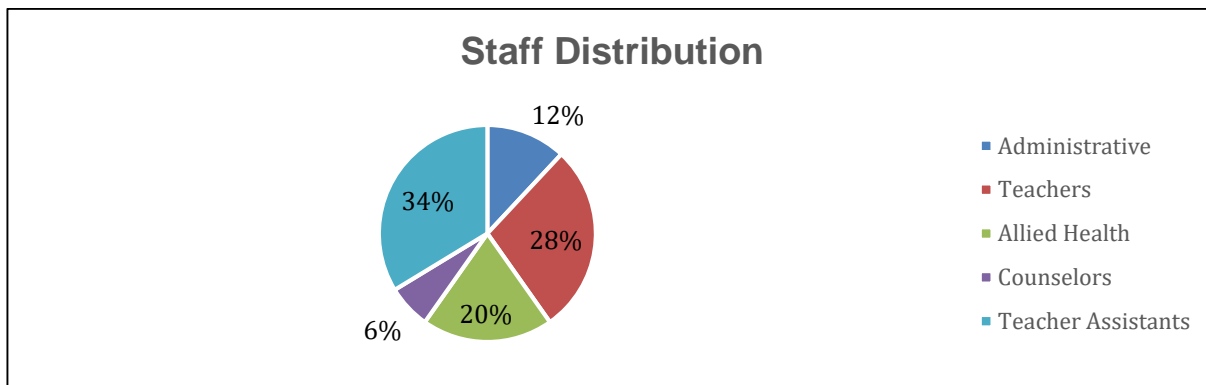


## **Staff Information**

As the chart below illustrates almost 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. There are 102 total staff.



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 10-30-18			Cost Comparisons
Program/Population	FLLAC Tuition Member	Private School Avg.*	Savings
Developmental Disabilities/Life Skills	\$55,341	\$80,127	<b>\$24,768</b>
PDD/Autism	\$55,341	\$84,086	<b>\$28,745</b>
Caldwell Elementary Emotional/Behavioral	\$55,609	\$66,135	<b>\$10,526</b>
Caldwell Alternative Emotional/LD	\$51,274	\$52,513	<b>\$1,239</b>
45 Day Extended Evaluation Pr.	CE \$13,902	\$16,533	<b>\$2,631</b>
	CA \$12,818	\$13,128	<b>\$310</b>

#### OSD Rate Sheet 10-30-18

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

Costs are based on day rate x 180 days or 45 days if compared to FLLAC 45 Day Extended Evaluation Program.

Life Skills/DD: Cotting School- \$78,381, Kennedy Day School- \$79,471, B.C Campus- \$82,531

Autism/PDD Programs: HMEA Darnell- \$76,064, Nashoba Learning- \$90,324, Crossroads- \$85,871

Caldwell Elementary Program: RFK Lancaster Day, \$50,125, Walker Home- \$74,435, Lighthouse- \$73,845

Caldwell Alternative School: McLean Arlington Academy- \$64,546, Wayside Academy- \$46,369, Victor School- \$46,624

## **Special Education Administrator** **Satisfaction Survey Results**

FLLAC conducted a satisfaction survey of our member district Special Education Administrators in November of 2018 using Survey Monkey or a traditional paper survey. 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 districts Special Education Administrators replied to the survey.

The results of this survey indicate that in 2017-2018 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 the respondents either strongly agreed (57%) or agreed (43%).
- FLLAC programs and services were cost effective, 100% of the respondents either strongly agreed (43%) or agreed (57%).
- “It is important to me that FLLAC provides programs that are located in my district or in a district nearby”, 100% either strongly agreed (71%) or agreed (29%).
- FLLAC staff were experienced, skilled and knowledgeable in meeting the needs of the students they serve, 100% either strongly agreed (57%) or agreed (43%).
- FLLAC Program Staff were responsive to my needs, 100% either strongly agreed (43%) or agreed (57%).

- FLLAC staff were effective when dealing with families, 86% either strongly agreed (43%) or agreed (43%), 14% had no opinion.
- The FLLAC Administration was responsive to the needs of my district, 100% of the respondents either strongly agreed (67%) or agreed (33%) with the statement.
- FLLAC staff provided services in a caring and respectful manner, 100% of the respondents either strongly agreed (57%) or agreed (43%) with the statement.
- How likely were you to recommend FLLAC Programs to other district administrators of respondents said they would be extremely likely (57%) to do so, said they would be very likely (28%) to do so or said they would be moderately likely (15%) to do so.

Recommendations:

- Vocational skills leading to communication within the community and opportunities for successful transitions after school.
- Offer professional development opportunities for related services staff providers and mental health topics.
- For district to receive an email when a parent schedules/completes a program tour (so district knows what steps are next).

