

CAPS Collaborative

Director's Report

June 14, 2017

Graduation: We are very proud to announce that we had three graduates from the Gateway program this year. Our three seniors this year have left a strong mark on our programs. They each joined us with very different needs and in very different places. While their experienced here at CAPS have had a number of ups and downs, they leave us in a wonderful place ready to move on to the next phase of their life. Two of the boys will be going to Mount Wachusette in the Fall and have taken all the placement tests and are accepted into programs. The third student will be joining the work force and is considering the service. We are so proud of their accomplishments. When I think of our students here at CAPS I am always impressed with what they have worked through to reach this milestone. While a Valedictorian works very hard to graduate from High School, our students face many many more obstacles on their pathway to graduation then most of their main stream High School peers. I thank all the program staff for what they have done to support these graduates through their journey.

Summer Program: The summer program promises to be very exciting. All CAPS programs continue during the summer and we will be running a six-week program, three days a week, starting the week after the 4th of July. Our summer enrollment is very high and we are also able to support our member districts with several new students who need summer placements. Summer is a little less structured and we have several field trips as well as special programs planned for the students. A large portion of the staff work summers but everyone takes a little time off to unwind and enjoy some rest and relaxation.

Summer Lunch Program: Our Board Chair, Pete Stephens has been instrumental in assisting us with setting up a summer lunch program. Working with the Fitchburg Public Schools we will be serving free breakfast and hot lunch to all of our students here at Sonoma Square. Fitchburg was able to designate our program as a summer satellite location. They will prepare, deliver and serve our lunch daily. Thanks Pete for your help with getting this process started.

Classroom Expansions: As we discussed during the budget process we are looking to expand a classroom in Hubbardston in our Kelly Day program. Hubbardston Center School has found a classroom space for us and we will be moving into the new space to be ready for a Fall start up.

Our Deaf Hard of Hearing Preschool will be having several preschoolers join us from Westminster. These typical peer models will be a welcome addition to our program. The second grade Deaf Hard of Hearing students will be moving over to John R Brigg in the Fall. The Principal and teaching staff have been so inviting and seem as excited as we are about our program being in their school.

The Gateway Program will be expanding the middle school again with a new classroom. We are using this new classroom as an opportunity to rearrange some of our space in the building and realign student placement to better provide services. We have already moved our classrooms into the new space we are leasing for next year and it could not look better. This summer we have several easy renovations we will be doing in the Gateway program. Opening up one classroom wall and putting in two doors will make the building even more useable. The renovations are planned for the last week of June and will be completed before the summer program starts.

New hires: We have been busy filling vacancies in our new classroom positions. A recent resignation has created an opening at Mahar so we continue to look for a teacher with severe licensure and vocational experience. For several years CAPS has been looking to add an Orientation and Mobility Specialist to our related service staff. We have found such a person and she comes highly recommended. A survey of district needs for this service has resulted in numerous requests for contracts for O+M services. We will be able to bring this position on with no real cost to the Collaborative as her salary and benefits will mostly be covered by contracts with member and non-member districts. We will be able to provide this service at a significant saving to the districts. In most districts this service has been provided by the Carrol Center which has been charging close to \$150.00 or more an hour. We will use a contract service price of \$92.25 per hour.

As the year comes to an end I don't need to tell any of you how crazy it can get. We are busy here at CAPS wrapping up loose ends, planning for summer and already excited about next year. As I reflect back over the year I am happy with the progress we have made. We expanded several programs and our student enrollment continues to be at a comfortable level. We have stayed within our budget and managed the Collaborative's funds with careful oversight. I feel we are providing high quality programs focused on meeting our member district's needs. As my second year comes to a close I feel that the organization is beginning to show my influence on its practices. I love the work that I do here at CAPS and feel privileged to have been given the opportunity to lead the Collaborative forward and continue to be excited about the next steps we will take. Thank you all for your support and dedication to CAPS Collaborative you are truly a pleasure to work with.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Landanno
Executive Director
CAPS Collaborative