

The FLLAC Educational Collaborative 2015-2016 Annual Report

**FLLAC Educational Collaborative
Central Office**

2 Narrows Road, Suite C 105

Westminster, MA 01473

www.fllac.org

Leadership at FLLAC Educational Collaborative

FLLAC Executive Board Members

(Appointed Representatives and Superintendents of the Member School Committees)

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

FLLAC Executive Board Sub-Committees

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

FLLAC Advisory Board

(Directors of Special Education)

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

FLLAC Administration

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

Mission Statement

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

Vision

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

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

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

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

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

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

issues for school administrators provided by a respected and knowledgeable attorney and the FLLAC consulting psychiatrist, an ABA for Educators training for related service providers, educators new to ABA and paraprofessionals provided by a licensed BCBA from a member district and numerous restraint trainings to a range of district and FLLAC staff by one of two CPI certified instructors on staff. 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 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 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.

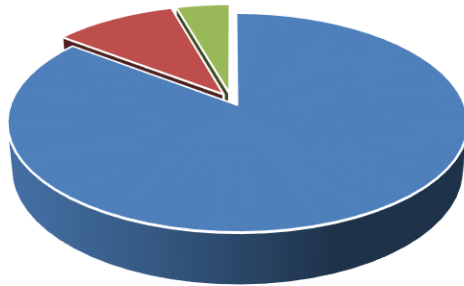
During the 2015-2016 School Year FLLAC helped our districts realize significant savings on electricity and natural gas costs through a natural gas and electricity cooperative purchasing agreement and on the costs of virtual education services through a bulk purchasing agreement with Edgenuity.

Guiding Principles

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

Financial and Enrollment Information

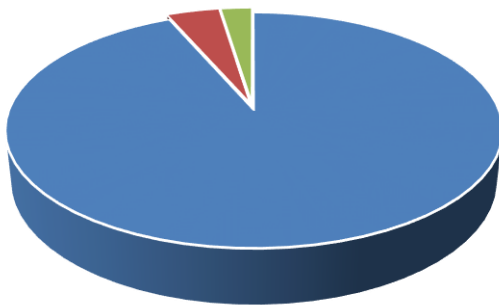
Primary Revenues



- Tuition
- Purchased and Contract Services
- Extended Year

Tuition	\$	5,823,963
Purchased and Contract Services	\$	694,679
Extended Year	\$	302,491

Expenses

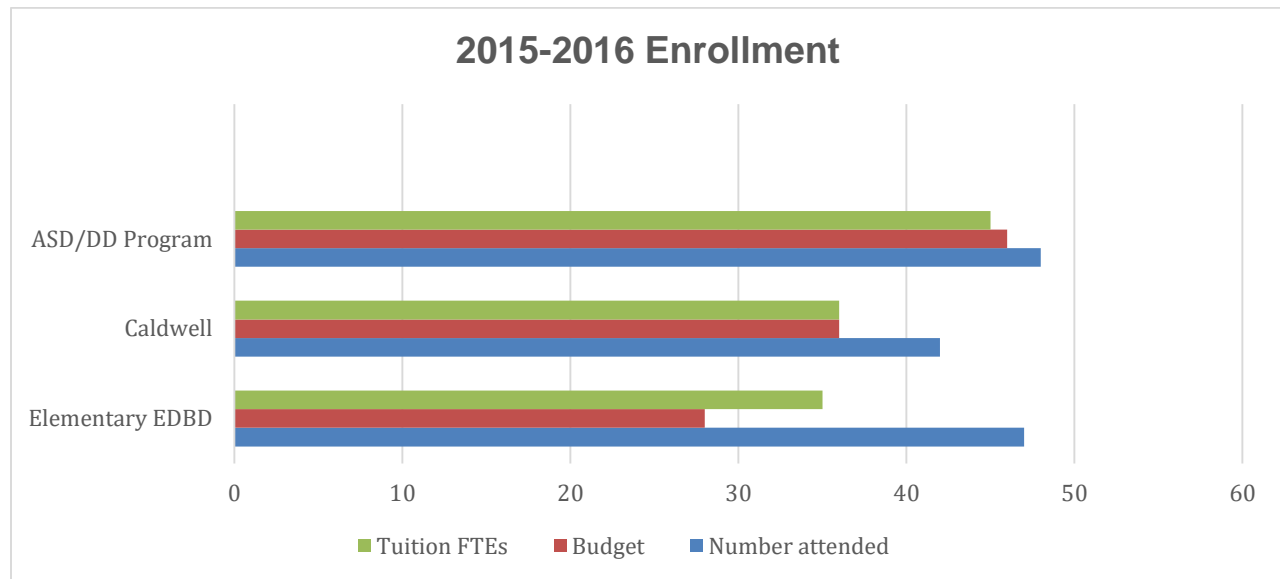


- Payroll and Benefits
- Occupancy
- Supplies and Equipment

Payroll and Benefits	\$	5,843,106
Occupancy	\$	256,788
Supplies and Equipment	\$	151,850

