

# 2023-2024



# Annual Report

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## CAPS COLLABORATIVE



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# Executive Director's Remarks

Dear CAPS Collaborative Community Members:

It is my pleasure to present you with the CAPS Collaborative annual report for fiscal year 2024. An extensive summary of the programs and services offered by CAPS Collaborative during this time, as well as the progress made towards meeting the goals and objectives outlined in our collaborative agreement will be highlighted.

CAPS Collaborative has been **providing special education programming and services for nearly 50 years**. As an extension of our member school districts, CAPS students aged 3 to 22 benefit from a variety of supports to meet their individual needs in our approved public day school and satellite programs located across the region. CAPS also continues to provide a wide range of related contracted services to both member and non-member districts across central Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. Programming spans across the Commonwealth from as far west as Orange to Newton in the east. Our exceptionally skilled and dedicated educational professionals **believe in the success of each and every student**, and in supporting their unique needs for highly specialized programming and service delivery.

CAPS opened the 2023-2024 school year with an enrollment of 173 students. The year ended with an all-time high enrollment of 185 in May prior to graduating our seniors. Our collaborative has experienced much growth in recent years fostered by our supportive Board of Directors, along with partnerships with sending school districts, families and caregivers, host schools, and community stakeholders. We look forward to **continued steady growth to meet the ever changing needs of our districts**.

At the close of the 2023-2024 school year we wished Executive Director Jennifer Gates all the best in retirement. We are grateful for her dedication and achievements and thankful to have had the opportunity to learn and work with her. Her contributions to CAPS Collaborative will have a lasting impact.

Having had the pleasure of serving CAPS as the Satellite Program Director for the past 10 years, I was both honored and excited to begin working as the Executive Director in July. I could not ask for a more supportive Board of Directors, or a more dedicated staff. I look forward to continued **partnerships with our districts, families, students, staff, and all community stakeholders** as we work to continue to provide exceptional programs and services throughout the region.

Respectfully submitted,

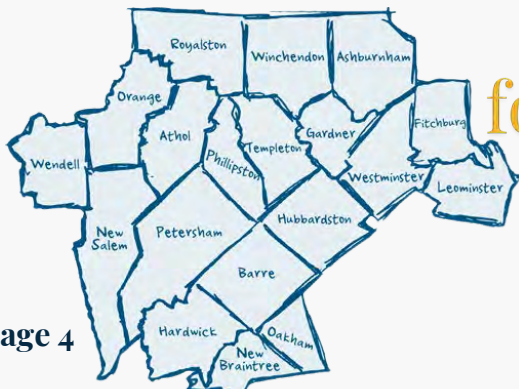
*Sheri D'Annolfo, M.Ed*

**Executive Director**

# Governance

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT	BOARD MEMBER	ROLE
Ashburnham/Westminster	Jennifer Storm	School Committee
Athol/Royalston	Matthew Erenworth	Superintendent
Fitchburg	Peter Stephens ( <i>Chair</i> )	School Committee
Gardner	Dr. Mark Pellegrino	Superintendent
Leominster	Melissa Bible	School Committee
Narragansett	Dr. Christopher Casavant	Superintendent
Orange	Jessica Reske	School Committee
Petersham	Dr. Elizabeth Zelinski	Superintendent
Quabbin	Colleen Mucha	Superintendent
R.C. Mahar	Dr. Elizabeth Zelinski	School Committee
Winchendon	Ruthann Petrino-Goguen	Interim Superintendent



**THANK YOU**  
for your leadership and  
vision

# Leadership Team

2 Narrows Road

Westminster, MA 01473





# Vision, Mission, Purpose

## PROGRESS TOWARDS OBJECTIVES

### Vision

CAPS will be the provider of choice for regional programs and services.

### Mission

CAPS Collaborative will work in partnership with districts to provide programs and services of the highest quality.

### Purpose

The purpose of CAPS Collaborative is to provide intensive educational programs for students with disabilities which are low incidence in their districts of residence; to provide professional development to educators; to provide related services to students with low incidence disabilities in member and non-member districts; and to provide other services as determined by the Board of Directors.

# Objectives

***CAPS will commit every aspect of the organization to providing exceptional educational opportunities for students.***

## **Progress towards Objectives:**

### **1. CAPS will demonstrate quality and responsiveness by becoming the first choice of districts for programs and services.**

Enrollment at CAPS Collaborative increased throughout the year, capping off at an all time high of 187 by the end of the 2023-2024 school year. CAPS continued to expand community outreach to districts and community stakeholders to remain visible and distinct from other programs.

### **2. CAPS will strive to be a customer focused organization that constantly evaluates district needs.**

An analysis of program enrollment, referral trends, and requests for contract services received during the 2023-2024 school year demonstrated the increased need for programming in 3 specific areas. Program expansions for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Preschool, Gateway Elementary, and Senators Elementary program were planned and budgeted for throughout the budget process, to meet the needs of districts, with the goal of opening these classrooms in 2024-2025. In addition to regular communication with board members and community partners, CAPS Collaborative Executive Director worked to meet monthly with special education leaders across districts to gather information around district needs, highlight areas where CAPS can be a support to districts, and strengthen partnerships. CAPS Elementary and Pre-K Deaf-Hard of Hearing Program was relocated to Page Hilltop Elementary School to allow for additional classroom space while maintaining opportunities for inclusion.