## **Program Descriptions**

In 2017-2018 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 MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education approved Public Day Programs. Both programs provide educational and therapeutic programming for students with learning disabilities, emotional issues, behavioral issues and, 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 the individual district. All of the students in the ASD/DD Program have been found eligible for special education services.

The FLLAC Extended Evaluation Program provided 45-day 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 received academic and therapeutic services as part of the school program. In addition students in the 45-Day Program received evaluation and assessment services as identified by the student's educational team and as requested by the sending district.

Students who completed the program received 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 could be provided with educational evaluations, projectives, psychological, risk assessment and behavioral evaluations and other assessments as determined by the referring team. The overall goal for both the Caldwell and the Caldwell Elementary Extended Evaluation Programs is to prepare students to return to less restrictive environments and to provide districts with recommendations on how to provide services in less restrictive settings.

# **Caldwell Alternative School**

**44 Wanoosnoc Road, Fitchburg, Massachusetts 01420**

**Program Phone: 978-345-5250**

**www.fillac.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 ***mindsets and goals; values and relationships; thoughts feelings and emotions; and serious peer conflicts.*** School Counselors provided milieu crisis intervention and consultation to classroom staff.

**Community involvement** continues to develop with the addition of the school van. We continue to 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, 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; 4 students were enrolled and 4 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 2017-18, referrals and dispositions are as follows:

<b><u>Referrals</u></b>	<b><u>Enrolled</u></b>	<b><u>Not Enrolled</u></b>	<b><u>Extended Evaluation Referrals</u></b>	<b><u>Enrolled</u></b>	<b><u>Not Enrolled</u></b>
47	18	Other program – 20 Declined Interview -8	11	4	Other program–7



### **Graduates/Transitions/Discharges**

Out of the five seniors who started this year, Caldwell graduated one senior with a diploma. Two students transitioned back to their sending school district, one moved to another district and school program, and the fourth went to another collaborative program. As a result of her internship experience in a pre-school program while at Caldwell, the graduate was offered a position as teacher assistant in a pre-school program.



### **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, science 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*



Clockwise from top right: 1. United Way, Day of Caring – preparing meals  
2. Woodshop 3. Production Crew 4. Manalow's – dog daycare internship site and  
5. Student Honor Roll lunch.

- *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*
- ✓ *Kayaking*
- ✓ *Hayride and apple picking*
- ✓ *Winter Feast and Pancake Breakfast*
- ✓ *Field Day*
- ✓ *Volunteer Bell-Ringing for Salvation Army*



### **Prioritizing Reading**

Caldwell continues to support direct instruction to enhance reading skills within our student population. The first class of each day is dedicated to 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.*

During this school year, we upgraded the LANGUAGE! level interventions with current editions of texts and supplemental materials and on-line learning features.

### **Professional Development - Consultation and Training**

Caldwell continues to grow in skills and understanding through the psychiatric consultation with Dr. Kerry Wilkins. In addition to staff professional development opportunities, clinical and programmatic review, and individual critical case presentations of identified students, the staff and program are able to enhance services and

understanding of students' need utilizing Dr. Wilkin's "Clinically-Informed Intervention Planning" and "Scale of Emotional Regulation".

To supplement FLLAC Collaborative agency-wide training offerings: a) Trauma/poverty, b) Cultural Sensitivity and c) Universal Design for Learning. Caldwell also enlisted the consultation/training services of Kathryn Brady and developed the following professional development goals and objectives for program improvement.

***Goal:***

Students will have access to resources and staff in order to realize one year's growth in one year's time in both academic and social/emotional learning (SEL) areas.

***Objectives:***

1. Students will increase time-on-learning in the classroom. (This will be observed as improved student attendance, student engagement with learning tasks, and a reduction in student removal from the classroom.)
2. Students will receive modifications and accommodations as written in each IEP under PLEP A and B, with a plan to ensure that all students' content, methodology and performance needs are met, similar to UDL guidelines.
3. Given directed instruction in SEL, students will demonstrate an increase in social competence and school adjustment, responding to everyday life situations with adaptive and constructive behavior.

***Specific Trainings included:***

Increasing Student Engagement through Accommodations for Learning

- a. Addressing interrupted staff contact/teacher absence; effective classroom environment
- b. Academics and Social Emotional Learning
- c. Impact of Anxiety on Learning

# **Caldwell Elementary School – EDBD Program**

66 Brookline Road  
Townsend, MA 01469

## **Philosophy**

We believe that every child can learn and acquire the social and emotional 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 placed within the Program on a long-term basis or for a 45 Day Assessment.

Caldwell Elementary began the year with twenty five (25) students enrolled and ended the year with Forty one (41) students.