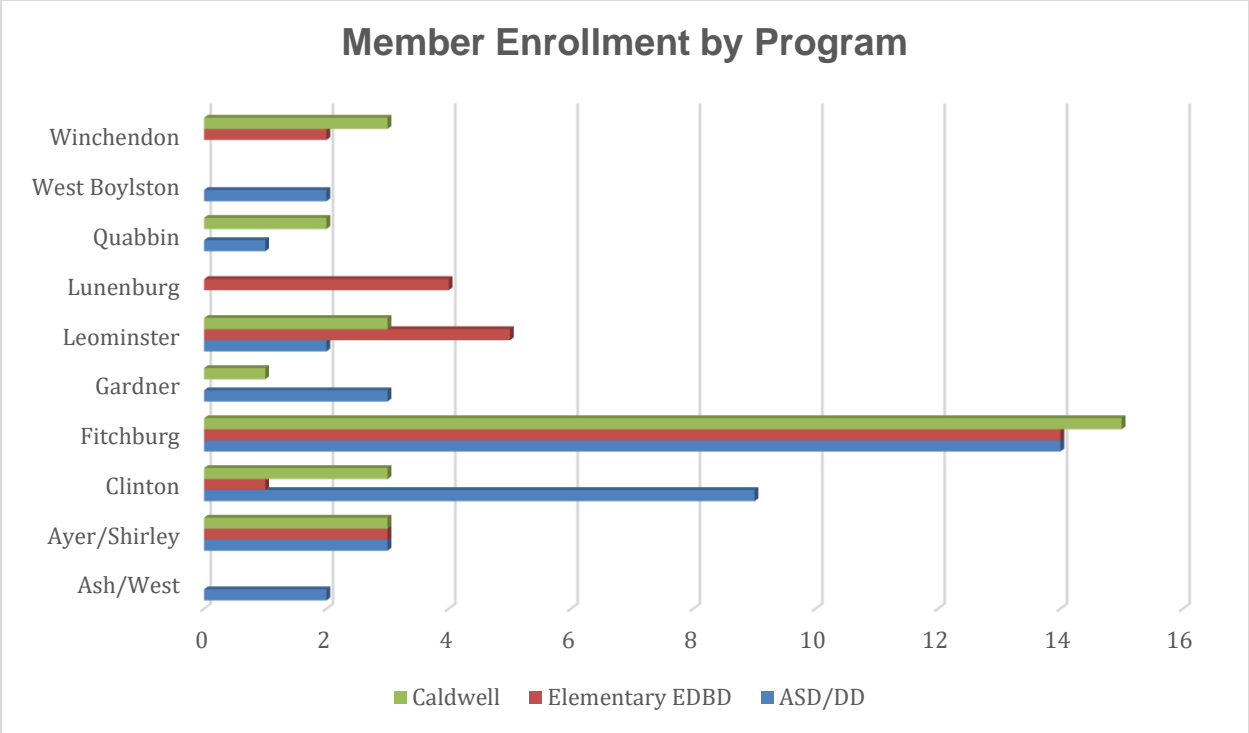
Better than 90% of Collaborative expenses continue to be related to staffing.

