updated 06.10.2026

Valley Collaborative Board of Directors Meeting
11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica, Massachusetts
Thursday, June 11, 2026 ▪ 10:00 a.m.

Welcome Guests

- Dr. Anthony Bent, Educational Leadership Consultant
- Linda Balfour, Academy Facilitator, Office of Professional Learning
- Lori Likis, Creative Coaching Consultant
- Katie Novak, Ed.D., Educational Consultant, The Novak Group (video)

Musical Performance by Valley Elementary School's Ukulele Troupe:

- Noah Perkins, 4th grade - Exeter, NH
- Henry Gould, 5th grade – Tewksbury, MA
- Brody Romano, 6th grade - Chelmsford, MA
- Meghan Pope - Music Therapist at Valley Elementary, conducting and accompanying on ukulele

Action Required

I. Approval of Minutes
   a. Board of Directors Meeting, General Session Minutes: January 8, 2026

II. Board Governance 2026 - 2027
   a. Election of Board Chairperson
   b. Board Member Retirees

III. Financial Update
   a. FY'26 Update Memo – Financial Update and Year End Projections
      i. Interim Statement of Net Assets through January 31, 2026
      ii. Interim Statement of Net Assets through February 28, 2026
      iii. Interim Statement of Net Assets through March 31, 2026
      iv. Interim Statement of Net Assets through April 30, 2026
      v. Interim Statement of Net Assets through May 31, 2026
      vi. Income Statement through January 31, 2026
      vii. Income Statement through February 28, 2026
      viii. Income Statement through March 31, 2026
      ix. Income Statement through April 30, 2026
      x. Income Statement through May 31, 2026
      xi. FY 26 Member Distribution Credit
      xii. FY 26 Cumulative Surplus Calculation
      xiii. Approval of the FY27 – FY28 Salary Schedules
      xiv. Approval of the updated Longevity Schedule
   b. Enrollment Update
   c. Treasurer's Reports
      i. December
      ii. January
      iii. February
      iv. March
      v. April
      vi. May
   d. PARS Statement
      i. PARS Target OPEB Trust Program Report

ii. January Account Report
iii. February Account Report
iv. March Account Report
v. April Account Report
vi. PARS Monthly Market Review

IV. Board of Directors Meeting Calendar 2026 – 2027 Revised
i. December 10th moved to December 15th
ii. April 8th moved to April 1st
iii. Reminder: September 17th & November 19th meetings will be held virtually

V. Executive Director Evaluation

VI. Business Manager/Accountant Evaluation

VII. Treasurer Evaluation

VIII. Approval of handbooks:
a. 2026 – 2027 Valley Collaborative Employee Handbook
b. 2026 – 2027 Valley Collaborative Student and Family Handbook and Policies and Procedures Manual
c. 2026 – 2027 Valley Adult Services Program Handbook

IX. Quarterly Reports on Collaborative Business for Member District School Committees – FY'26 3rd Quarter

No Action Required

X. Making a Difference Awards
a. Student, Individual and Staff of the Month Award Presentation
b. The Annual Dr. Anthony Bent Leadership Award Presentation
Recipient: Brian Mihalek, Assistant Principal, Valley Middle School & Valley Transitional High School – Transitional Programming
c. The Community Partner Award Presentation
Recipients: Haran Painting LLC
d. The Community Leader Award Presentation
Recipients: 3M

XI. Valley Collaborative 2025 – 2026 Professional Learning Update
Presented by: Linda Balfour, Academy Facilitator, Office of Professional Learning
Katie Novak, Ed.D., Educational Consultant, The Novak Group (video)

XII. Valley Collaborative District Improvement Plan Update
Presented by: Dr. Lori Likis, Creative Coaching Consultant

XIII. Communications

State Agencies
a. FY 25 Valley Annual Report Submission
b. FY25 Valley Financial Audit

Valley Program Updates
c. Elementary School Update & Newsletters
d. Transitional High School Alternative Programming Update
e. Middle School and Transitional High School Transitional Programming Updates
f. Adult Services Update
g. Safety Committee Update
h. Valley Promotional Brochures

Community and Staff

i. Valley Transitional High School Graduation Invitation – June 12, 2026
j. Valley's Spring Newsletter
k. Valley's Summer Newsletter
l. Email from Renato Silva regarding facilities
m. Email from Linda Balfour regarding facilities
n. Email from Sgt. Melanson regarding ALICE Drill
o. Note from the Marston Family regarding Donation
p. Staff Appreciation Email
q. Note from John Resteghini
r. Retirement letter from Sue Donato
s. Email from Brian Mihalek regarding Tony Bent Leadership Award

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q. Note from John Resteghini
r. Retirement letter from Sue Donato
s. Email from Brian Mihalek regarding Tony Bent Leadership Award

Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
Annual Stakeholders' Meeting
General Session Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2026
10:06 a.m. – 11:05 a.m.
11 Executive Park, N. Billerica, MA

Board Members Present: Dr. Jay Lang, Dr. Denise Pigeon, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Dr. Kerry Clery, Dr. Christopher Chew, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan

Board Members Absent: Mr. Steven Stone, Dr. Geoff Bruno, Mr. Brad Morgan

Collaborative Representatives Present: Dr. Chris Scott, Executive Director; Ms. Heidi Kriger, Treasurer; Mr. James George, Business Manager/Accountant; Members of the Collaborative Senior Leadership Team

Also Present: Thomas Lent, Barrow Lent LLP

Call to Order: Dr. Jay Lang, Chairman, convened the Collaborative Board Meeting at 10:06 a.m. Dr. Lang conducted roll call attendance of all Board Members.

Dr. Lang and Dr. Chris Scott welcomed all in attendance and introduced all participants and presenters at the Annual Shareholders' Meeting.

Acknowledgements of the Students, Individuals and Staff of the Month

Dr. Scott and Members of the Collaborative Leadership team introduced and acknowledged the students, individuals and staff of the month and the student presentations.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Jay Lang requested the Board to review the meeting minutes made available for review and asked for a motion relating to the minutes.

On a motion made by Dr. Michael Flanagan, and seconded by Dr. Denise Pigeon,, a quorum of voters being present, it was voted:

VOTED: To approve the General Session Meeting Minutes for the Board of Directors dated December 4, 2025.