**3. CAPS will integrate quality, integrity, respect, and teamwork into every aspect of the organization.**

CAPS administrators complete ongoing monitoring and evaluation of program needs as they relate to staffing, equipment, space, curriculum, and professional development. We are proud to provide quality programming supported by experienced professionals. Teamwork is central to everything we do at CAPS Collaborative and vital to the success of our students, staff, and programs.

**4. CAPS will demonstrate accountability through constantly evaluating results and progress towards goals.**

In addition to continuous internal evaluation and reflection, CAPS participated in a mid-cycle review with DESE during the 2023-2024 school year. Progress towards our goals is measured in many ways, student success across programs and disciplines, feedback from students, staff, districts, parents, and caregivers.

**5. CAPS will implement programs and services in the most cost-effective manner and exercise due diligence in financial decision making.**

The Collaborative's Administrative team meets regularly to review program needs and staffing efficiencies. Program performance in conjunction with fiscal performance are the standards to which CAPS holds itself highest. Constantly updating staffing with an emphasis on appropriate ratios for academic success, CAPS prides itself in being a cost efficient option for the districts it serves. A review of optimization of services is given to the Board monthly.

**6. CAPS will work in partnership with districts to ensure that students transition to the least restrictive environment in their home school district.**

Providing students with the tools and opportunities to be educated in the least restrictive setting and return to district whenever possible is an essential goal for CAPS programs and CAPS teams.





# Professional Development

## STAFF INVESTMENT & RETENTION

Three years ago, a reinvestment strategy into the specialized staff CAPS already has began. Since then, CAPS has increased its budget for professional development and invested more heavily into the development and learning of its talented professionals. Not only through operating funds but through different grant opportunities, CAPS is seeking all avenues to grow with the people who uplift the programs everyday. In fiscal 2024, over \$32,000 was allocated to staff training and development. If the professionals at CAPS are learning and improving their skills on a regular basis, their success will only further the education and care of CAPS students.



### Safety & Intervention

Crisis Prevention and Intervention  
ALICE Training  
L.E.A.D. Training  
Restorative Practices  
Safety Care  
Trauma Informed School

### DESE & Programmatic

**Instruction**  
Augmentative and  
Alternative Communication  
MCAS Training  
ASHA Convention  
CPR/First Aid  
New IEP  
Language First  
CVI

### Mandated Trainings

Civil Rights Training  
51A/Mandated Reporting  
Anti-Discrimination Policies and Procedures  
Anti-Hazing Policies and Procedures  
Bullying Prevention  
Conflict of Interest and Ethics Training  
Suicide Awareness and Prevention  
Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment  
Bloodborne Pathogens  
Title IX and Sexual Harassment  
FERPA - Confidentiality Laws  
IDEA and Section 504 Laws  
Physical Restraint Prevention  
Requirements of Special Education

# Programs and Services

## ALTERNATIVE & SPECIAL EDUCATION

CAPS Collaborative works with districts to **fill the educational gaps** for a wide range of the student population. Leased classroom space within public schools provide opportunities for inclusion when appropriate while fostering the skills necessary to be successful in the **least restrictive environment**.



### CAPS Collaborative is made up of four programs:

The Gateway School  
Deaf-Hard of Hearing Program  
Kelly Day School  
Senators Program

The Gateway School is a separate day school designed to meet students' needs in areas of social/emotional development. Students in the **Gateway School** present with a variety of academic, social, and behavioral challenges as well as emotional impairments. The Kelly Day School supports students with multiple and severe disabilities who may be medically fragile. Our Senators Program supports students with moderate to severe disabilities and also including Autism. The CAPS program for **Deaf and Hard of Hearing** (DHH) provides a climate where language and diversity are valued, providing services using a variety of communication modalities, including American Sign Language (ASL), audition and spoken English.

# The Gateway School

The CAPS Gateway School is a separate public day school that supports students in Kindergarten through 12th grade. Students are referred to the Gateway School because their needs in social/emotional development are impacting their ability to access curriculum in a less restrictive setting. Utilizing a holistic integration of the principles and practices of collaborative problem solving, trauma informed care, and strength based approaches, the Gateway School strives to **create a differentiated and supportive learning environment** that is tailored to meet the needs of each student.



*"We challenged our students to think about what they would like to be when they grow up. It truly was a pleasure to see and hear their excitement unfold as they shared their ideas"*

**- Mallory Ellis, Teacher, Reading Specialist**



The focus is on understanding student strengths and fostering the development of effective skills that will generalize across all environments. This learning model is designed to accommodate individual learning styles and support paths to goals of high school graduation and meaningful postsecondary transition plans. Prevocational training including internships within the community and volunteering opportunities are an example of how our programming extends beyond the classroom.

# Volunteering and Vocational Programming



Students enrolled in the Gateway School have opportunities to participate in volunteering and vocational programming supported by a CAPS job coach. Building connections within the community, learning new skills and boosting confidence are just a few of the benefits of our volunteer and vocational programming. Community relationships are explored annually to expand and grow the outreach opportunities for our students.

## LINK Program for 18 - 22

LINK, a CAPS Gateway program located at Mount Wachusett Community College, enrolls students age 18 to 22 where they have the opportunity to attend transition classes, gain functional skills, explore career opportunities, and further develop their independence. Partnering with MWCC, students are introduced to the campus experience with peers while preparing for independent living.