### **Long-term referrals for 2017-2018 total: 6 Students**

Students enrolled: 3 Students

Parents chose other program: 2 students

Not an appropriate fit for program: 1 student

**45 Day referrals for 2017-2018 total: 22 Students**

Students enrolled: 14 Students

Parents/guardian chose other program: 8 Students

**Transitions from long-term placement 2017-2018 school year:**

Back to district: 0 Students

Transitions to a more restrictive environment: 2 Students

End of school year transition back to in-district public school: 0 Students

End of school year transition to other FLLAC Program: 1 Student

**Transitions from 45 Day placement 2017-2018 school year:**

Transition to long-term placement at Caldwell Elementary: 14 students

Transition to other FLLAC Programs: 0 Students

Transition back to in-district public school: 0 Students

Transition to a more restrictive setting: 0 Students

End of school year transition to other FLLAC Programs: 0 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 clinician acts as a liaison to the sending school districts and are available to provide support to parents and guardians. The Caldwell Elementary program is located in the former Squannacook Elementary building in Townsend. We have an onsite Licensed Practical Nurse available to our 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.

### **Activities**

Community based field trips to promote the social integration of our students into the community, while incorporating academic material into self-guided visits and tours, for grades K-6. Such opportunities offer the ability to develop focused connections between curriculum and event sites.



Classrooms made regular trips to the Townsend Public Library and have participated in various programming at the library including story time, book fair, research projects, and viewing of Festival of Trees with a display of decorated book themed trees.

Last December, Caldwell Elementary School students and staff took a wintery walk down to the Townsend Senior Center to spread some holiday cheer. The students began with a reading of "'Twas the Night Before Christmas," performed by several brave student volunteers willing to speak in front of our large crowd of seniors. Then accompanied by staff, students sang and rang the bells along with some of their favorite carols they had been practicing in music therapy for weeks, culminating in a bell solo to "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." After the performance, students walked around and chatted with some of the seniors who were excited to share their gratitude. Seniors were then presented with homemade cards and artwork the students created by hand. Seniors, students, and staff all had a wonderful time!



We made our annual visit to Lanni Orchards. The students always look forward to this trip as we move into the fall season. Each child enjoyed a hayride, apple picking, picking a pumpkin from the pumpkin patch and learning about the Orchard's operations. The visit concluded with a fresh glass of apple cider.

Caldwell Elementary ended the school year with one of the favorite end of the year traditions by participating in a field trip and barbeque to Pearl Hill State Forest. The children enjoyed a day of swimming, hiking building sand castles and enjoying nature.

### **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.) re-enforcers. 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 contracted Behavioral Psychologists are available on an as needed basis. Behavioral support plans and data are reviewed and updated routinely by the program staff.

### **Growth of prior initiatives**

#### **Music Therapy-**

Caldwell Elementary continues to strengthen and embrace music therapy within the program. Expressive therapy interns from Lesley University have become welcome members of our school community and have added more depth to our music therapy programming. 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.



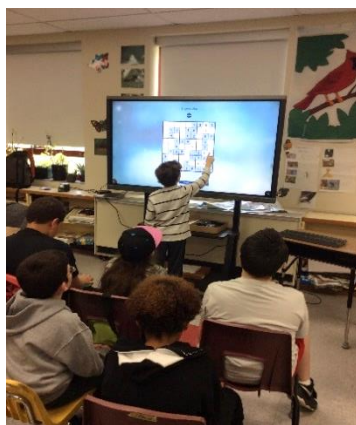
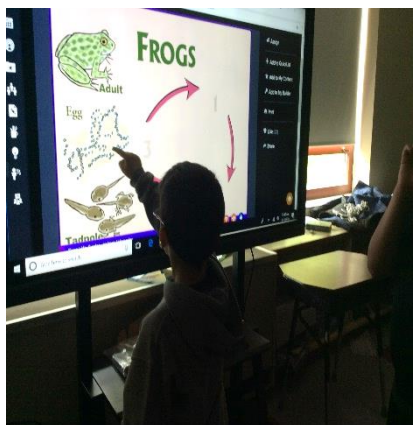
#### **Mindfulness-**

Caldwell Elementary continues to integrate mindfulness activities into our program on a daily basis. Teachers, counselors and all related service providers have adopted mindful activities into the schedules and practices with our students. Mindfulness activities include: breathing exercises, guided imagery, mindful movement, yoga and listening to music. Scholarly Research finds that mindfulness practice decreases stress and anxiety, increases attention, improves interpersonal relationships and strengthens compassion.

## 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, several iPads, two learning centers with two Clear Touch Interactive 55" Board and several desktop computers for students to use to access the curriculum. Given the diversity of our population, technology has been found to be a 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.