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

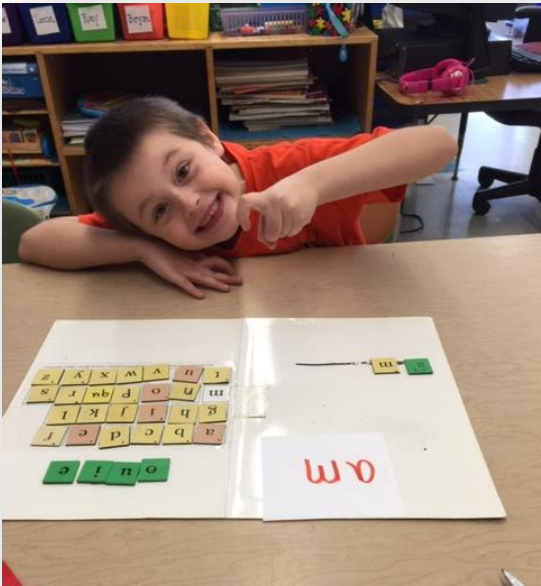


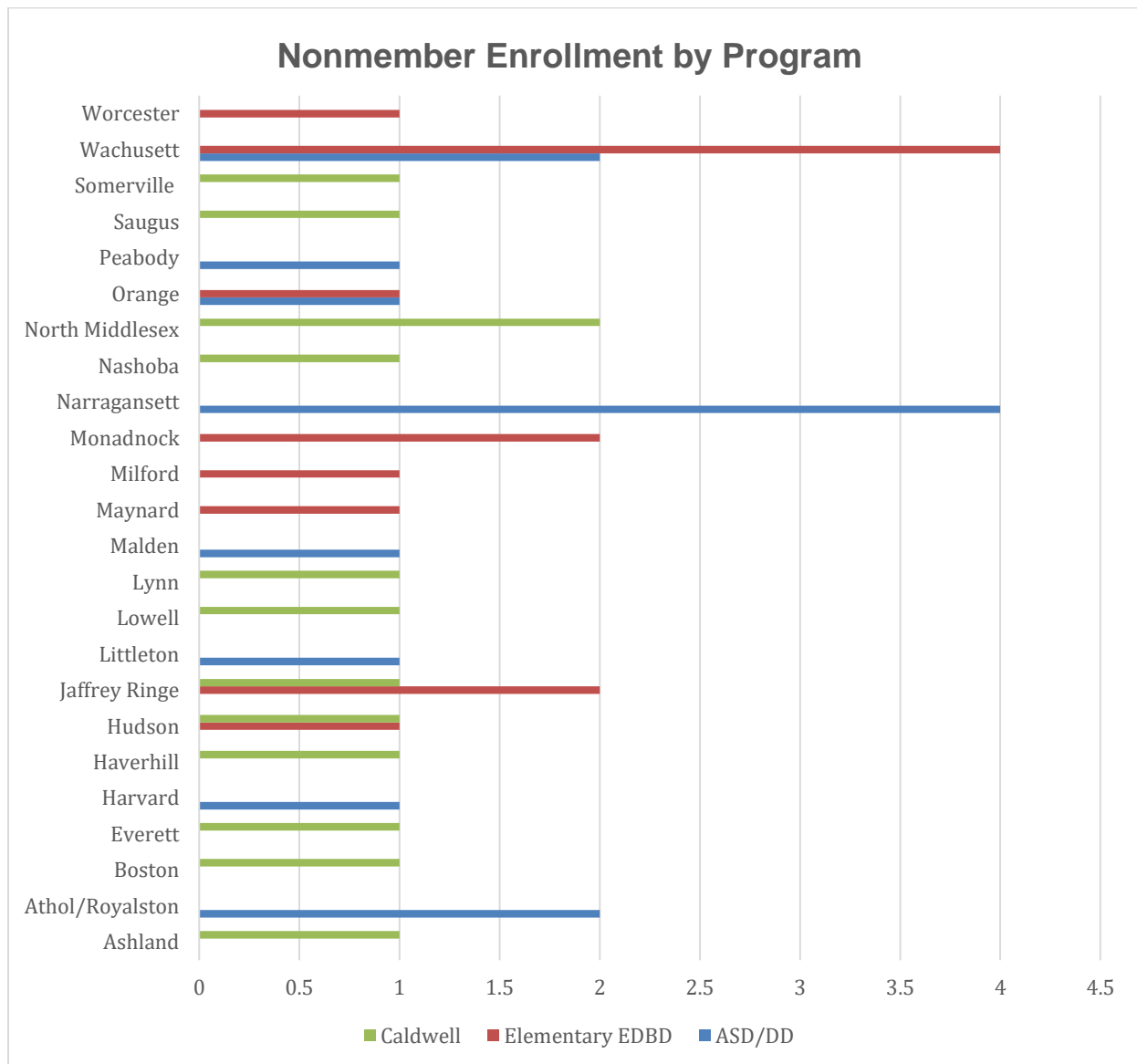
	<u>Number attended</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Tuition FTEs</u>
Elementary EDBD	47	28	35
Caldwell	42	36	36
ASD/DD Program	48	46	45

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 45 day assessment placements available at the Elementary EDBD and Caldwell Alternative programs. 'Tuition FTE's' refer to the total attendance as reflected by tuitions collected. This lets us anticipate where we might need to initiate spending holds as we recognize potential revenue shortfalls.



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

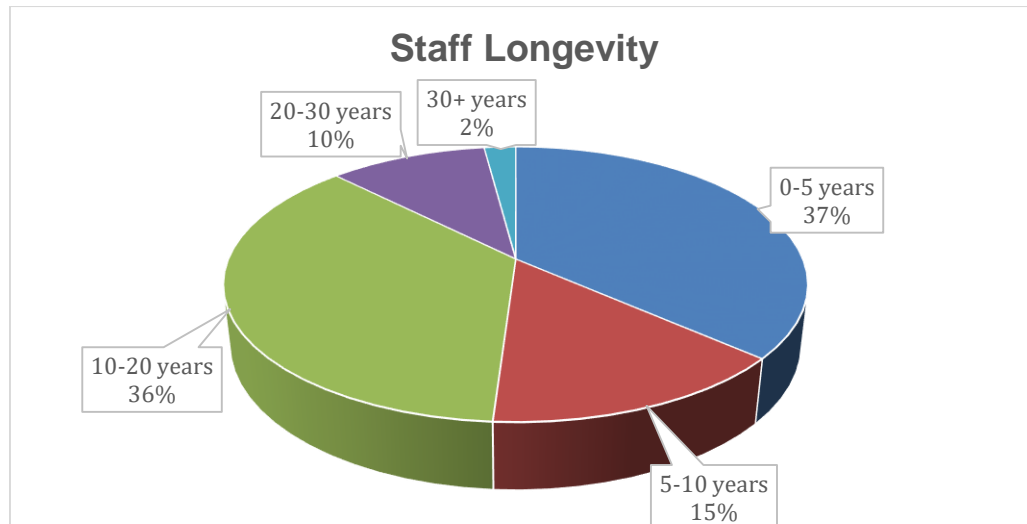




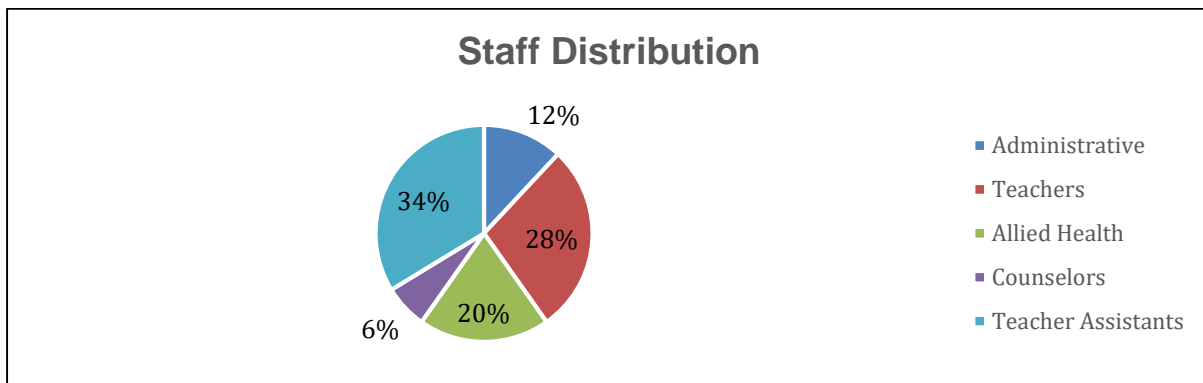
While some placements are from districts within our region, we have noted out of region placements tied to residential programs for students requiring alternative education placements.