The vote was 4-0-2. Yes: Dr. Denise Pigeon, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Dr. Jay Lang, Dr. Christopher Chew. Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan and Dr. Kerry Clery abstained.

Fiscal Year 2027 Budget

Dr. Scott reviewed with the Board the proposed budget for fiscal year 2027, which had been reviewed and discussed previously by the Board at its prior meeting. She again reviewed with the Board the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Presentation Memo, a copy of which was contained within the Board materials and which had been updated since the December 4, 2025 meeting. The Board discussed the proposed tuition and fee-for-services increase, the cost-of-living adjustment, and enrollment. Dr. Lang asked for motions relating to the items related to proposed budget and tuitions, which would be voted upon by roll call vote.

On a motion made by Dr. Michael Flanagan, and seconded by D. Kerry Clery, a quorum being present, it was voted by roll call vote:

VOTED: **That the Board of Directors approves the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget, including an Operating Expense Budget for the Collaborative in the amount of $28,957,372 as presented and recommended by the Executive Director; and requests that the Treasurer certify and transmit the budget for Fiscal Year 2027 to each member district by no later than February 1, 2026.**

The roll call vote was 6-0. Yes: Dr. Jay Lang, Dr. Denise Pigeon, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Dr. Kerry Clery, Dr. Christopher Chew, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan.

On a motion made by Dr. Michael Flanagan, and seconded by Dr. Denise Pigeon, a quorum being present, it was voted by roll call vote:

VOTED: **That the Board of Directors accepts and approves the tuition rates and fees-for-services for member districts for Fiscal Year 2027 as presented; and requests that the Treasurer certify and transmit the tuition rates and fees-for-services for Fiscal Year 2027 to each member district by no later than February 1, 2026.**

The roll call vote was 6-0. Yes: Dr. Jay Lang, Dr. Denise Pigeon, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Dr. Kerry Clery, Dr. Christopher Chew, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan.

On a motion made by Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, and seconded by Dr. Kerry Clery, a quorum being present, it was voted by roll call vote:

VOTED: **That the Board of Directors accepts and approves the assessment of surcharges on tuition rates and fees-for-services on non-member districts based on each student enrolled from a non-member district for Fiscal Year 2027 as presented and recommended by the Executive Director; and authorizes the Executive Director to publish the non-**

2

member district tuition rates and fees-for services for Fiscal Year 2026.

The roll vote was 6-0. Yes: Dr. Jay Lang, Dr. Denise Pigeon, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Dr. Kerry Clery, Dr. Christopher Chew, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan.

Financial Update

Executive Director's Report and Fiscal Year 2026 Update

Dr. Scott reviewed the revenues, expenses, budget and enrollment for the School Year 2025-2026. Dr. Scott referred the Board to her Fiscal Year 2026 Budget memorandum within the Board materials which outlined the current revenue and expenses at the Collaborative and enrollment, operating expenses and vehicle/transportation expenses.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Heidi Kriger, the Collaborative Treasurer, provided the Board with her report which covered the months through November 2025. Ms. Kriger provided a verbal summary of her report, including available balances, transfers, withdrawals, interest income and ending balances. She also reviewed the OPEB Trust financial information and balances and PARS statements. A written summary report was contained within the Board materials. There was no further discussion.

On a motion made by Dr. Michael Flanagan, and seconded by Dr. Christopher Chew, a quorum of voters being present, it was voted:

VOTED: That the Board of Directors accepts the report of the Collaborative Treasurer, as presented at this meeting, and requests that a copy of the report be filed and maintained at the Collaborative.

The vote was 6-0. Yes: Dr. Jay Lang, Dr. Denise Pigeon, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Dr. Kerry Clery, Dr. Christopher Chew, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan.

Academic Calendars

Dr. Scott reviewed the proposed 2026-2027 Academic, Day Employee and Adult Services Calendars, with proposed Board Meeting dates.

On a motion made by Dr. Kerry Clery, and seconded by Dr. Christopher Chew, a quorum being present, it was voted:

VOTED: That the Board of Directors approves the academic, day employee and adult service calendars and the Board meeting dates for the 2026-

2027 School Year as presented, and authorizes the Executive Director to post such dates on the Collaborative website.

The vote was 6-0. Yes: Dr. Jay Lang, Dr. Denise Pigeon, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Dr. Kerry Clery, Dr. Christopher Chew, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan.

Non-Member District Request for Signatory Confirmation Update

Dr. Scott indicated that a non-member district requested confirmation that Dr. Scott remained authorized to execute and deliver contracts on behalf of the Collaborative and the Board of Directors.

On a motion made by Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, and seconded by Dr. Denise Pigeon, a quorum being present, it was voted:

VOTED: That the Board of Directors affirms that Dr. Chris A. Scott, as Executive Director of Valley Collaborative, is authorized and empowered to execute contracts on behalf of Valley Collaborative.

The vote was 6-0. Yes: Dr. Jay Lang, Dr. Denise Pigeon, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Dr. Kerry Clery, Dr. Christopher Chew, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan.

Final Fiscal Year 2025 Audit and Reports

Dr. Scott review the final Fiscal Year 2025 Audit completed by the Collaborative's independent auditors and the Annual Report, indicating that copies would be provided to member districts and their respective School Committes.

Valley Collaborative Program Updates

Dr. Scott introduced separately Heather Mackay, Nick LeClair, Nicole Noska and Matthew Gentile, each of whom provided the Board with an update regarding their respective schools and/or programs. The Collaborative's School Nurse, Jessica Marcotte, also provided an update. There was no further discussion.

Quarterly Reports on Collaborative Business – Fiscal Year 2026 Second Quarter / Valley Collaborative Winter Newsletter

Dr. Scott presented her memo on quarterly reports and newsletters directed to both Board members and member district school committees.

Communications

Dr. Scott directed the Board to the communications contained within the Board materials, which she reviewed with the Board. There was no further discussion.

On a motion made by Dr. Michael Flanagan and seconded by Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan, a quorum of voters being present, it was voted:

VOTED: To adjourn the Board meeting.

The vote was 6-0. Yes: Dr. Jay Lang, Dr. Denise Pigeon, Dr. Michael Flanagan, Dr. Kerry Clery, Dr. Christopher Chew, Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan.