## **New Initiatives**

### Expansion to include 7<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms-

Caldwell Elementary has developed and proposed an expansion to include 7<sup>th</sup> grade. These classrooms would utilize space on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Squannacook Elementary. This model would provide a homeroom as a base classroom and include a rotating schedule for ELA, Math and Science. This model will prepare students to move from a self-contained classroom model to navigate more transitions and challenges of subject specific classrooms with continued therapeutic support in order to meet the demands of a less restrictive middle school program.

### Addition of Prevention and Integration Specialists-

Prevention and Integrations Specialists would work alongside our Licensed Clinicians and Special Education Teachers as a part of a collaborative team. Roles and responsibilities would include:

- Provide prevention techniques and tools to support classrooms.
- Provide counseling skills as needed under the supervision of licensed clinicians.
- Communicates pertinent information to appropriate staff.
- Assists in the development of behavior support plans.
- Monitoring data and application of behavior support plans.
- Documentation of adverse behaviors and data analysis.
- Provide crisis intervention and de-escalation strategies for dysregulated students.
- Available to provide and assist Crisis Prevention Institute model (CPI).
- Conduct processing and reflection session before re-entering classroom.
- Works collaboratively with Teachers and Assistants to ensure implementation of behavior plans.

**FLLAC**  
**EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE**  
**ASD and DD Programs**  
150 School Street, Clinton, Ma. 01510



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Program Phone: 978-368-1431

[www.fllac.org](http://www.fllac.org)

Program Fax: 978-368-1507

The Autism Spectrum Disorder classrooms (ASD), Developmental Disabilities (DD) classrooms continue to provide specialized services to students with special needs in the context of the public school setting. Students present with profound deficits that impact their ability to function independently and make effective progress in the general education setting. All referrals made to these classrooms come through the district child-study process where district teams determined that the student required a more intensive educational setting in order to make effective progress

**Population:**

Students present with a variety of academic, social, and behavioral challenges. While some students are academically competitive, a large majority of students present with significant delays in cognition, self-regulation skills, motor skill deficits, and expressive and receptive language delays. In addition, some students present with significant medical needs that require direct nursing support. Students require a high level of adult supervision and assistance to keep them safe and implement all of their educational goals and objectives.

**Standard Diagnosis Include:**

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (forms may include: Classic, Asperger's Syndrome, PDD-Nos, etc.)
- Down Syndrome
- Intellectual Disability
- Rare Genetic Disorders (Charge Syndrome, Wolf Hirschhorn Syndrome, Fragile X, etc.)
- Multiple Disabilities (Autism/ADHD/Sensory Processing, Autism/Spina Bifida/Intellectual, Autism/ODD)
- Complex Medical Care needs

**Program Model:**

The ASD/DD Program is an intensive language and behaviorally based program with a low student to teacher ratio (2:1). All Students receive close adult supervision for all academic instruction, personal care tasks, and behavioral interventions. Each classroom utilizes various instructional techniques including discrete trials, small groups, hands-on and multi-sensory learning experiences, behavioral modification, and positive behavioral supports suitable for children with special needs. All students receive instruction in reading, spelling, math, language arts, science, and social studies. Daily living skills are incorporated within the context of the daily routine to teach safety, self-awareness, and independence. Students are provided with an opportunity to integrate into the general educational setting when it is deemed appropriate by their educational team. These integrated opportunities can include, but are not limited to, lunch, recess, assemblies, academic instruction, and specials (music, gym, library art, etc.).

The ASD/DD Program currently utilizes an integrated therapy model to deliver therapeutic services to students. Integrated therapy incorporates the same therapy approach as “push-in” but adds additional structure to the relationships with teachers and overall process. In this service delivery model supports are provided in the classroom where the student is receiving instruction. Therapy is provided in a less restrictive setting and does not remove the student from the classroom or instruction. It also helps students to generalize their skills beyond the pull-out therapy setting and provides generalized benefits for all students and their teaching staff.

**Referrals:**

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

*Enrollment:* Start of School Year: 43 students

End of School Year: 51 students

Summer 2018 Enrollment: 54

*Referrals:* 2017-2018 total school year referrals: 21

2017-2018 students accepted for placement: 15

### Reasons for who are not placed in ASDDD Program

- Parent/District chose a more restrictive placement.
- Parent/District agreed to keep students in their current placement and withdrew referral.
- Student required a therapeutic EDBD program with clinical counseling services and appropriate peer models.
- Parent/Guardian did not call back to set up program visit.

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 with significant behavioral needs. 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.