Staff Information

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



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



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

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

Effectiveness

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

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 11-9-16		Cost Comparisons	
<u>Program/Population</u>	<u>FLLAC Tuition</u> <u>Member</u>	<u>Private School Avg.*</u>	<u>Savings</u>
Developmental Disabilities/Life Skills	\$53,523	\$72,799	\$19,276
PDD/Autism	\$53,523	\$76,632	\$23,109
Caldwell Elementary Emotional/Behavioral	\$52,705	\$65,361	\$12,656
Caldwell Alternative Emotional/LD	\$49,670	\$51,887	\$2,217
45 Day Extended Evaluation Pr.	CE \$13,176		\$16,340
	CA \$12,425		\$13,573

OSD Rate Sheet 8/12/16

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

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

Life Skills/DD: Cotting School, \$75,458. Kennedy Day School \$69,728. B.C. Campus, \$73,213.

Autism/PDD Programs: HMEA Darnell, \$73,228. Nashoba Learning, \$86,954. Center for Applied Behavioral Instruction, \$69,714.

Caldwell Elementary Program: Franklin Perkins, \$53,335. Walker Home, \$71,658. Lighthouse, \$71,091.

Caldwell Alternative School: Mclean Arlington Academy, \$62,140. Wayside Academy, \$44,638. Victor School, \$48,885.

Special Education Administrator Satisfaction Survey Results

FLLAC conducted a satisfaction survey of our member district Special Education Administrators in December of 2016 using Survey Monkey. Since the majority of the work we do is in support of special education programs and services, feedback from Special Education Administrators is critical to determining our overall effectiveness as an organization. Six out of ten of our member district Special Education Administrators replied to the survey.

The results of this survey indicate that in 2015-2016 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 agreed (50%) or strongly agreed (50%) with the statement.
- FLLAC programs and services were cost effective, (83%) of the respondents either agreed (66%) or strongly agreed (17%) with the statement.
- “It is important to me that FLLAC provides programs that are located in my district or in a district nearby”, 100% of the respondents agreed (50%) or strongly agreed (50%) with the statement.
- FLLAC staff were experienced, skilled and knowledgeable in meeting the needs of the students they serve, 83% of the respondents either agreed (33%) or strongly agreed (50%) with the statement.

- FLLAC Program Staff were responsive to my needs, 83% of the respondents either agreed (33%) or strongly agreed (50%) with the statement.
- FLLAC staff were effective when dealing with families, 100% of the respondents either agreed (50%) or strongly agreed (50%) with the statement.
- The FLLAC Administration was responsive to the needs of my district, 100% of the respondents either agreed (33%) or strongly agreed (67%) with the statement.
- FLLAC staff provided services in a caring and respectful manner, 100% of the respondents either agreed (33%) or strongly agreed (67%) with the statement.
- How likely were you to recommend FLLAC Programs to other district administrators 63% of respondents said they would be extremely likely to do so, 17% said they would be very likely to do so and 17% said they would be moderately likely to do so.

Recommendations: Two Special Education Administrators recommended that FLLAC increase the number of vocational opportunities available to students. One administrator recommended that additional BCBA supports be provided to the Caldwell Elementary Program. One administrator recommended that FLLAC develop “truly individualized and measureable benchmarks” and that additional student work samples and data supporting student academic progress be provided at IEP meetings.

Program Descriptions

In 2015-2016 FLLAC offered four programs designed to meet the needs of specific student populations. Our member districts identified students from these populations as needing services the districts could not provide within the individual district. Two programs, the Caldwell Alternative Middle and High School (gr. 7-12) and the Caldwell Elementary Program (gr. K-6), are DESE approved Public Day Programs and provide educational and therapeutic programming for students with learning disabilities, emotional issues, behavioral issues and, increasingly, complex mental health issues. All students in these two programs have been identified as needing special education services.

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

The FLLAC 45-Day 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.

Caldwell Alternative School

44 Wanoosnoc Road, Fitchburg, Massachusetts 01420

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

Goals and Purpose

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

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

Referrals

Caldwell began the year with twenty-two (25) students enrolled and ended the year with thirty-six (36) students. During School Year 2015-2016, referrals and dispositions are as follows:

<u>Referrals</u>	<u>Enrolled</u>	<u>Not Enrolled</u>	<u>45 Day Referrals</u>	<u>Enrolled</u>	<u>Not Enrolled</u>
45	17	Other program – 9 Declined Interview - 8 Moved from Dist. – 2 Remain in distr. - 3	16	6	Other 45 day – 5 Decline intake- 4 Moved - 1

Coordination with Evaluation Program

Students enrolled in the Evaluation Program are assigned to Caldwell Alternative classrooms and participate in daily school program to facilitate assessment with their peers. This program received 116 referrals for evaluations; 6 were enrolled and 4 remained enrolled at Caldwell after the evaluation process.