Dr. Jay Lang adjourned the Collaborative Board Meeting at 11:05 a.m.

LIST OF DOCUMENTS USED, DISTRIBUTED AND REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING:

- School Year 2025-2026 Electronic Board Binder for Board Meeting, January 8, 2026

Respectfully Submitted,

_____
Dr. Jay Lang, Chairman
Dated: _____

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Central Administration

11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica, MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Ph.D., Executive Director
Date: June 11, 2026
Re: Election of Board Chairperson

Annually, during the final scheduled meeting of the school year, the Board organizes itself by electing a Chairperson and any other Board positions deemed appropriate by the Board.

Required Action:

- Vote to elect a Board Chairperson

Attachments:

- None

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica, MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Ph.D., Executive Director
Date: June 11, 2026
Re: Board Member Retirees

It is with sincere gratitude and appreciation that we recognize the retirements of Dr. Michael Flanagan of Tyngsborough Public Schools and Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan of Tewksbury Public Schools and honor their many contributions to Valley Collaborative.

Dr. Flanagan has served on the Valley Collaborative Board of Directors and Executive Committee for nearly a decade. Throughout his service, he consistently placed students at the center of decision-making and helped ensure that Valley's financial operations remained closely aligned with and supportive of its mission.

Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan has served on the Valley Collaborative Board of Directors and Executive Committee for more than four years. Her thoughtful leadership and steadfast commitment to addressing complex special education challenges positively impacted countless students and families throughout the region.

Valley Collaborative extends its deepest appreciation to both leaders for their dedication, service, and lasting contributions to the organization and the communities it serves.

Required Action:

- None

Attachments:

- None

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Dr., N. Billerica MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: June 11, 2026
Re: FY26 Update Memo – Financial Update and Year End Projections

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As of May 31, 2026 (192 of 210 days – 91.4%), Valley closed favorable with revenues on target at 90.5% and expenses are down at 86.64%.

Projections for the end of the year are better than our amended budget. This is due to the following factors:

- Tuition revenue is now projected to be higher. This increase is due to higher enrollment after the amended budget was created.
- State contract revenues continue to be trending close to projected.
- Projected operating expenses for the year are expected to be lower than budgeted.

The cumulative surplus for the year is projected to be above $2M. Conservatively, this estimate will not change significantly but will be revisited after the audit in the Fall. Currently, I am requesting the Board vote to return $1,745,297.00

Again, this year, it has been an honor to offer high quality special education services in the most fiscally responsible manner. Our collective work and dedication to Valley's mission has resulted in positive outcomes for students and a projected $2M return to school districts. I would like to thank Valley's Board Chair, Dr. Jay Lang, and the Board of Directors for their effective oversight, governance and generous support of this most important work.

Required Action:

- Vote to return $1,745,297.00 to member districts per 25% surplus calculation

Attachments:

- Interim Statement of Net Assets through January 31, 2026
- Interim Statement of Net Assets through February 28, 2026
- Interim Statement of Net Assets through March 31, 2026
- Interim Statement of Net Assets through April 30, 2026
- Interim Statement of Net Assets through May 31, 2026

- Income Statement through January 31, 2026
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- FY 26 Member Distribution Credit
- FY 26 Cumulative Surplus Calculation

Valley Collaborative
Interim Statement of Net Assets
For the Period Ended
January 31, 2026

UNAUDITED

ASSETS

Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	$	4,548,307
Restricted Investments - OPEB		8,329,655
Accounts Receivable, Net		5,204,646
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets		28,947
Cash Held for Member Districts		936,636
Total Current Assets		19,048,191
Non-Current Assets		
Land & Building		4,192,869
Furniture, Equipment, and Leasehold Improvements, Net of Depreciation		1,926,716
Construction in Progress		-
Total Non-Current Assets		6,119,585
TOTAL ASSETS	**$**	**25,167,776**

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	$	1,398,219
Other Liabilities		2,516,128
Member District Accounts (Settlement)		936,636
Total Current Liabilities		4,850,983
Total Liabilities		4,850,983
Net Assets		
Operating - Unrestricted		5,883,803
Restricted - Student Activities		44,955
Reserved - OPEB Trust		5,840,459
Reserved - Capital		1,500,000
Invested in Capital Assets, Net of Related Debt		7,047,576
Total Net Assets		20,316,793
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	**$**	**25,167,776**
		-

Substantially all disclosures and the Statement of Cash Flows required by GAAP are omitted.
No assurance is provided on these financial statements.

Valley Collaborative
Interim Statement of Net Assets
For the Period Ended
February 28, 2026

UNAUDITED

ASSETS

Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	$	4,852,100
Restricted Investments - OPEB		9,203,549
Accounts Receivable, Net		5,121,839
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets		28,947
Cash Held for Member Districts		629,440
Total Current Assets		19,835,875
Non-Current Assets		
Land & Building		4,352,391
Furniture, Equipment, and Leasehold Improvements, Net of Depreciation		2,278,889
Construction in Progress		-
Total Non-Current Assets		6,631,280
TOTAL ASSETS	**$**	**26,467,155**

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	$	1,573,469
Other Liabilities		2,516,128
Member District Accounts (Settlement)		629,440
Total Current Liabilities		4,719,037
Total Liabilities		4,719,037
Net Assets		
Operating - Unrestricted		5,880,604
Restricted - Student Activities		40,849
Reserved - OPEB Trust		6,714,353
Reserved - Capital		1,500,000
Invested in Capital Assets, Net of Related Debt		7,612,312
Total Net Assets		21,748,118
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	**$**	**26,467,155**
		-

Substantially all disclosures and the Statement of Cash Flows required by GAAP are omitted.
No assurance is provided on these financial statements.