### 2017-2018 school year transitions

Transitions back to in-district public school:	0 students
Graduated/Transition to adult services:	4 students
Transitions to a more restrictive setting:	0 student
Moved to a non-member district or out of state:	0 student
Student Passed Away	1 Student

### Census:

The ASD and DD programs receive budgetary support based on 48 students. During the 2017-2018 school year the student census averaged 50 students.

### Classroom census in June 2018

Elementary ASD I Page Hilltop	6 students
Elementary ASD II Page Hilltop	6 students

Elementary DD Page Hilltop	3 students
Middle School ASD I Clinton	6 students
Middle School ASD II Clinton	5 students
Middle School DD Clinton	5 students
High School ASD Ayer-Shirley	7 students
High School DD Ayer-Shirley	8 students
18-22 Transitional Classroom	5 students

### **Staffing:**

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

#### **DESE licensed staff**

- 1 Administrator
- 9 Teachers

#### **Professionally Licensed Staff**

- 5 Therapists
- 1 Therapy Assistant
- 1 Family Support Coordinator
- 2 Nurses (RN & LPN)
- 1 Music Therapist

#### **Highly Qualified Support Staff**

- 19 Paraprofessionals
- 2 Job Coaches
- 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, LICSW 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, self-advocacy and work endurance. Community work site experiences include Ayer-Shirley Mail Delivery, Honey Pot Bakers, Clinton Office (Inventory & Clean Up), Tiny's Restaurant, Nashoba Park Assisted Living, Cell Treats at Phoenix Park, the Perkins School Laundry, Pit Shop Barber, All Things Jeep, Ayer Police Station, and the Ayer Childcare Program.

**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, Monty Tech Restaurant, Seven Hills Fitness, Arc Adult Program etc.

### **2017-2018 Program Changes & Achievement:**

- The ASD/DD Program hired a new program supervisor
- Accepted 15 new students from member and non-member districts
- Completed a program assessment, reconfigured classrooms, and reassigned students to better meet their needs, allow for better program supports, and make room for more referrals.
- Opened our new 18 - 22 Transitional classroom (Vocational & Community based experiences).
- Hired a second job coach to service both of our high school classrooms (Pre-Vocational Experiences).
- Developed more community based work sites for students aged 18 – 22.
- Reconfigured the Elementary DD classroom to meet the needs of students with complex medical needs.
- Developed a 1:1 Nursing Policy form for privately hired nurses attending school with a student.
- Provided an effective mentorship/induction program to three new teachers and one new program supervisor.
- Purchased and implemented new curriculum (Unique Learning Systems) in all nine classrooms.
- Purchased new technology (2 Cleartouch Interactive Screens)

### **2017-2018 Initiatives:**

- Train staff to utilize ACE Software
- Purchase more Cleartouch Interactive Screens
- Increase BCBA Services to meet the high demand of student referrals coming in

with significant behavioral needs.

- Assess program and develop a plan to meet the influx of incoming referrals.
- Continue to promote and bring in referrals for our complex medical care classrooms.
- Provide more professional development activities for teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Family support coordinator will provide more information and supports to our student's families.
- Increase our association with allied agencies and providers.
- Launch our new educator evaluation protocol.
- Launch an additional high school program to meet the needs of our current student enrollment and future referrals.
- Reassess and improve our Transitional Services for students (14+ years old).
- Develop a Technology Plan and improve Technology Services within our program.
- Re-evaluate the names and description of each classroom to authentically represent the services and student population in our program.
- Develop a brochure that provides information about the ASD/DD program and services.



## TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM



## GRADUATION





## PROM



## 18-22 Transitional Classroom

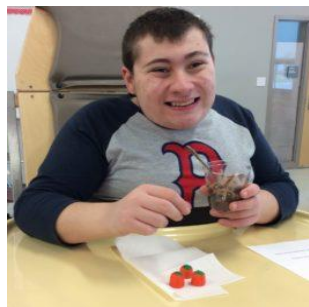




## SPRING EXTRAVAGANZA



## Work Hard / Play Hard





# SPECIAL OLYMPICS



## **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 2017-2018 year the program, located at the Caldwell Alternative and Caldwell Elementary Schools served approximately 18 students (4 at CA and 14 at CE).

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 initial evaluations were for students' whose needs were of such a high level that the district felt that an extended evaluation 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.

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 Devereux. Ongoing communication with community providers enabled program 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 2017-2018 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 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 other 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 supports including the introduction of telepresence learning robots (VGo and BEAM), introducing and helping to fiscally manage the Footsteps to Brilliance early literacy innovation zone 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 2017-2018 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. Districts also realize savings through ongoing consultation and advice. In 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 for 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 2017-2018 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 Aide, 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.