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 hyperactive disorder, suicidal ideation/depression, anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar, oppositional defiant, Asperger's Syndrome (and some other spectrum disorders), or a combination of these.

Graduates/Transitions/Discharges

Caldwell graduated 5 seniors with diplomas; 3 were enrolled at Mount Wachusett Community College, and 2 entered the world of work. During the academic year, 4 students returned to district, 2 transitioned to more restrictive school settings, 3 transferred to another day school, and 4 dropped out.



Community involvement has been greatly enhance as a result of the **school van**, which allows for regular transportation of students to the Boys and Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster for our winter physical education program as well as job training sites, and shopping for school store and field trips.

Opportunities to for academic improvement and satisfactory completion of graduation requirements:

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

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

- *Health groups with Pro-Health,*
- *College Fairs and campus visits to Fitchburg State University and Mount Wachusett Community College,*
- *Development of transition planning and career education,*
- *Wood shop and production crew.*
- *Student run school store*
- *Coordination of group initiatives, sports/games tournaments, community meals and recreation events, allows students the opportunity to practice techniques learned in social skills groups.*

Programs

Caldwell Alternative School enrolls 38 students between the Middle School and High School (grades 7-12).

Caldwell Middle School (grades 7 & 8) enrolls students in two classrooms, each staffed with a Teacher and a Teacher Assistant. These classrooms are self-contained

thus students receive instruction in the core content curriculum within the room. Students leave the classroom for art and physical education.

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

Reading Program

Caldwell continues to prioritize enhancing reading skills within our student population. The first academic class for students is reading. Upon enrollment students are assessed for placement in our reading program. The program seeks to strengthen and teach deficit skills as well as 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! and individual pull-out instruction.

Staff Professional Development/Consultation

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

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

Staff training focused on better understanding of the nature and needs of the student population and providing skill building in best instructional practices. Topics included:

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



Caldwell Elementary School – EDBD Program

1025 Massachusetts Avenue, Lunenburg, MA 01462

Program Phone: 978-582-4206 www.fllac.org Program Fax: 978-582-4208

Philosophy

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

Mission Statement

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

Student Population

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

Referrals

Referrals are made to the Program through the Special Education Directors of the sending school districts. Students may be placed within the Program on a long-term basis or for a 45 Day Assessment.

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 is available to provide support to parents and guardians. The Caldwell Elementary program is located in the former T.C. Passios building in Lunenburg. 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.

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.

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.

A Caldwell Elementary favorite is our annual visit to Lanni Orchards. This year our students were able to participate in an educational component of the Orchard's



agricultural process through the distribution and sales process. Students enjoyed apple and pumpkin picking; hayrides and refreshments.

Caldwell Elem also visited the Ecotarium in Worcester, MA. After walking through the nature trail and entering the Ecotarium many students had a great time in the wind tunnel where they went into a simulated environment with up to hurricane force winds. Next, the students went on a quick tour of the interior. The students and staff were then lead to the planetarium where they watch an informative and entertaining video that encompassed many of the core curriculum science and social studies standards. At the conclusion of the video presentation, the students were given the opportunity to make their rounds of the entire facility, including the indoor and outdoor animal habitats. Many of the students found the activities fascinating and enjoyed their time at the Ecotarium.

Growth of prior initiatives

Technology-

The Caldwell Elementary Program has been integrating technology into their classrooms resulting in increased student engagement. Our program currently has ten laptops and five iPads 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 are currently in the process of adapting books for students that struggle with reading and using 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 the of the technology coordinator Lori Stevens.

Music Therapy-

Each classroom has a weekly music therapy session. The students use this time to identify and learn coping strategies that they may not normally be able to tap into. Some students have been able to unlock previously unknown talents, too. These talented students were celebrated last spring during the Caldwell Elementary Art & Music Celebration. This event was a huge hit for everyone involved. Many students participated in the music/talent portion. Furthermore, each student had some of their artwork on display for family members and friends to observe. We look forward to making the Art & Music Celebration an annual event based on the success of the inaugural celebration.



On Tuesday, May 31, 2016, our Caldwell Elementary program had our first “Celebration of the Arts” event featuring music and art from all of our students. Our art teacher, Ms. April Estabrooks, and music therapist, Jess Kaptcianos, coordinated the event together. An art gallery featured artwork throughout the year from students as well as a peace mural that was created by students, staff, and visitors on the day of the event itself. Students practiced

their songs 3-4 weeks in advance to prepare for the music concert. Kids sang into the microphone, played the guitar, played the piano, played the drums, and at the end of the concert we even had a group dance party! The celebration was a huge success and we hope to make this a Caldwell Elementary School annual tradition.

Mindfulness-

Over the previous year, the students in our program have been participating in mindfulness activities within their classrooms. These activities can include grounding activities, yoga, stretching, breathing exercise, and any other physical or mental activities that have been identified to calm and/or focus the students prior to beginning their academic schedule.

As with technology, each classroom participates in various activities that work for their specific needs. Some students may need physical activities to wake their bodies up,

while other students need more peaceful and mentally focused activities to calm their bodies down. Having varied activities has proven to be beneficial in making progress with our mindfulness initiative.



ASD and DD Programs

150 School Street, Clinton, Ma. 01510

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

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

Referrals:

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

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

Transitions/Discharges:

The ASD and DD Programs recognize that every student has the right to receive educational services in their home district. It is the objective of every classroom teacher and related service provider to assist in the development of skills that each student will need in order to be successfully returned to their home school district.