Orchestrated by the CAPS Transition Specialist and other talented transition staff, the LINK program is a unique opportunity for students getting ready for their first phase of adulthood.



### PROGRAM LOCATIONS

**The Gateway School, K - 12**  
Gateway Campus  
2 Narrows Road  
Westminster, MA 01473

**LINK, 18-22**  
Mount Wachusett CC  
444 Green Street  
Gardner, MA 01440



# Deaf and Hard of Hearing



CAPS DHH Programming is designed to meet individual learning needs with a specific regard for language and communication access. The CAPS DHH Program provides services for students using American Sign Language (ASL), audition and spoken English with sign language support. Students have opportunities for small-group instruction and full inclusion in the general education settings. The program **supports and accommodates student's primary mode of communication and their use of hearing assistive technology** (e.g. hearing aids, cochlear implants, FM/DM systems, etc.) in the classroom.



## Students have access to:

- Integrated general education courses with supplemental aids and services
- Self contained, small group instruction led by Teachers of the Deaf
- Full range of academic and extra-curricular offerings from host school
- Transition planning for major milestones
- Vocational opportunities and career training



*“I have watched my daughter’s self-esteem, self-worth and self-acceptance flourish both educationally and emotionally. Now she accepts this world for her own taking, in a direction she gets to choose as an incredible Deaf teen. She now has the confidence to walk her own path with the help and the push of this program and its amazing teachers and support staff.”*

**- Ronelle, Grade 9 Parent**

Providing meaningful learning opportunities to foster academic and social excellence, the CAPS DHH support team consists of Teachers of the Deaf, ASL/English Educational Interpreters, Counselors, Speech Language Pathologists, Educational Audiologist, and Paraeducators. This specialized team works with students to develop confidence and the fundamental self-advocacy skills needed to be successful in various settings.



The Pre-K and elementary program moved to Page Hilltop Elementary School in Ayer for the start of the 2023/2024 school year to allow for more space due to program growth and the need for space for small group programming and related services. Our middle school program enjoyed its second year at Bigelow Middle School in Newton. The High school program is located at Newton North High School.

## PROGRAM LOCATIONS

**Pre K - Elementary**  
Page Hilltop Elementary  
115 Washington Street  
Ayer, MA 01432

**Middle School**  
Bigelow Middle School  
42 Vernon Street  
Newton, MA 02458

**High School**  
Newton North High School  
457 Walnut Street  
Newton, MA 02460

# Kelly Day School

*"She thrived with the therapy staff enhancing her mobility, speech developing communication and cognitive skills all while taking to assistive technology and an adaptive learning model."*

**-From the CAPS blog article [A Tribute to Kelly O'Brien](#)**

The Kelly Day School at CAPS Collaborative supports students with multiple disabilities who may have complex physical, health, communication, sensory, neurological, or sensory challenges. The integrated therapy model provides a dynamic and interactive learning environment to meet the unique needs of each student we serve. Inclusion opportunities are maximized as our students **work towards independence in all areas of skill development.**

## Service Providers Include:

- Board Certified Behavioral Analyst
- Occupational Therapists
- Orientation & Mobility Specialist
- Physical Therapists
- Registered Nurses (with LPN support)
- Speech/Language Pathologists
- Vision Teachers

The small class sizes in substantially separate classrooms located within host schools provide ample opportunities for inclusion. Educational learning is supported with communication devices, adaptive learning equipment and assistive technology



## PROGRAM LOCATIONS


**Pre K - Early Elementary**  
Hubbardston Center School  
8 Elm Street  
Hubbardston, MA 01452

**Mid - Upper Elementary**  
Ruggles Lane Elementary  
105 Ruggles Lane  
Barre, MA 01005


**Middle - High School**  
Quabbin Regional School  
800 South Street  
Barre, MA 01005




# Senators Program



The Senators program services students in middle and high school up to age 22 with moderate to severe disabilities including Autism. Students referred to these classrooms present with delays in cognitive development as well as communicative, social, and sensory impairments. The goals of these classrooms are to **develop functional academics and living skills**, as well as vocational/community/leisure abilities.



The principals of Applied Behavioral Analysis are the foundation for the classroom structure based on each student's unique & individual needs. Using small group and 1:1 format, these principles include discrete trial training, incidental teaching and behavior shaping. All services and instruction provided are per each student's Individualized Educational Plan.



*"Staff strive to support each student's unique needs for highly specialized programming and service delivery."*

- Sheri D'Annolfo, Executive Director

## PROGRAM LOCATIONS

### Middle- High School

R.C. Mahar Regional School  
507 S. Main Street  
Orange, MA 01364

# Itinerent Services

## SPECIALIZED PROVIDERS & ASSESSMENTS

Structured in program tuition based on students individual IEPs are therapy services including including physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy up to 2x30 with additional available on a case by case basis. Recently based on student and district needs, CAPS has expanded its BCBA program inclusion and beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, will have BCBA support as part of its program tuition.

While CAPS invests heavily in our internal therapy and specialty educational supports, CAPS also reaches out to area districts.