Valley Collaborative
Interim Statement of Net Assets
For the Period Ended
March 31, 2026

UNAUDITED

ASSETS

Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	$	6,775,372
Restricted Investments - OPEB		8,815,339
Accounts Receivable, Net		4,350,703
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets		27,022
Cash Held for Member Districts		287,722
Total Current Assets		20,256,158
Non-Current Assets		
Land & Building		4,352,391
Furniture, Equipment, and Leasehold Improvements, Net of Depreciation		1,718,165
Construction in Progress		-
Total Non-Current Assets		6,070,556
TOTAL ASSETS	**$**	**26,326,714**

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	$	1,661,984
Other Liabilities		2,516,128
Member District Accounts (Settlement)		287,722
Total Current Liabilities		4,465,834
Total Liabilities		4,465,834
Net Assets		
Operating - Unrestricted		6,909,041
Restricted - Student Activities		40,849
Reserved - OPEB Trust		6,326,143
Reserved - Capital		1,500,000
Invested in Capital Assets, Net of Related Debt		7,084,847
Total Net Assets		21,860,880
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	**$**	**26,326,714**
		-

Substantially all disclosures and the Statement of Cash Flows required by GAAP are omitted.
No assurance is provided on these financial statements.

Valley Collaborative
Interim Statement of Net Assets
For the Period Ended
April 30, 2026

UNAUDITED

ASSETS

Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	$	6,330,617
Restricted Investments - OPEB		9,299,128
Accounts Receivable, Net		4,708,288
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets		27,126
Cash Held for Member Districts		198,026
Total Current Assets		20,563,185
Non-Current Assets		
Land & Building		4,352,391
Furniture, Equipment, and Leasehold Improvements, Net of Depreciation		1,658,040
Construction in Progress		-
Total Non-Current Assets		6,010,431
TOTAL ASSETS	**$**	**26,573,616**

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	$	1,314,201
Other Liabilities		2,516,128
Member District Accounts (Settlement)		198,026
Total Current Liabilities		4,028,355
Total Liabilities		4,028,355
Net Assets		
Operating - Unrestricted		7,149,896
Restricted - Student Activities		45,671
Reserved - OPEB Trust		6,809,932
Reserved - Capital		1,500,000
Invested in Capital Assets, Net of Related Debt		7,039,762
Total Net Assets		22,545,261
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	**$**	**26,573,616**
		-

Substantially all disclosures and the Statement of Cash Flows required by GAAP are omitted.
No assurance is provided on these financial statements.

Valley Collaborative
Interim Statement of Net Assets
For the Period Ended
May 31, 2026

UNAUDITED

ASSETS

Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	$	6,785,555
Restricted Investments - OPEB		9,299,128
Accounts Receivable, Net		5,228,270
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets		26,417
Cash Held for Member Districts		411,025
Total Current Assets		21,750,395
Non-Current Assets		
Land & Building		4,352,391
Furniture, Equipment, and Leasehold Improvements, Net of Depreciation		1,598,226
Construction in Progress		-
Total Non-Current Assets		5,950,617
TOTAL ASSETS	**$**	**27,701,012**

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	$	1,525,680
Other Liabilities		2,511,997
Member District Accounts (Settlement)		411,025
Total Current Liabilities		4,448,702
Total Liabilities		4,448,702
Net Assets		
Operating - Unrestricted		7,893,063
Restricted - Student Activities		50,473
Reserved - OPEB Trust		6,809,932
Reserved - Capital		1,500,000
Invested in Capital Assets, Net of Related Debt		6,998,842
Total Net Assets		23,252,310
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	**$**	**27,701,012**
		-

Substantially all disclosures and the Statement of Cash Flows required by GAAP are omitted.
No assurance is provided on these financial statements.

Valley Collaborative

Interim Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets

For the Period Ending January 31, 2026

124 of 210 (59%) School Days

UNAUDITED

	AMENDED BUDGET	ACTUAL	
REVENUES			
Services	$ 23,012,981	$ 13,287,555	
State Contracts	5,800,000	3,180,902	
Other	750,000	428,876	
Interest	30,000	25,265	
Total Revenues	**29,592,981**	**16,922,598**	57.18%
EXPENSES			
Salaries	18,788,975	11,464,827	
Employee Benefits	4,074,850	2,140,888	
Operating Expenses	3,347,463	1,659,806	
Leases & Rentals	594,727	319,473	
Depreciation	751,000	509,845	
Total Expenses	**27,557,015**	**16,094,839**	58.41%
Change in Net Assets - Operating	**$ 2,035,966**	**$ 827,759**	
Non Operating Activities			
Return to Member Districts	-		
Non-Operating Expenses (1)	(1,275,000)	(927,991)	
Change in Net Assets	**$ 760,966**	**$ (100,232)**	

Substantially all disclosures and the Statement of Cash Flows required by GAAP are omitted. No assurance is provided on these financial statements.

Valley Collaborative

Interim Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets

For the Period Ending February 28, 2026

136 of 210 (64.8%) School Days

UNAUDITED

	AMENDED BUDGET	ACTUAL	
REVENUES			
Services	$ 23,012,981	$ 14,752,143	
State Contracts	5,800,000	3,551,543	
Other	750,000	468,082	
Interest	30,000	32,739	
Total Revenues	**29,592,981**	**18,804,507**	63.54%
EXPENSES			
Salaries	18,788,975	12,827,580	
Employee Benefits	4,074,850	2,413,051	
Operating Expenses	3,347,463	1,786,956	
Leases & Rentals	594,727	334,583	
Depreciation	751,000	0	
Total Expenses	**27,557,015**	**17,362,170**	63.00%
Change in Net Assets - Operating	**$ 2,035,966**	**$ 1,442,337**	
Non Operating Activities			
Return to Member Districts	-		
Non-Operating Expenses (1)	(1,275,000)	(981,032)	
Change in Net Assets	**$ 760,966**	**$ 461,305**	

Substantially all disclosures and the Statement of Cash Flows required by GAAP are omitted. No assurance is provided on these financial statements.

Valley Collaborative

Interim Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets

For the Period Ending March 31, 2026

158 of 210 (75.2%) School Days

UNAUDITED

	AMENDED BUDGET	ACTUAL	
REVENUES			
Services	$ 23,012,981	$ 17,278,407	
State Contracts	5,800,000	4,002,092	
Other	750,000	512,497	
Interest	30,000	36,617	
Total Revenues	**29,592,981**	**21,829,613**	73.77%
EXPENSES			
Salaries	18,788,975	14,217,674	
Employee Benefits	4,074,850	2,709,706	
Operating Expenses	3,347,463	2,012,722	
Leases & Rentals	594,727	349,693	
Depreciation	751,000	563,250	
Total Expenses	**27,557,015**	**19,853,045**	72.04%
Change in Net Assets - Operating	**$ 2,035,966**	**$ 1,976,568**	
Non Operating Activities			
Return to Member Districts	-		
Non-Operating Expenses (1)	(1,275,000)	(1,014,291)	
Change in Net Assets	**$ 760,966**	**$ 962,277**	

Substantially all disclosures and the Statement of Cash Flows required by GAAP are omitted. No assurance is provided on these financial statements.