2015-2016 school year transitions back to in-district public school: 4 students

Transitions to adult services: 2 students

Transitions to a more restrictive setting: 1 student

Census:

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

During the 2015-2016 school year the student census averaged 45 students.

Classroom census in June 2016:

Elementary ASD Page Hilltop-	6 students,	Elementary ASD Lura White-	4 students
Middle School ASD1 Clinton-	6 students,	Middle School ASD2 Clinton-	5 students
High School ASD Ayer-Shirley-	8 students,	High School DD Ayer-Shirley-	9 students
Elementary DD Page Hilltop-	3 students,	Middle School DD Clinton-	5 students

Staffing:

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

DESE licensed staff: 9 teachers, 6 therapists, 3 therapy assistants, 1 family support coordinator and 1 administrator

Highly qualified support staff: 19 paraprofessionals, 1 program secretary

Program Initiatives:

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

Teacher Training: All classroom teachers meet monthly and receive formal training in the policies and procedures of the FLLAC Collaborative as well as current topics in special education, i.e., Differentiated Instruction, Evaluation and Assessment of Students, Core Curriculum and Time-on-Learning, MCAS-Alt Assessment, 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 training.

Reverse Inclusion: All ASD and DD Classrooms have established opportunities for regular education students to participate in activities and lessons within the substantially

separate special education classroom. These activities include Cooking Group, Music Therapy, Games Group, Social Skills Group, Book Buddies and Panther Pals.

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

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

Field Trips and Community Exploration: The ASD and DD programs have accessed community businesses and recreational venues in an effort to develop greater community awareness, safety skills and social exposure. 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, and Davis Farmland.

2016-2017 Initiatives:

Develop more community based work sites for students aged 18 – 22.

Provide more professional development activities for teachers and paraprofessionals.

Increase parent participation in Parent Support Group.

Expand student performances such as Talent Show and Spring Extravaganza.

Increase the support and training parents receive to manage their children at home.

Increase our association with allied agencies and providers.

The FLLAC 45 Day Program

The FLLAC 45-Day 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 2015-2016 year the 45-day programs at Caldwell Alternative and Caldwell Elementary served approximately 25 students.

The students who were referred to the program continue to present with complex challenges. It is noteworthy that a large number of students were referred due to incidents in their schools that have led the districts to specifically request risk assessments. Some of these have been situations where students have been excluded from their district school due to violations involving offenses around drugs, weapons, assault on staff and pending felonies. Others have been initial evaluations where the students' needs were of such a high level that the district felt that a 45-day assessment was warranted in order to determine if the student qualifies for special education services. Some sending districts requested that the program collect data and observations in order to assist the district in making recommendations for appropriate educational programming and placement. The number of young students with significant social emotional, mental health and behavioral needs remained noteworthy. Based on ongoing feedback from districts the trend toward the program serving increasingly complicated students will continue to grow.

The 45-Day Program continued to work with community agencies, including but not limited to, The Lipton Center, LUK, Health Alliance, The Spanish American Center, DCF, DYS, Juvenile Probation, and private counselors and physicians as well as STARR bed placements such as RFK and Cottage Hill. Ongoing communication with community providers enabled 45-day 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 2015-2016 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 45-day program has been very positive. They reported 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 45 Day 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 and ABA support 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 2015-2016 school year the Leominster Schools, The City of Leominster, Ashburnham-Westminster Regional Schools, The Town of Lunenburg, The Lunenburg Public Schools, The Town of Clinton, The Clinton Public Schools and FLLAC all participated in a contract for natural gas and electricity through Tradition Energy.

In 2015 districts participating in the FLLAC coordinated energy purchasing agreement realized a combined savings of \$48,677 over market prices for the purchase of electricity and \$42,614 over market prices for the purchase of natural gas for a total savings of \$91,291.

Staff Training and Consultation

FLLAC staff continue to be recognized for their expertise by area school districts. During the 2015-2016 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, developing inclusive practices and in supporting the development of reading and communication programs. FLLAC staff in the ASD/DD program also participated in district sponsored trainings as members of individual district building staff. This fostered greater communication between FLLAC and district staff and presented opportunities for ongoing job-alike activities and consultation.

Home ABA Therapy and Tutoring

FLLAC provides in-home tutoring and ABA training to a limited number of students in our districts on an “as available” basis. These supports are highly individualized and our flexibility in meeting the needs of district students has been appreciated by the districts. During the 2015-2016 year our ABA, and home tutor served 2 students either in their homes or directly in the schools.

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

Extended Year Services

Many of the students FLLAC serves require extended year services. In order to maximize efficiencies and provide for greater activities we bring students from our ASD/DD programs and students from our districts together in the Ayer/Shirley Schools for a five week summer program. Students in our Caldwell Alternative Middle and High School and our Caldwell Elementary Programs attended summer programs in our Fitchburg and Lunenburg buildings respectively. The programs run from Monday through Thursday and provide ongoing academic instruction, related services and fun, yet functional, activities. Over the 2016 summer period FLLAC served approximately 45 students in the ASD/DD extended year program, 13 students in the Caldwell Alternative program and 25 students in the Caldwell Elementary Program. We expect to see the number of students requiring extended year services to increase, especially for the students in the Caldwell Elementary Program.