FLLAC staff also participated in two half day trainings over the course of the school year. One training, provided by the Assabet Valley Collaborative, focused on increasing cultural awareness. The second half day training focused on understanding and implementing Universal Design for Learning and was presented by Dr. Kristen Rodriguez.

### **Home 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 2017-2018 year our ABA, and home tutor served 1 student in their home. In addition, one student in Clinton utilized the VGo Telepresence learning robot to attend school while at home due to medical issues. The student was so successful that the Clinton Public Schools decided to purchase the VGo from FLLAC. FLLAC plans to purchase additional telepresence devices and 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 tutoring services to one student. 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 Townsend 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 43 students in the ASD/DD

extended year program, 15 students in the Caldwell Alternative program and 26 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 11 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 2017-2018 year FLLAC related service providers worked in districts including Ayer-Shirley, Leominster, Gardner, Quabbin, Fitchburg, Narragansett, Montachusett Technical High School 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 19% by sharing positions and position costs rather than paying for contract services. For example, 2018 costs for Nursing, Physical and Occupational Therapy staff billed to member districts totaled \$451,329. Had hourly rates been used, the total cost to districts would have been \$560,203 thus districts realized a savings of \$108,874.

### **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 2017-2018 year 368 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.

District participating in the FLLAC Virtual Education Initiative realized significant savings through this cooperative purchasing effort. For districts utilizing the one- semester courses realized a combined savings of \$18,700 over the retail price of the Edgenuity platform. A total of 374 students used the program at a savings of \$50/student.

#### 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**

**Edgenuity: Number of Students in attendance per semester**

Leominster	42	253	18		
Ash/West	15	8		5	
Gardner	6	5	1		
Narragansett	1				
West Boylston	4			2	
Ayer Shirley		2	12		
	68	268	31	7	Total:374

**Footsteps to Brilliance**

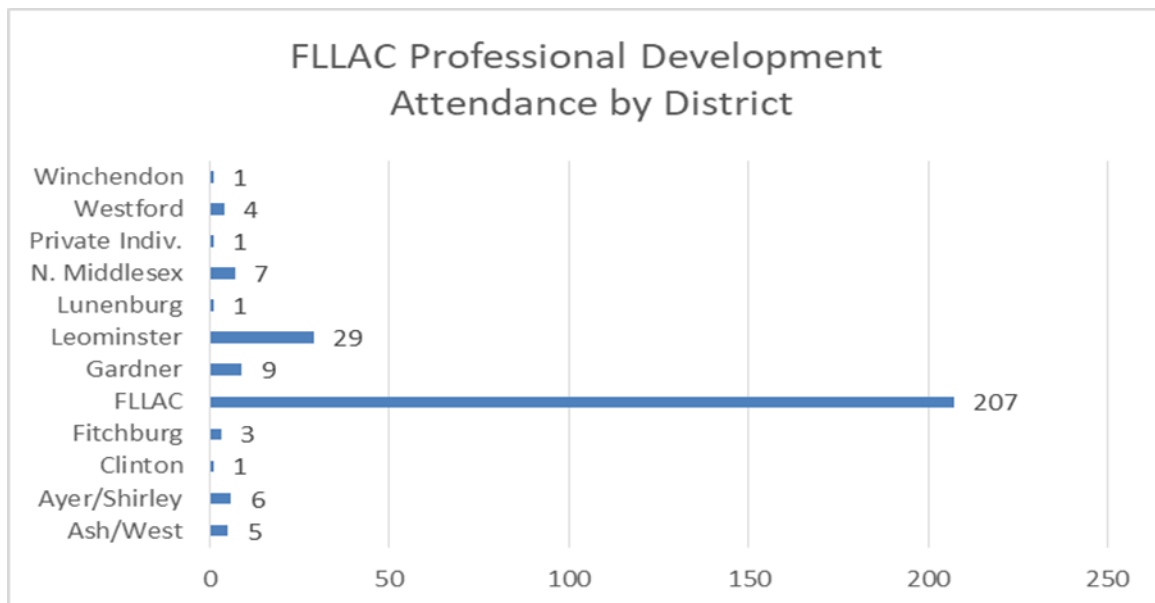
Over the course of the 2017-2018 school year FLLAC, working with a number of member and non-member districts located along the Rt. 2 corridor and the United Way/Community Foundation of North Central MA and entered into an agreement to create an Early Literacy Innovation Zone using the Footsteps to Brilliance (F2B) early literacy application. FLLAC acted as the fiscal agent on behalf of a number of participating district and enabled those districts to access grant funding from the United Way/Community Foundation that funded half of the cost for a five year contract to provide the F2B application to the districts and their respective communities. Districts that participated in the funding through FLLAC included Clinton, Gardner, Narragansett, Winchendon, Lunenburg and Leominster. FLLAC was pleased to act on behalf of these districts to reach approximately 7370 students in pre-k through grade 3 living in those communities. F2B has proven to be remarkably helpful in increasing the number of actual words read by young students thereby providing districts with hard data demonstrating increased early literacy in their communities.