Valley Collaborative

Interim Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets

For the Period Ending April 30, 2026

172 of 210 (81.9%) School Days

UNAUDITED

	AMENDED BUDGET	ACTUAL	
REVENUES			
Services	$ 23,012,981	$ 19,051,599	
State Contracts	5,800,000	4,428,363	
Other	750,000	555,282	
Interest	30,000	40,388	
Total Revenues	**29,592,981**	**24,075,632**	81.36%
EXPENSES			
Salaries	18,788,975	15,627,514	
Employee Benefits	4,074,850	3,018,268	
Operating Expenses	3,347,463	2,187,848	
Leases & Rentals	594,727	428,791	
Depreciation	751,000	625,833	
Total Expenses	**27,557,015**	**21,888,254**	79.43%
Change in Net Assets - Operating	**$ 2,035,966**	**$ 2,187,378**	
Non Operating Activities			
Return to Member Districts	-		
Non-Operating Expenses (1)	(1,275,000)	(1,029,331)	
Change in Net Assets	**$ 760,966**	**$ 1,158,047**	

Substantially all disclosures and the Statement of Cash Flows required by GAAP are omitted. No assurance is provided on these financial statements.

Valley Collaborative

Interim Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets

For the Period Ending May 31, 2026

192 of 210 (91.4%) School Days

UNAUDITED

	AMENDED BUDGET	ACTUAL	
REVENUES			
Services	$ 23,012,981	$ 21,290,059	
State Contracts	5,800,000	4,846,995	
Other	750,000	601,402	
Interest	30,000	44,285	
Total Revenues	**29,592,981**	**26,782,741**	90.50%
EXPENSES			
Salaries	18,788,975	17,068,142	
Employee Benefits	4,074,850	3,291,840	
Operating Expenses	3,347,463	2,381,602	
Leases & Rentals	594,727	444,221	
Depreciation	751,000	688,417	
Total Expenses	**27,557,015**	**23,874,222**	86.64%
Change in Net Assets - Operating	**$ 2,035,966**	**$ 2,908,519**	
Non Operating Activities			
Return to Member Districts	-		
Non-Operating Expenses (1)	(1,275,000)	(1,048,225)	
Change in Net Assets	**$ 760,966**	**$ 1,860,294**	

Substantially all disclosures and the Statement of Cash Flows required by GAAP are omitted. No assurance is provided on these financial statements.

Projected Distribution of Surplus Funds for FY2023 From Enrollment Data

Estimated Distribution of Surplus Funds for FY2026 From Spedfi Data				
As of Projection through May 31, 2026				
		Projected		Percentage of
		Percentage	Estimated	Tuition Estimated
Member District	Total Fiscal Year Tuition	of Total	Return	To Be Returned*
Billerica Public Schools	1,109,528	10.76%	187,829.89	16.93%
Chelmsford Public Schools	1,822,666	17.68%	308,555.78	16.93%
Dracut Public Schools	1,480,685	14.36%	250,662.38	16.93%
Groton-Dunstable Regional School District	440,956	4.28%	74,648.63	16.93%
Nashoba Valley Technical High School	-	0.00%	-	16.93%
North Middlesex Regional School District	1,794,834	17.41%	303,844.09	16.93%
Tewksbury Public Schools	1,276,441	12.38%	216,086.31	16.93%
Tyngsborough Public Schools	1,246,541	12.09%	211,024.59	16.93%
Westford Public Schools	1,137,973	11.04%	192,645.32	16.93%
Grand Total	**10,309,624**	**100.00%**	**1,745,297.00**	**16.93%**

Valley Collaborative
Cumulative Surplus Calculation - FY 26
As of May 31, 2026 Projection (Leaving 20% of expenses in Adult Program)

(A)	Voted Cumulative Surplus as of June 30, 2025	7,614,806	
(B)	Amount of (A) used to make contribution to OPEB Trust PY	-	
	Issued as Credits to Member Districts	(1,188,054)	
(c)	Unexpended FY 26 General Funds	1,007,872	**B**
(D)	Cumulative Surplus as of 6/30/26	7,434,624	
(E)	FY 26 Total General Fund Expenditures	22,757,305	**A**
(F)	Cumulative Surplus Percentage	32.67%	
	Estimated Excess Cumulative Surplus as of June 30, 2026	1,745,297	
	Per Audit Report	-	
	Projected Surplus	**1,745,297**	

A	Per Total Expenses	27,313,367
	MRC Evaluation and Training	-
	MRC Supported Work	-
	Young Adult Workplace Training	(4,556,062)
		22,757,305

B	Per Projection	1,919,084
	MRC Evaluation and Training	-
	MRC Supported Work	-
	Young Adult Workplace Training	(911,212)
		1,007,872

Valley Collaborative
Cumulative Surplus Calculation - FY 26
As of May 31, 2026 Projection (Leaving 25% of expenses in Adult Program)

(A)	Voted Cumulative Surplus as of June 30, 2025	7,614,806	
(B)	Amount of (A) used to make contribution to OPEB Trust PY	-	
	Issued as Credits to Member Districts	(1,188,054)	
(c)	Unexpended FY 26 General Funds	780,069	**B**
(D)	Cumulative Surplus as of 6/30/26	7,206,821	
(E)	FY 26 Total General Fund Expenditures	22,757,305	**A**
(F)	Cumulative Surplus Percentage	31.67%	
	Estimated Excess Cumulative Surplus as of June 30, 2026	1,517,494	
	Per Audit Report	-	
	Projected Surplus	**1,517,494**	

A	Per Total Expenses	27,313,367
	MRC Evaluation and Training	-
	MRC Supported Work	-
	Young Adult Workplace Training	(4,556,062)
		22,757,305

B	Per Projection	1,919,084
	MRC Evaluation and Training	-
	MRC Supported Work	-
	Young Adult Workplace Training	(1,139,015)
		780,069

Central Administration
11 Executive Park Dr., N. Billerica MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: June 11, 2026
Re: FY27-FY28 Salary Schedules

The Valley Collaborative Executive Committee conducted an analysis of member district salary schedules to inform recommended changes to Valley's salary structure. The goal is to maintain Valley's 182-day school year salaries within the lower third of member district salary schedules, recognizing that Valley's licensed staff have the opportunity to work the summer program at the same per diem rate, resulting in a potential 212-day work year and supporting overall market competitiveness.

