

CAPS Collaborative

Director's Report

September 2017

Summer Program

This past summer saw a large jump in summer program participation. While most of our students continued with us for the summer months we also saw a number of students join us for the summer. Several of the local day programs don't offer a summer component so we are able to service those student in our program helping fill a need for our sending districts. Over all we had an average of 115 students a week. That is a record high number for summer participants and a significant number above what we had budgeted.

Summer Program Breakfast and Lunch Program

Working with the Fitchburg Public Schools we were able to qualify as a free summer food program site. Each day the Fitchburg Public Schools program delivered hot and cold lunches and a daily breakfast choice for all of our students free of charge. We have a wonderful relationship with Ashburnham/Westminster for our school year lunch program but they do not serve summer food. In the past, our students had to bring lunches from home and often this presented a real problem for many students. We can't thank the Fitchburg program enough for including us. Some special thanks go out to the Fitchburg Food Program Director, David Semenza and our Board Chair, Pete Stephens for making this all happen.

Opening Day All Staff Meeting

Each year I look for an affordable and comfortable location to hold our All Staff Opening Day meeting. This year we held the meeting on the same day as most of the districts held their opening day so there was not a good meeting place for us to use in the local schools. We need to find a space that can hold 100 plus people and also has parking for a group this size. After many calls, I found the Gardner PACC and was able to secure the spot. We had a great meeting, the facility was very comfortable, had lots of parking and was easy to find. Better yet it was very inexpensive and I provided the coffee myself keeping the cost even lower. Mr. Stephens came and spoke on the Board's behalf. I recognized staff for longevity, reviewed the new employee handbook, conducted a group building activity and took care of the annual housekeeping details needed to start the school year. I have received positive feedback on the meeting location and the agenda.

Staffing

Like most years here at CAPS Collaborative we have experienced a change in staffing. Several staff resigned, several staff were not renewed and several staff have changed programs. You will remember from our budget discussions from the spring that we planned to expand our program in Hubbardston

and added a new classroom in the Gateway Middle School. Expansion is created based on referral patterns. We welcome several new staff and are excited about what the new staff bring to our programs.

We have hired the new Treasurer. Richard Sarasin is recently retired from the Fitchburg City Auditors Office. He brings a great amount of experience to the position and Justin and I are excited to be working with him. As Murray Cox retires from the position I would like to recognize him for all his help and support and say how much I enjoyed working with him these last two years. Murray is truly very dedicated to our organization and has helped to create the solid fiscal plan that exists today.

Student Enrollment

The 2018 school year has started with our enrollment right on target. We currently have 122 students enrolled in our Satellite and Gateway programs. In addition, we have several intake meetings scheduled as well as additional referral packets coming in all the time. I have talked in the past about our growth and how we as an organization need to consider and plan carefully for expansion to meet our districts needs yet grow at a pace that our own infrastructure can support. I will be looking carefully at referral patterns and program capacity all this year as we continue to plan for CAPS Collaborative's future.

2018 Focus

This year we will be working to focus on building safety and partnerships. In the Gateway Program, we have already begun meeting regularly with the Fire and Police to create better safety plans. We have sent several staff out for Alice Training and are working closely with the Safety Team to make the building more secure and establish routine practice drills. This past summer we conducted some administration training around evaluation and have created evaluation tools for all staff groupings. This year every CAPS employee will be given training on the evaluation tool for their group and will participate in a formal evaluation process. This will be a new event for many our employee groups who have not been formally evaluated in the past. We have budgeted to continue our work around improved curriculum resources, equipment and access to technology. This summer the Gateway programs had an upgrade to the infrastructure supporting our technology and the system will now support more technology use connected to instruction.

I am always excited when every new year begins and look forward to the successes and challenges the new year will bring. As we continue to grow and expand our programs I am always reminded of how fortunate I am to have the dedicated and talented staff and supportive Board of Directors that make this organization so wonderful. We do very important work servicing a very special population. As always thank you for your support.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Landanno
Executive Director
CAPS Collaborative