



**Mission: *To work in partnership with districts to provide programs and services of the highest quality and to improve results for students.***

## Executive Director’s Report: May 2014

The following topics are offered for discussion at our May Board meeting:

**CAPS Success Stories.** From Deborah Page, the Kelly Day Elementary School teacher: “I have a wonderful success story. Today in music, Margaret (KDE student; not her real name) had a music buddy named Diana (1st grader; not her real name). Diana worked beautifully with Margaret, clapping her hands & helping Margaret through the movements. Margaret was very accepting of this, which says a lot for Diana. When I went to get lunches for my class, Diana sought me out and said, "Tell Margaret she did a nice job in music and that I had fun!" Ed, I think there's a potential special education teacher named Diana!”

The other success story involves the Language Acquisition Program (LAP) at Bennett School, and the Commission for the Deaf and area school districts referring more young children to the program. Most recently, the Dracut public school sent a referral and arranged a parent and school representative visit. The student will be placed shortly and enrollment is anticipated to be at 9 students by June. The success of the program has created a need for a kindergarten- early elementary program for these students.

**Status of Programs and Services.** . As of May 9, enrollment in CAPS programs was 96. Enrollment in specific CAPS programs from January 2014 to April 2014 is shown in the following table. We have received five (5) referrals since the March Board meeting.

<b>CAPS Enrollment by Program: January 2014 to May 2014</b>					
<b>Program</b>	<b>Jan.</b>	<b>Feb.</b>	<b>March</b>	<b>April</b>	
Jr/Sr High	14	14	16	16	
Gateway	16	17	18	19	
Odyssey	4	4	5	4	
Kelly Day Pre	8	8	8	8	
Kelly Day Elem	7	7	8	8	
Kelly Day Middle	5	5	5	5	
Jr. Senators	8	8	8	8	
Sr. Senators	8	9	9	8	
Horizons	8	8	8	8	
Deaf pre	7	7	7	7	
LINK	8	7	7	7	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>98</b>	

**Consultations & Program Evaluations: Walker/League School.** On May 5, Frank Gagliardi, (Director of the League School) and Jim Earley (Director of Walker School Partnerships) and the autism clinical coordinator for the League School visited CAPS programs at School Street, Hubbardston Center School, and Westminster Elementary School. (The League School is a private school that specializes in programs for students with autism. Walker Partnership provides program consultations and evaluations on public school programs, particularly programs for students with emotional/behavioral challenges.) The consultants suggested some changes in the structure and organization of the program at Horizons and some shifts in staff responsibilities in the Gateway and Jr./Sr. High programs. Another meeting with these consultants is scheduled for June 5. In addition, Sheri D'Annolfo has continued dialogue with Steve Bichierri, Program Coordinator for FLLAC Programs for students with autism. The two coordinators are sharing information and ideas on a regular basis.

**Programs for Deaf/Hard of Hearing Students.** On May 9, I visited Austine School for the Deaf in Brattleboro, Vermont. The purpose of my visit was to discuss the possibilities of providing services to students who were displaced due to the school's closing. I met with the Austine Executive Director and the Director of Admissions who was handling the transition of students to other programs. Both directors were eager to work together to provide programs for two north central Massachusetts students and one student from Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire. Follow-up steps include arranging a visit for CAPS DHHP staff to Austine and discussions with a district willing to host the program. (Preliminary discussions have been held with the Winchendon Special Education Director.)

On a related topic, the CAPS Preschool for Deaf/Hard of Hearing students is likely to have nine students in the very near future. In addition, three of these students are ready to transfer to a comparable K-1 program. Therefore, developing a CAPS program for these students is a serious consideration.

**Update on Status of Agreement/Board Appointments.** As of May 12, we have received seven (7) Agreements signed by school committee chairs. We have received five (5) confirmations of reappointments of Board members. A follow-up letter will be sent to school committee chairs of districts that have not sent signed CAPS Agreements or confirmation of CAPS Board appointments.

**DESE/Collaborative Developments.** On April 28, FLLAC and CAPS convened a meeting on District Determined Measures at Oakmont High School. The meeting was requested by DESE and intended for the region's curriculum coordinators. Dr. Murphy, Executive Director of FLLAC, took the lead in making arrangements, and Dr. Hicks graciously offered to host the meeting at Oakmont High School. DESE representative, Craig Waterman, shared a power point presentation and conducted a Q&A session with participants. Thanks to Dr. Murphy and Dr. Hicks for taking responsibility for convening this meeting. The DESE has indicated a desire to use collaboratives to host and handle logistics for similar meetings.

The five Central MA collaboratives are scheduled to meet on May 13<sup>th</sup>, and more information on DESE/MOEC initiatives will be shared and discussed at this meeting. I will report on the discussions at Central MA meeting at our Board meeting on May 14.

#### **Additional Information on new hires, donations, and a request from Keene State College.**

**New Hires.** The only new potential new hire to be brought to the Board approval is Kyle Harrington as Program Coordinator for the Gateway and Jr./High programs. As stated previously, the hiring committee consisted of Kathy Figueira (Interim Program Coordinator, CAPS), Jen Gates (45 Day Coordinator, FLLAC-CAPS), Valerie Chase (CAPS Speech Language Pathologist), and Dr. John Salovardos (Gardner Director of Pupil Personnel Services). The hiring committee was impressed with Mr. Harrington's

experience and background. He has been a lead teacher/supervisor of programs that are similar to Gateway and Jr./Sr. High for the Merrimac Educational Collaborative (MEC). He has a master's degree in special education from Bay Path College and licensure in moderate disabilities. He will receive his principal's certification this June and plans to continue his education and get his special education administrator's licensure in the fall. Mr. Harrington's resume is included in Board packets.

***Donations.*** CAPS has received 12 donations in memory of Mr. DeCarolis. Mr. DeCarolis was an extremely well-respected teacher and a principal in the Leominster Public School system for many years. He was also a relative of a CAPS student. The total of donations thus far is \$535.00. CAPS greatly appreciates the generosity of Mr. DeCarolis and his family. A letter of thanks and condolences will be sent to the family as well as thank you notes to all donors.

***Keene State College Teaching.*** Keene State College has asked me to continue teaching the master's degree Capstone class – a three semester research class that is the “capstone” of students' master's degree experience. The class meets one Saturday a month during the school year with one exception: the first class for the summer semester is June 9. I believe that the KSC teaching experience keeps me grounded in public school issues as well as in touch with current issues in both general and special education. I thank the Board for being generous in supporting me in this endeavor and would request your support in teaching the class for coming year.