The cost of Valley's FY26 salary schedule is $6.8 million. The revised salary restructuring proposal—which drops step 1, applies a 4.5% increase to step 2, and distributes a consistent 4% increase between Steps 2 and 13—resulting in a total FY27 cost of $7.3 million. This represents an increase of approximately $542,000 over FY26 while reducing costs by approximately $300,000 compared to the original proposal that was incorporated into the FY27 budget.

The revised salary restructuring proposal is designed as a two-year implementation plan, with an additional 4.5% increase to step 2 and a consistent 4% increase between Steps 2 and 13 in year two. Under this model, the projected total cost for FY28 would be $7.8 million, representing an increase of approximately $510,000 over FY27.

Required Action:

- Vote to approve Valley Collaborative's FY27 – FY28 Salary Schedule

Attachments:

- Valley Collaborative's FY26 – FY28 Salary Schedule Analysis

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Dr., N. Billerica MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: June 11, 2026
Re: Longevity Schedule

The Collaborative provides longevity pay as a means of recognizing and rewarding long-term service and commitment to the organization. Employees become eligible for annual longevity payments upon completing a specified number of years of continuous service with the Collaborative and must be employed at a minimum of 0.5 FTE. Longevity payments are distributed annually on the first payroll in December based on years of service, as outlined below.

Years of Continuous Service	**Annual Longevity Payment**
1–4 years	$750
5–9 years	$1,000
10–14 years	$1,500
15–19 years	$2,000
20+ years	$2,500

The existing longevity structure was adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic when Valley was experiencing significant workforce shortages and recruitment challenges. Since that time, Valley has increased salary competitiveness and no longer experiences the same level of staffing vacancies that existed when the current structure was implemented.

As a result, Valley is proposing to grandfather employees hired prior to July 1, 2026 into the existing longevity structure while implementing a revised schedule for employees hired on or after July 1, 2026. The proposed revision aligns more closely with traditional longevity models by beginning longevity recognition at year 10 of service.

Proposed Longevity Schedule for Employees Hired on or After July 1, 2026

Years of Continuous Service	Annual Longevity Payment
10–14 years	$1,500
15–19 years	$2,000
20+ years	$2,500

Under this policy, continuous service shall mean uninterrupted employment with the Collaborative and may include years of service in different positions. Interruption of employment for the purpose of FMLA leave, parental leave, or military leave of up to five (5) years of cumulative service under the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act shall not be deemed an interruption in service for the purpose of calculating continuous service for longevity pay.

Required Action:

- Vote to approve Valley Collaborative's Longevity Schedule for staff hired after July 1, 2026

Attachments:

- Valley Collaborative's Longevity Schedule for staff hired after July 1, 2026

Valley Collaborative Programmatic Enrollment Data												
Program	9/30/2025			12/1/2025			4/17/2026			6/8/2026		
	Member	Non-Member	Program Total	Member	Non-Member	Program Total	Member	Non-Member	Program Total	Member	Non-Member	Program Total
Elementary	47	51	98	50	49	99	51.5	49.5	101	51.5	53.5	105
Middle - ALT Programming	5	6	11	5	6	11	5	7	12	8	7	15
Middle - Transitional Programming	10	18	28	10	17	27	10	17	27	10	18	28
High - ALT Programming	31	22	53	33	23	56	37	22	59	38	21	59
High - Transitional Programming	43	35	78	41	35	76	39	35	74	37	35	72
Totals	136	132	268	139	130	269	142.5	130.5	273	144.5	134.5	279

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
TREASURER'S REPORT
DECEMBER 31, 2025

		Beginning Balance	Receipts	Payroll	Accounts Payable	Earnings	Transfers	Ending Balance
ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS								
Operating	**a/c 493426**	$ 3,297,732.69	$ 2,441,322.41		$ (290,092.25)		$ (2,596,000.00)	$ 2,852,962.85
Payroll	**a/c 795823**	$ 98,611.00		$ (2,482,890.15)			$ 2,600,000.00	$ 215,720.85
Joe's Bistro	**a/c 531401**	$ 3,293.42	$ 1,767.84				$ (4,000.00)	$ 1,061.26
ICS MMDA	**a/c 856490**	$ 4,787.82				$ 1.01		$ 4,788.83
Capital Reserve	**a/c 4063467**	$ 1,500,000.00						$ 1,500,000.00
Independence Project	**a/c 821315**	$ 114.36	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 114.36
TOTAL ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS		$ 4,904,539.29	$ 2,443,090.25	$ (2,482,890.15)	$ (290,092.25)	$ 1.01	$ -	$ 4,574,648.15
MMDT	**a/c 0044263747**	$ 1,178,223.13	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 4,016.39	$ -	$ 1,182,239.52
Total Unrestricted Cash		$ 6,082,762.42	$ 2,443,090.25	$ (2,482,890.15)	$ (290,092.25)	$ 4,017.40	$ -	$ 5,756,887.67
PARS OPEB Trust		$ 8,859,619.81	$ -	$ -	$ (2,346.15)	$ 21,207.80	$ -	$ 8,878,481.46
TOTAL CASH		$ 14,942,382.23	$ 2,443,090.25	$ (2,482,890.15)	$ (292,438.40)	$ 25,225.20	$ -	$ 14,635,369.13

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
TREASURER'S REPORT
JANUARY 31, 2026