FLLAC Extended Year Services are provided to any student from our districts who require the services of our programs and meet the criterion for acceptance, regardless of whether they attend a FLLAC program during the school year or not. Rates for the Extended Year Program are based on the day rates, pro-rated to a shorter day, and are

less than rates for our school year programs. Districts realize the day rate savings over comparable private programs as illustrated in the tuition cost comparisons on page 9 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 2015-2016 year FLLAC related service providers worked in districts including Ayer-Shirley, Leominster, Gardner, Quabbin, Fitchburg and Clinton.

Using hourly rates of \$85/hour for therapists and \$40/hour for therapy assistants for comparison, the districts are saving an average of 24% by sharing positions and position costs rather than paying for contract services. For example, 2016 costs for Physical and Occupational Therapy staff billed to districts for work conducted in the districts totaled \$529,067. Had hourly rates been used, the total cost to districts would have been \$653,415.

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 2015-2016 year nearly 300 students took advantage of Edgenuity courses. Below is a table showing the number of students participating, the districts they were from and the type of course or courses they took.

By participating in the FLLAC sponsored cooperative purchasing agreement with Edgenuity participating districts were able to offer courses they might not have the economy of scale to offer individually and retain students who might look at leaving the

district because of unique academic needs such as athletes participating at a level requiring them to be absent for parts of the normal school calendar. In addition districts have been able to give staff experience teaching in a virtual environment and are acquiring the skills needed to manage larger numbers of students participating in virtual education.

Districts participating in the FLLAC Virtual Education Initiative realized significant savings through this cooperative purchasing initiative. For districts utilizing the one-semester courses realized a combined savings of \$15,000 over the retail price of the Edgenuity platform. For districts utilizing the full year courses districts saved \$7,800.

Instructional Services Program Options – For FLLAC Standard Pricing

1-200 enrollments

IS Teaching Services - per semester course enrollment **\$275**

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

Instructional Services Program Options – Standard Edgenuity pricing

1-200 enrollments

IS Teaching Services - per semester course enrollment **\$325**

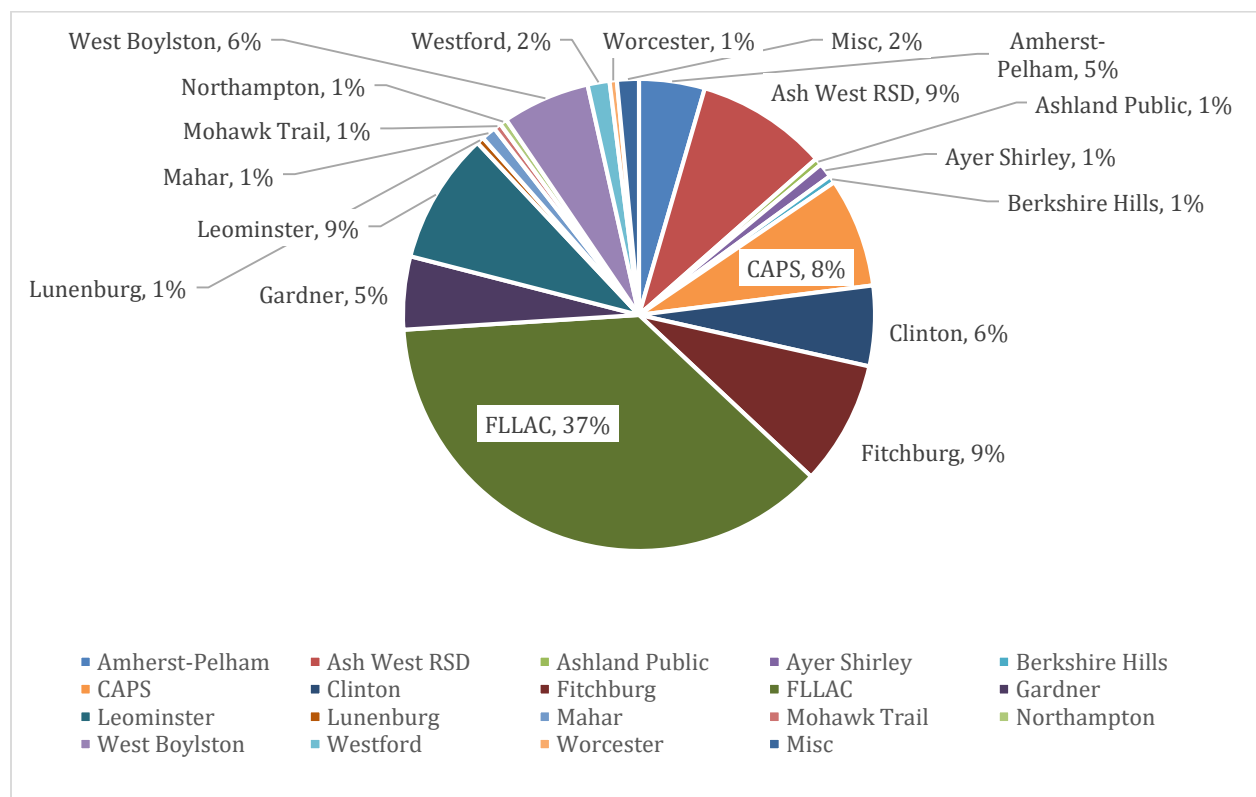
IS Teaching Services - full-time semester enrollment **\$1,750**

	<u>Semester Course</u>	<u>Full Time Student/Semester</u>
Ash/West	11	10
Gardner	26	3
Leominster	228	11
Narragansett	23	1
West Boylston	12	0

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 2015-2016 school year FLLAC provided trainings on Legal Issues for School Administrators, Mental Health First Aide, CPI (restraint), Psychiatric and Legal Issues for Educators and ABA 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.