*"To provide related services to students with a diverse need of specialized instruction to member and non-member districts"*

- CAPS Collaborative's Purpose

Within the last decade, CAPS has significantly expanded its specializations to help optimize student learning and independence to stay at the **forefront of progressive education approaches**. Along with those mentioned, CAPS Itinerent Department includes:



Recently, the **Assistive Technology (AT) and Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC)** department has been the largest area of need throughout the region over the past few years, has successfully doubled the number of area schools and students receiving a variety of services that aid in the overall learning and communication process. While

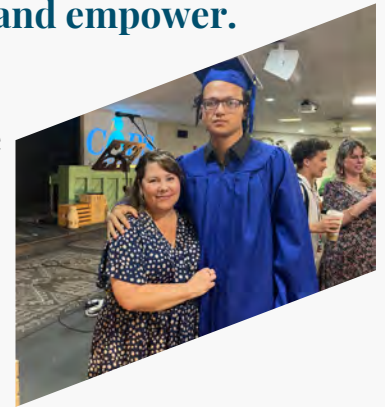
AT equipment and strategies increase academic, curriculum, and inclusion/participation success, AAC lends a voice to those unable to successfully speak. Low and high tech systems provide individuals with a positive outlet for expressing their wants, needs and decisions while also allowing them more autonomy, positive social interactions and improving their overall quality of life.

# Financial Analysis

## THE PROVIDER OF CHOICE

Collaboratives are charged with providing programs and services for the most vulnerable students. This was entrusted to CAPS in July of 1975 by 7-of its original Member Districts to meet the needs they themselves did not have the resources to provide. As the region's educational environment continued to change, Collaboratives came into existence meet the needs of its students. Collaboratives' are set forth to **create, provide and empower**.

CAPS Collaborative's leading goal is to provide the most comprehensive programs and services for its students and staff while **pivoting resources to create opportunities**. Consistently adapting to the educational environment, remaining cost effective is at the forefront of budget decisions and that of its Board of Directors.

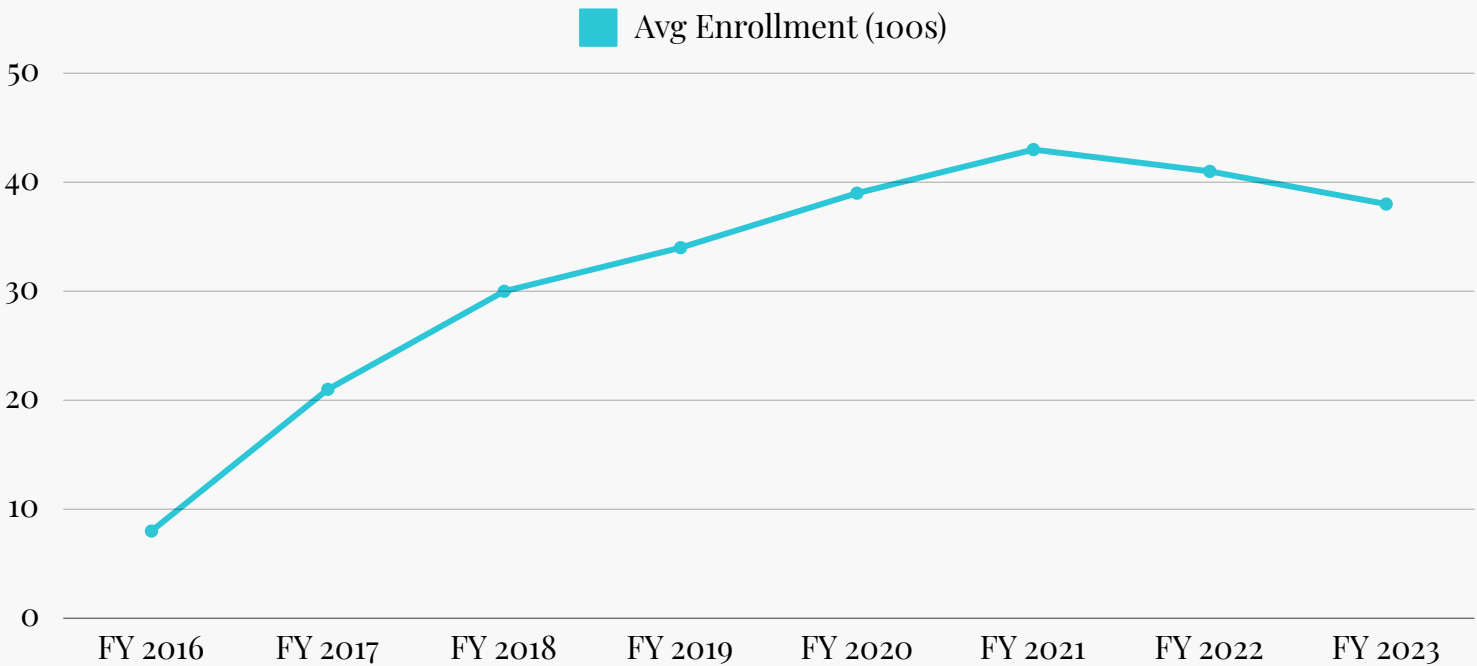


## Tuition Rates

Program tuition is set on an annual basis by the Board of Directors. Through its Finance Subcommittee, independent Treasurer and CAPS Administrative Team, a mix of area trend data compared to past, current and projected enrollment are analyzed during the budget process. Updating staffing needs with an emphasis on appropriate ratios for program safety and academic success, CAPS remains a cost-efficient option for its Member Districts.