		Beginning Balance	Receipts	Payroll	Accounts Payable	Earnings	Transfers	Ending Balance
ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS								
Operating	**a/c 493426**	$ 2,852,962.85	$ 1,982,998.29		$ (255,258.51)		$ (2,110,000.00)	$ 2,470,702.63
Payroll	**a/c 795823**	$ 215,720.85		$ (2,036,376.30)			$ 2,110,000.00	$ 289,344.55
Joe's Bistro	**a/c 531401**	$ 1,061.26	$ 1,490.53					$ 2,551.79
ICS MMDA	**a/c 856490**	$ 4,788.83				$ 1.00		$ 4,789.83
Capital Reserve	**a/c 4063467**	$ 1,500,000.00						$ 1,500,000.00
Independence Project	**a/c 821315**	$ 114.36	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 114.36
TOTAL ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS		$ 4,574,648.15	$ 1,984,488.82	$ (2,036,376.30)	$ (255,258.51)	$ 1.00	$ -	$ 4,267,503.16
MMDT	**a/c 0044263747**	$ 1,182,239.52	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 3,945.13	$ -	$ 1,186,184.65
Total Unrestricted Cash		$ 5,756,887.67	$ 1,984,488.82	$ (2,036,376.30)	$ (255,258.51)	$ 3,946.13	$ -	$ 5,453,687.81
PARS OPEB Trust		$ 8,878,481.46	$ -	$ -	$ (2,351.61)	$ 169,584.75	$ -	$ 9,045,714.60
TOTAL CASH		$ 14,635,369.13	$ 1,984,488.82	$ (2,036,376.30)	$ (257,610.12)	$ 173,530.88	$ -	$ 14,499,402.41

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
TREASURER'S REPORT
FEBRUARY 28, 2026

		Beginning Balance	Receipts	Payroll	Accounts Payable	Earnings	Transfers	Ending Balance
ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS								
Operating	**a/c 493426**	$ 2,470,702.63	$ 1,669,038.55		$ (176,107.74)		$ (1,380,000.00)	$ 2,583,633.44
Payroll	**a/c 795823**	$ 289,344.55		$ (1,478,448.65)			$ 1,380,000.00	$ 190,895.90
Joe's Bistro	**a/c 531401**	$ 2,551.79	$ 1,261.46					$ 3,813.25
ICS MMDA	**a/c 856490**	$ 4,789.83				$ 0.90		$ 4,790.73
Capital Reserve	**a/c 4063467**	$ 1,500,000.00						$ 1,500,000.00
Independence Project	**a/c 821315**	$ 114.36	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 114.36
TOTAL ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS		$ 4,267,503.16	$ 1,670,300.01	$ (1,478,448.65)	$ (176,107.74)	$ 0.90	$ -	$ 4,283,247.68
MMDT	**a/c 0044263747**	$ 1,186,184.65	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 3,528.37	$ -	$ 1,189,713.02
Total Unrestricted Cash		$ 5,453,687.81	$ 1,670,300.01	$ (1,478,448.65)	$ (176,107.74)	$ 3,529.27	$ -	$ 5,472,960.70
PARS OPEB Trust		$ 9,045,714.60	$ -	$ -	$ (2,394.34)	$ 160,228.38	$ -	$ 9,203,548.64
TOTAL CASH		$ 14,499,402.41	$ 1,670,300.01	$ (1,478,448.65)	$ (178,502.08)	$ 163,757.65	$ -	$ 14,676,509.34

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
TREASURER'S REPORT
MARCH 31, 2026

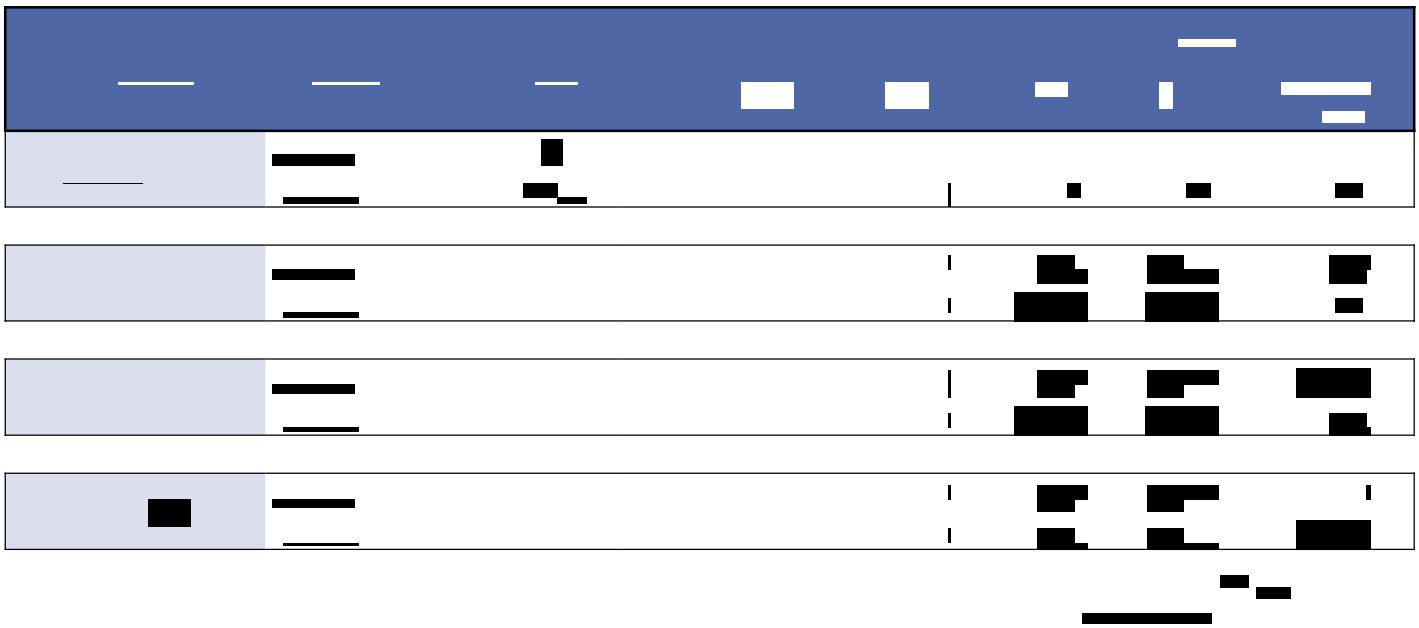
		Beginning Balance	Receipts	Payroll	Accounts Payable	Earnings	Transfers	Ending Balance
ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS								
Operating	**a/c 493426**	$ 2,583,633.44	$ 3,655,122.59		$ (486,044.24)		$ (2,220,000.00)	$ 3,532,711.79
Payroll	**a/c 795823**	$ 190,895.90		$ (1,607,055.74)			$ 2,220,000.00	$ 803,840.16
Joe's Bistro	**a/c 531401**	$ 3,813.25	$ 1,773.49					$ 5,586.74
ICS MMDA	**a/c 856490**	$ 4,790.73				$ 1.00		$ 4,791.73
Capital Reserve	**a/c 4063467**	$ 1,500,000.00						$ 1,500,000.00
Independence Project	**a/c 821315**	$ 114.36	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 114.36
TOTAL ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS		$ 4,283,247.68	$ 3,656,896.08	$ (1,607,055.74)	$ (486,044.24)	$ 1.00	$ -	$ 5,847,044.78
MMDT	**a/c 0044263747**	$ 1,189,713.02	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 3,878.83	$ -	$ 1,193,591.85
Total Unrestricted Cash		$ 5,472,960.70	$ 3,656,896.08	$ (1,607,055.74)	$ (486,044.24)	$ 3,879.83	$ -	$ 7,040,636.63
PARS OPEB Trust		$ 9,203,548.64	$ -	$ -	$ (2,430.95)	$ (385,779.10)	$ -	$ 8,815,338.59
TOTAL CASH		$ 14,676,509.34	$ 3,656,896.08	$ (1,607,055.74)	$ (488,475.19)	$ (381,899.27)	$ -	$ 15,855,975.22