The Early Literacy Innovation Zone is an innovate approach to increasing early literacy skills on a regional basis and could serve as a model for other regions across the country. This five year project involved a commitment from districts and the United Way/Community Foundation of North Central to utilize an easy to access, multilingual, and effective technology application to improve reading skills in young children. By partnering with the United Way/Community Foundation FLLAC was able to save participating districts almost \$2,500,000 over the course of the grant.

## **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 2017-2018 school year FLLAC provided trainings on Legal Issues for School Administrators, Mental Health First Aide, CPI (restraint) and Legal Issues for Educators. FLLAC Professional Development continues to receive outstanding feedback on evaluations.

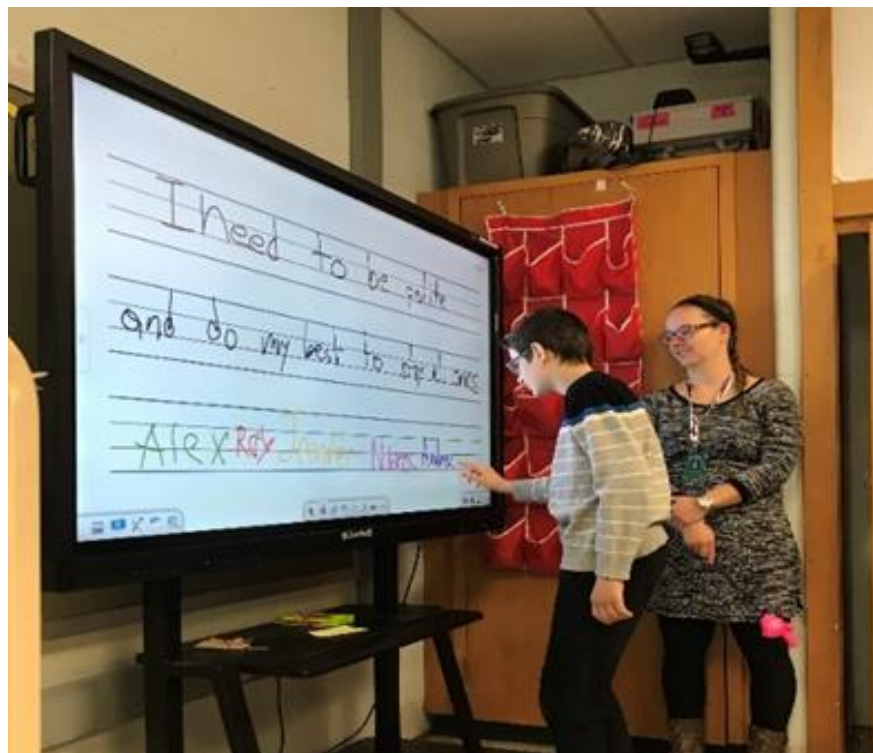
FLLAC Professional Development is provided to educators based on the total costs of the presentation divided by an estimated number of participants. In most cases FLLAC meets or exceeds the estimated number of participants and is able to realize a modest gain. In some cases, the estimated number of participants 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.



At the Caldwell Alternative Program Kathy Brady, a well-known presenter on responsive classrooms and UDL, worked with the staff throughout the 2017-2018 year on how to implement UDL responsive classrooms and staff found her ongoing support and mentoring very effective. The Caldwell Alternative Program also trained staff in the use of the “LANGUAGE!” reading program.

Staff at the Caldwell Elementary Program were trained in how to implement Adventure Based Programming. They also were trained in how to use and implement “Clear Touch” programs and applications.

Staff in the ASD/DD program were trained in and implemented the “Unique Learning Systems” curriculum that uses “News to You” to tier instruction in reading, vocabulary and current events for each student. Staff were also trained to use the “Clear Touch” screen programs and applications and plan to introduce additional “Clear Touch” boards into classrooms in the future.



## **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 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. 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 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 2017-2018 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 telepresence 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 telepresence. 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 and long term.
- Staff Development, leadership training and succession planning.
- Professional Development for FLLAC and District Staff.
- Marketing and Branding.

In the February of 2017 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 45 day and alternative programs. The group held 4 meetings over the course of 2017-2018 year 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 study group identified several areas FLLAC should explore including providing family supports, case management and emergency short-term placement options. The MH study group identified the INTERFACE Referral Service of William James College as an organization

capable of providing supports to families in our districts and FLLAC entered into an agreement with INTERFACE and four districts, Leominster, Lunenburg, North Middlesex and Ayer/Shirley to provide referral supports to those districts and the communities they serve communities and was able to save each participating district \$2500 by offering to provide regional support for INTERFACE outreach in the communities.