CAPS Program	Private School Average	CAPS Member Tuition FY 24	Member Savings	Comparable Programs
Gateway School	\$94,527	\$55,109	\$39,418	Devereux, Lighthouse, RFK Community Alliance
Deaf Hard of Hearing	\$81,709	\$63,483	\$18,226	Beverly School, Clarke School, Learning Center, Willie Ross School
Kelly Day School	\$118,434	\$72,944	\$45,490	Boston Campus School, New England Center for Children
Senators Program	\$127,817	\$71,533	\$56,284	Cardinal Cushing, May Institute, New England Center for Children

The 2023-2024 approach to tuition rates reflected **continuing the program development** approach since the COVID shutdown of 2021 that focused on continuity of service and self-sustainability. With extensive growth over the past decade, fiscal 2022-2023 marked the second year post COVID of program plateaus. Expanding mid-level age groups have begun turning into extensive graduating classes annually. New enrollments in the fall months are initially replenishing those empty seats from the previous year, making organic growth more and more challenging. In addition, the changing landscape in the profile of students referred to Collaboratives continues to become more extensive, therefore requiring more intensive services.



*\*Not reflected above is the addition of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Middle & High School Programs beginning FY 2022*



With the coming fiscal year’s focus pivoting from program development to self-sustainability, the Administrative team and Board of Directors considered a multitude of factors along with an ongoing plateau with Gateway, Kelly Day and the Senators programs when considering tuitions adjustments for the 2024 fiscal year:





## 2023 - 2024 Tuition Rates

Program	Members		Non-Members		2nd Tier	
	Annual	Daily	Annual	Daily	Annual	Daily
DHH   PS-ES	\$56,243	312.46	\$68,881	382.67	\$73,703	409.46
DHH   MS-HS	\$61,634	342.41	\$68,881	382.87	\$77,598	431.10
Kelly Day	\$70,138	389.65	\$84,278	468.21	-	-
Senators	\$68,801	382.23	\$82,672	459.29	-	-
Gateway	\$50,559	280.88	\$61,934	344.08	-	-
Gateway   LINK	\$39,183	217.68	\$47,084	261.58	-	-

## Program Enrollment

Soaring to new heights in 2023-2024, **CAPS reached an all time high in enrollment** during its storied 48-year history. Previously held high from 1994, CAPS' original DHH HS program had upwards of 80 students which propelled enrollment numbers into the lower 170s. Fiscal 2024 not only eclipsed that number but left it far behind hitting the new enrollment high of 187 students in April 2024.

While still battling the challenges of program plateaus in the Gateway School and Senators program, coming to fruition were investments in other younger level classrooms. Over the last 3-years in the Kelly Day School, the addition of a Middle School classroom and a second Pre-k/Kindergarten has allowed for a natural grade-level progression as well as increased enrollments at the beginning of a student's school career. Kelly Day's model is the first self-sustaining growth model CAPS has implemented and is the blueprint being used in other programs. Average Enrollment grew in Kelly Day from 43 to 47 students and is projecting to hit more heights in fiscal 2025.

Since becoming a CAPS program in the 2021 fiscal year, enrollment in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing middle and high school classrooms has doubled from 16 to 32 in the three year span. Furthermore, The Pre-K and Elementary Classroom's move to Page Hilltop Elementary in the Ayer-Shirley school district saw immediate benefits in the pre-k population.



Enrollment jumped by 2.5 times in the pre-school from 4 to 10 in 2024 and marked the first growth in DHH Pre-k and Elementary since 2019. As exciting as the middle-high school classrooms doubling, growing younger classrooms are beginning to set up a self-sustainable DHH program moving towards 2025 and beyond. Fiscal 2026 will see 9 seniors graduate from Newton North High School and the DHH High School. In preparation for that amazing program achievement, CAPS will expand the DHH PreK further by opening a second room in fiscal 2025 at Ayer-Shirley. Harnessing the momentum of this **new partnership will be vital to program sustainability** over the next two years.

2023 - 2024 Enrollments

Program	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
Gateway ES	19	19	19	19	19	18	19	20	20	20
Gateway MS	21	21	23	21	23	23	23	21	20	19
Gateway HS	25	23	24	23	27	27	25	25	23	17
Gateway LINK	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3
DHH PS	4	5	6	6	6	8	8	10	10	10
DHH ES	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
DHH MS	12	12	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
DHH HS	17	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
Kelly Day PS	5	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	8	8
Kelly Day K	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Kelly Day EES	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	7
Kelly Day EMS	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6
Kelly Day EUS	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Kelly Day MS	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Kelly Day HS	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Senators JR	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Senators SR	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Senator VOC	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
TOTAL	174	177	182	179	185	186	184	187	185	178

# Contracted Services

CAPS' wide range of specialists are available to districts to assist in meeting IEP goals and requirements, provide assessments or serve as the providers for in-district departments. Similar to tuition, these contracted services rates are reviewed during the budget process.