Executive Director's Summary

The FLLAC Collaborative continued to work with our Board and our districts throughout the 2015-2016 school year to provide high quality, local, individualized, flexible and responsive programs and services. Our collaborative remains a stable and ongoing concern. Over the 2015-2016 fiscal year FLLAC was able to realize a gain of over \$543,000 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 2016.

FLLAC made a concerted effort to increase career education and exploration opportunities for our students in both the Caldwell Alternative and ASD/DD programs. Supported by funds from our 274 grant, FLLAC Program Supervisors and vocational/career education staff worked with staff from the Valley Collaborative to develop forms, protocols and supports that would expand our capabilities in vocational education for 18-22 year old students. Transportation to and from job sites and job site development were handled by our Career Education Teacher at Caldwell Alternative and by our Community Experience Coordinator in the ASD/DD Program. The Caldwell Alternative Program leased a 12-person van that greatly aided our ability to bring students to job sites. Students worked at local job sites, attended college information sessions and visited a range of community/vocational resources over the course of the year.

FLLAC programs have remained relatively stable in terms of space during the 2015-2016 year with public school classrooms in Ayer-Shirley and in Clinton and our two public day programs in Fitchburg and Lunenburg. We were able to agree to an extension with the Town of Lunenburg to have the Caldwell Elementary Program remain at the TC Passios School for the 2016-2017 School Year. Over the course of the 2015-2016 year we looked at a number of possible sites for this program beyond June 30, 2017. We continued to work with our member districts, realtors and area school districts to find adequate space for the program.

The FLLAC Central Office continued to share space with the CAPS Collaborative in Westminster but FLLAC decided to seek central office space closer to FLLAC programs and the geographic center of our service area. FLLAC sent out an RFP for office space with the goal of finding space on or close to Rt. 2 in the Fitchburg/Leominster area. The RFP received two responses and, after consultation with the space committee, it was decided to move the FLLAC central office to Phoenix Park in Shirley over the course of the summer of 2016. FLLAC will continue to work with CAPS to provide professional development opportunities, run a regional special education advisory group and offer Educational Team Liaisons and other district staff job alike opportunities.

FLLAC was able to hire a full time Instructional and Information Technology Specialist who worked three days/week in FLLAC Programs and two days/week assisting the FLLAC Administration with the increasing demands for data and information. The IT Specialist spends at least one day/week in each of our three programs and provides professional development, consultation and technical assistance to the teaching staff. This support has allowed students and staff in each program to utilize technology more effectively in support of communication and academic growth.

At FLLAC we are continually looking to anticipate the needs of our member districts. Based on discussions with our Administrative Team, the Special Education Advisory Board, representatives from other collaboratives and providers in the community it was clear that there is a need for increased mental health supports. 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 number of students with complex mental health needs. We were able to increase our capacity to provide mental health supports by having a staff person trained as Mental Health First Aid Trainer. FLLAC worked with the SHINE Initiative of Central MA to obtain a \$2000 grant to fund the Mental Health First Aid train the trainer course in the summer of 2015.

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.

Over the course of the 2015-2016 year the Board discussed the need for FLLAC to develop a 3-5 year strategic plan that would address program, services, marketing and long-term space needs. An RFP was issued in January of 2016 seeking a consultant to assist in the development of a Strategic Plan and the Board selected the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) for the job. Dr. Michael Palladino of NESDEC worked with the Board and the Executive Director to determine a process and priorities and to develop methods for gathering data from a range of stakeholders, including staff, Special Education Administrators and Board Members. Dr. Palladino facilitated an all-day focus group for all 100+ FLLAC staff on May 25, 2016. The FLLAC Board also appointed a Strategic Plan Committee consisting of:

James Jolicoeur, Superintendent of Leominster and Board Chair
Steve Haddad, Superintendent of Winchendon
Kathy Buchanan, Special Education Director of Clinton
Edward Pratt, Director of Student Services, Leominster
Steve Bicchieri, Program Supervisor, FLLAC ASD/DD Programs
Gary MacCallum, Principal, Caldwell Alternative Middle/High School
Julie Bragg, Program Supervisor, Caldwell Elementary
Terri Burchfield, FLLAC Business Manager
Richard Murphy, FLLAC Executive Director

The Strategic Plan Committee meet several times over the course of the spring and summer of 2016 and, with input from the staff focus groups, identified 5 Strategic Goal areas to be addressed over the next 3-5 years. They are:

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

As an educational service agency we continually face new challenges, however, with our caring, diligent and dedicated staff, our supportive boards and the encouragement and support of our families and school committees, I feel FLLAC will be able to remain true to our mission of providing cost effective, local, responsive and high quality services. We will implement the recommendations of our Board to strengthen regional efforts, continue to address the collaboratives need for stable and adequate space and, guided by the Strategic Plan, to develop new supports and services to meet the needs of an increasingly complex student population. I look forward to working with the Board, our Special Education Administrators and our staff to implement the goals and priorities identified in the 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 2015-2016 school year we provided exemplary services to students, provided the economies of scale that allowed our districts to serve students in the least restrictive environment and offered the kind of cost effective supports and professional development required to serve those students our member districts would not be able to serve by themselves.

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

Richard W. Murphy, Ph.D.
Executive Director