In September of 2017 the Caldwell Elementary Program successfully moved into the Squannacook Elementary School in Townsend after obtaining a five year lease with the option to expand. In the spring of 2018 the Board approved an RFP seeking space for the Caldwell Alternative after determining the current space cannot be maintained as a suitable learning environment for our students. The Board also approved the Executive Director to receive training as a Chief Procurement Officer for the purposes of acquiring real property.

Over the course of the 2017-2018 year FLLAC reached out to a number of constituents, including our Special Education Administrators and our staff through surveys, meetings and email. We asked them to describe how they felt about FLLAC, how they perceived the organization and to describe characteristics of the FLLAC based on their experiences. Respondents felt that FLLAC was a student centered, reliable, responsive and effective organization. They felt that FLLAC should consider changing our logo and should develop strategies to reach out to those members of the community who may not know what FLLAC is or what we do. We plan to use the information we collected to work with a Branding Committee during the coming year to more efficiently and effectively tell our story.

## **Executive Director's Summary**

The FLLAC Collaborative continued to work with our Board and our districts throughout the 2017-2018 school year to provide high quality, local, individualized, flexible and responsive programs and services. Our collaborative remains a stable and ongoing concern. Over the 2018 fiscal year FLLAC was able to realize a gain of over \$330,000 which will be added to the collaborative fund balance following approval by the Board. Details of our financials are included in our annual Audited Report for FY 2018.

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 and job coaches in the ASD/DD Program. The ASD/DD Program also hired a second job coach to support the efforts to get our students out to community and work experience 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. Caldwell alternative students interned at a tattoo shop in Fitchburg, Home Depot and a dog day care center in Leominster. Plans are underway to offer additional sites at Leominster Hospital and a local music shop. FLLAC has also partnered with the Leominster Center for Excellence to provide additional internship sites and to introduce the “Big Picture Learning” concept to Caldwell Alternative Staff.

FLLAC programs have remained relatively stable in terms of space during the 2017-2018 year with public school classrooms in Ayer-Shirley and in Clinton and our Caldwell Alternative public day program in Fitchburg. We were pleased to be able to move the Caldwell Elementary Program into the Squannacook School in Townsend and, with a five year lease with NMRSD, plans are underway to grow the program and renovate additional space on the second floor of the building to open for the 2018-2019 School Year. The Board also agreed that there was a need for new space for the Caldwell Alternative Program and issued an RFP to Lease or Purchase space with the goal of moving the program in the summer of 2019.

At FLLAC we are continually trying 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 look 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 identified at least three areas where FLLAC might be able to support our districts, assistance with referrals, assistance with transitions and the need for support of a case worker/social worker and the need for a program or location where students would be able to transition back from a hospital of more restrictive setting.

FLLAC continued our relationship with a consulting psychiatrist, Dr. Kerry Wilkins, who 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 also was an active member of the MH Study Group.

The ASDDD Program began the year with a new Program Supervisor, Megan Ritter. Megan did an outstanding job working with her staff to more effectively meet the needs of students presenting with complex medical needs and of students who were in the 18-22 year age range. The program saw an increase in referrals and Megan has introduced a number of new initiatives including new “Clear Touch” technology in the classrooms, the “Unique Learning Systems” reading and literacy program and plans to implement the ACES curriculum in the program next year.

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 including the introduction of new instructional and curricular materials such as “Clear Touch” technology, “LEARNING!”, the ACES Curriculum and “Unique Learning Systems”.

I look forward to continuing to work with the Board, our Special Education Administrators and our staff to implement the goals and priorities identified in the Strategic 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, responsive and professional manner. Throughout the 2017-2018 school year we provided exemplary services to students, offered economies of scale that allowed our districts to serve students in the least restrictive environment, provided innovative and creative solutions to developing issues such as telepresence learning options and improving early literacy with the Footsteps to Brilliance app and the INTERFACE referral service. I also look forward to finding appropriate space for our Caldwell Alternative Program as we continue to make sure our programs provide the best possible learning environment for all of our students.

FLLAC provided the kind of cost effective programs, services, supports and professional development required to collectively serve those students that our member districts would not be able 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 sincerely appreciative of the support we receive from our Board, our special education administrators, school committees, families and our community. I am pleased to continue to work with our staff, our districts, The Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives (MOEC), the Department of Education and the community to implement the recommendations of the strategic plan and to provide every FLLAC student the very best educational opportunities available.

Richard W. Murphy, Ph.D.

Executive Director