CAPS Service Provider	Private Per Hour Average	CAPS FY 24 Per Hour Rates	Member Savings	Comparable Service Providers
Assistive Tech   AAC	\$210.00	\$115.00	\$95.00	Easter Seals
Interpreting (ASL)	\$125.00	\$68.25	\$56.75	Partners Interpreting
Occupational Therapy	\$140.00	\$99.75	\$40.25	Delta T Group, Futures, Sunbelt
Physical Therapy	\$140.00	\$99.75	\$40.25	Delta T Group, Futures, Sunbelt
Speech Therapy	\$140.00	\$99.75	\$40.25	Delta T Group, Futures, Sunbelt

*Cost-effectiveness for contracted service rates is measured through a comparison of its hourly rates with comparable private or independent contractor rates. Organizations above were selected for like service as well as availability with its Member Districts.*

Contracted Service rates were increased by 5% increase for fiscal 2024, continuing the restructured format begun last year breaking out a Non-Member rate. Districts maintain their benefit by being members of the Collaborative with a 10% difference in rates from the new Non-Member amounts. Speech Contracted Services continued to soar in 2024 with CAPS specialty service providers running entire therapy departments in a couple of our Member Districts. Contrary to OT | PT contracted services however, these services saw all-time lows in contracted revenue. Mainly due to the loss of a district shortly before the school year began, the OT | PT department was not able to obtain new contracts as significant as the one lost. CAPS was committed to keeping its long term therapy staff by shifting responsibilities but will be looking towards a department restructuring in fiscal 2025 to better reflect the new market trends for therapy services in the region.





## 2023 - 2024 Tuition Rates

Therapy Services (Per Hour)			Other Services (Per Hour)		
	Mem	Non		Mem	Non
Occupational Therapy	99.75	109.75	Augmentative Communication Eval	115.00	126.50
Physical Therapy	99.75	109.75	Assistive Technology	112.75	124.00
Speech Language Pathologist	99.75	109.75	Board Certified Behavioral Analyst	112.75	124.00
Occupational Therapy Assistant	57.75	63.50	Interpreter (ASL   ELL)	68.25	75.00
Physical Therapy Assistant	57.75	63.50	Orientation & Mobility Specialist	112.75	124.00
Speech Language Pathologist Assistant	57.75	63.50	Teacher of the Deaf   In-Home Teach.	97.25	107.00
School Psychologist	97.25	107.00	Teacher of the Visually Impaired	112.75	124.00

## Fiscal Performance 2024

The 2023-2024 was another extremely positive year in terms of growth and outreach. Enrollment numbers soaring across the Commonwealth, **CAPS is poised to eclipse the 200 student enrollment mark in 2025**. This set up for even further heights than were reached in fiscal 2024 by the trend realization and adjustments made through the year. With the Kelly Day School and Deaf Hard of Hearing Program now poised for sustained organic growth into the future, 2024 marked a planning year for similar strategies with the Gateway School and Senators programs.

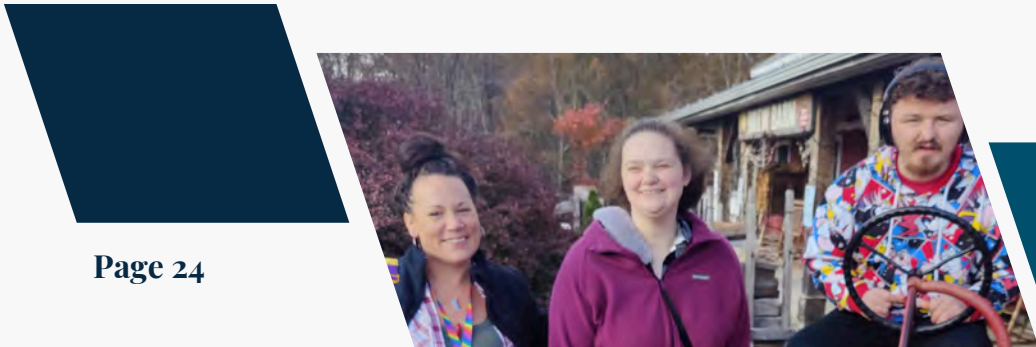
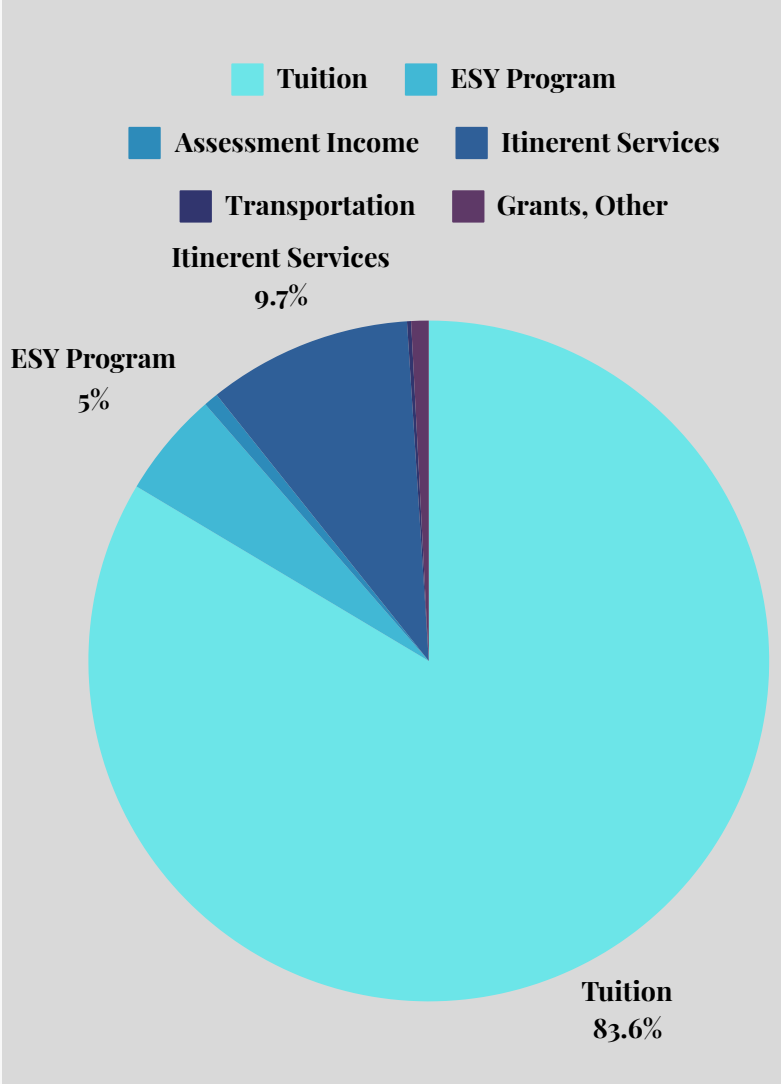
Fiscal	Revenue	Growth Rate
2020 - 2021	\$9,601,328	5.86%
2021 - 2022	\$11,078,667	15.39%
2022 - 2023	\$12,100,684	9.23%
2023 - 2024	\$13,630,634	12.64%

The significance of the new enrollment heights, expansion and outreach is reflected in the growth rate since fiscal 2020-2021. Collectively, CAPS **has grown by 43.12% in that time period.**

Along with great partnerships from Member Districts, future Members in Ayer-Shirley and even school building partners with Newton Public Schools, the significant Collaborative growth has stemmed from investment back into the programs. With a **12.64% growth rate coming out of fiscal 2024**, expenses did exceed revenues by \$80,864 (equivalent to one Satellite Program enrollment) with two program plateaus stalling fund balance gains.

Revenues for fiscal 2024 topped \$13,630,634. This was evident with 19 additional students from 2023 and a **14.2% increase in tuition revenue**. Other large areas of expansion included Speech Contracted Revenue with 60% growth due to running a member district’s speech therapy department. Instructional contracted revenue also saw areas of gain with a new Augmentative and Alternative Communication and Assistive Technology department attending to new educational needs in the area. Combined with the addition of a second Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI), these accounted for the 14.4% growth for instructional assistance to districts. Contrary to a postive year across the Revenue side of the Profit/Loss statement was the loss of OT | PT Contracts and a reduction in the need for those services by area schools. Revenue in these departments decreased by 62%.

2024 Sources of Revenue

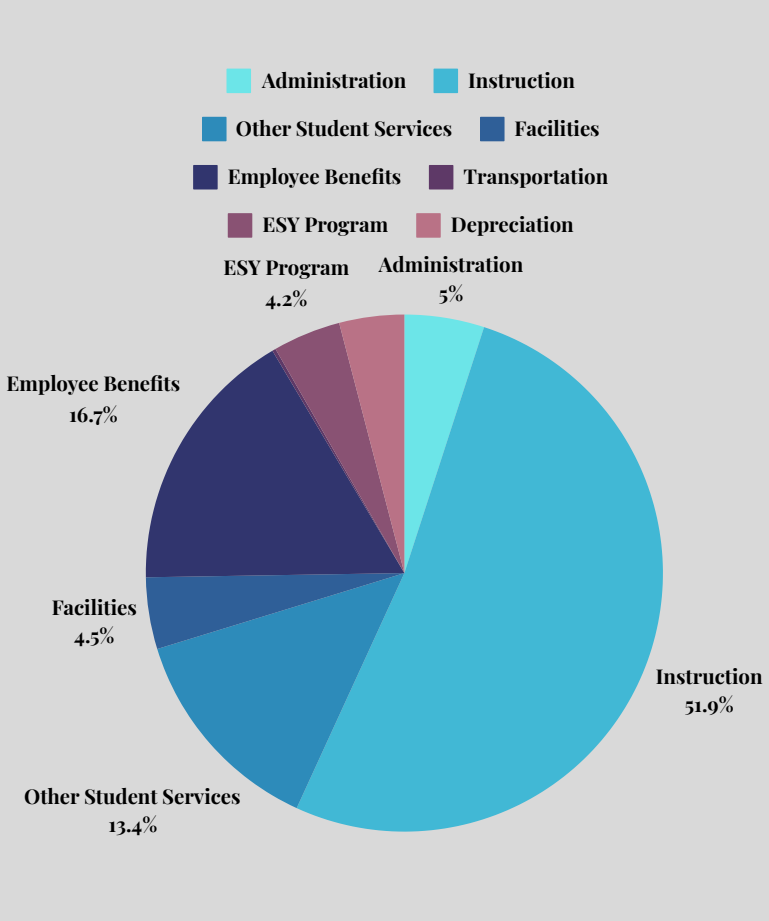




With revenue increasing by \$1,548,482 (13%) from 2023, expenses in 2024 increased at a lesser rate of \$1,403,941 (11%). While a **positive development throughout a 40% growth rate over 4 years**, the 2% difference in revenue vs expense growth prove the small margins CAPS programs are operating under. There are a few factors that have lead to this development. Mainly, its the investment in program service enhancements and professional staffing.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Kelly Day and Senators are small margin programs with small student-staff ratios due to the nature of the program’s needs. Closer to a 1.25-1.5:1 in Kelly Day and Senators, Gateway historically has had larger ratios and better margins.

2024 Sources of Expense



A growing need for programming for students with social/emotional challenges, as well as the intensity of trauma responses significantly increasing, has changed to the scope of Gateway. Clinical Service Specialists, multiple Counselors and BCBA has improved the school’s therapeutic and behavioral response resources. Successes from these investments are shown in **consistently graduating 5 - 8 students annually**. While an incredible achievement, the fiscal turnover is significant. The first fall months of the year are spent replenishing former graduates, lending to a flat enrollment overall in the low to mid 60s over 5-years. The investment in professional staff, while enhancing program services, has increased student to staff ratios to almost 3:2, minimizing margins at a flat enrollment.



Similarly, the lack of a lower-level elementary classroom has made program expansion and sustainability with the Senators program stagnant. With classrooms structures toward discrete trial training, incidental teacher and behavior shaping techniques through small groups, it is a staff intensive program that doesn't have a high referral rate annually. Despite these challenges, the groundwork is set for new lower level classrooms **building sustainable growth in 2025 and beyond.**



**2024 Capital Asset Balances**

Classroom Furn	\$328,864
Equipment	71,796
Facilities	265,814
Technology	177,529

Audited Financials	Budgetary Basis 23-24	
REVENUE		
Tuition	\$11,390,794	83.57%
ESY Tuition	685,542	5.03%
Assessment	93,924	0.69%
OT Contracted	78,177	0.57%
PT Contracted	89,280	0.65%
Speech Contracted	499,040	3.66%
Instructional Contracted	654,536	4.80%
Transportation Contracted	26,249	0.19%
Other Revnue	113,092	0.83%

**Total Revenue**      **\$13,630,634**

EXPENSE		
Administration	\$684,047	4.99%
Instructional	6,703,189	48.89%
OT	444,615	3.24%
PT	438,293	3.20%
Speech	918,166	6.70%
Operation & Maintenance	653,341	4.76%
Fixed Charges	2,294,718	16.74%
Transporation	29,547	0.22%
Itinerent	406,267	2.96%
ESY Instructional	582,489	4.25%
Other Expense	556,826	4.06%



**Total Expense**      **\$13,711,498**

**Change in Fund Balance**      **\$ (80,864)**

# 2024 in Review

## Highlights and Successes

*"Wonderful things happen every day here in the CAPS Collaborative programs"*

- Cindy Landanno, former CAPS Executive Director, website welcome message

CAPS is not defined by its financial reports or the slogan on its website. The people are what define a Collaborative, both staff and students. The 2024 fiscal year was another example of incredibly talented professionals proving their dedication and selflessness for the student lives they improve daily. The impact of CAPS Collaborative is now statewide: reaching out and embracing new member districts, expanding to after school programs with exciting partnerships, putting on more graduation ceremonies, being at the forefront of assistive technology and new communication methods for our region, and most importantly, seeing different levels of success achieved every day throughout CAPS Classrooms. These are just a few examples of those 2024 successes:

**Ayer-Shirley  
Regional School District  
became CAPS' 12th  
Member District.**

After DESE approved a new Collaborative Agreement, as of July 2024 Ayer-Shirley will be the first new member since July 2011.



**New partnership with  
Monty Tech RVT**  
12-students and young adults received job-skills training after school through MT Voc instructors and CAPS support staff. Program will return 2025

**DHH PS | ELE**  
has a new home & partner  
at Page Hilltop Elementary  
Ayer-Shirley welcomed our  
younger Deaf and Hard of  
Hearing classrooms to ample  
inclusion opportunities,  
growing to 19 students  
preK-5th grade





**ALICE Training**  
Two staff were trained to be instructors. They will begin implementation with CAPS staff in fiscal 2025.

**Central MA Special Ed Directors Group**  
Member and Non-Member special edu leaders joined monthly meetings highlighting CAPS programs & services with various networking opportunities.

**RBT Program developed & implemented**  
Using applied behavioral analysis, eight paraeducators enrolled to develop a high level of skills supporting students across the Satellite programs



**Mid-Cycle Program Review**  
Successfully completed in the Spring of 2024



From reaching new heights and celebrating countless successes in 2024, **the future is bright for 2025**. As three Kindergarten/Early Elementary classrooms are poised to open in DHH, Gateway and Senators, an increased support system and knowledge as Ayer-Shirley joins the Board of Directors as the first new member since 2011, and exciting new partnership with Monty-Tech and the second round of the STEP program will open in the fall, CAPS Collaborative will enroll its 200th student for the first time in its history in 2025.

Most importantly, CAPS will continue to excel at its **purpose of providing the most comprehensive alternative and specialized education** in the region for its most vulnerable students.

Wonderful things happen  
**EVERY DAY**  
here in the  
CAPS Collaborative programs.

# |Contact Us



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*Readers of the  
CAPS Annual Report  
with question or comments are  
encouraged to contact:*

**Sheri D'Annolfo**  
**Executive Director**

[sdannolfo@capsed.net](mailto:sdannolfo@capsed.net)







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## Appendix

### **ACCEPTANCE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

We, the Board of Directors of the **CAPS Collaborative**, have voted to accept the Annual Report as submitted for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024.

We also certify that the representations made in the annual report are accurate and have been disclosed in accordance with Department guidelines.

Peter V. Stephens

Board Chairperson

12/11/2024

Date of Board Vote