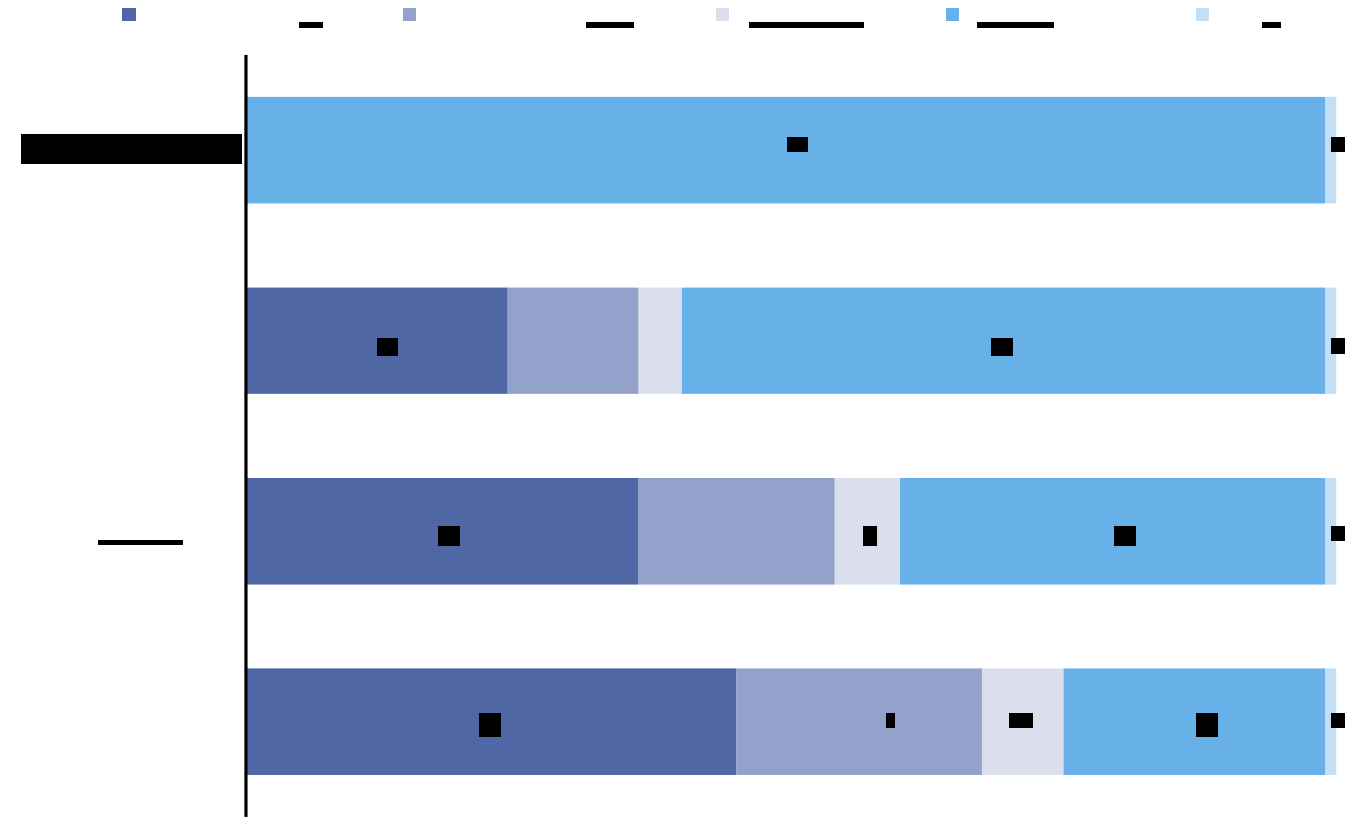
VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
TREASURER'S REPORT
APRIL 30, 2026

		Beginning	Receipts	Payroll	Accounts	Earnings	Transfers	Ending
ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS								
Operating	**a/c 493426**	$ 3,532,711.79	$ 1,797,852.75		$ (246,973.42)		$ (1,355,000.00)	$ 3,728,591.12
Payroll	**a/c 795823**	$ 803,840.16		$ (2,082,446.41)			$ 1,360,000.00	$ 81,393.75
Joe's Bistro	**a/c 531401**	$ 5,586.74	$ 1,936.03				$ (5,000.00)	$ 2,522.77
ICS MMDA	**a/c 856490**	$ 4,791.73				$ 0.98		$ 4,792.71
Capital Reserve	**a/c 4063467**	$ 1,500,000.00						$ 1,500,000.00
Independence Project	**a/c 821315**	$ 114.36	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 114.36
TOTAL ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS		$ 5,847,044.78	$ 1,799,788.78	$ (2,082,446.41)	$ (246,973.42)	$ 0.98	$ -	$ 5,317,414.71
MMDT	**a/c 0044263747**	$ 1,193,591.85	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 3,770.58	$ -	$ 1,197,362.43
Total Unrestricted Cash		$ 7,040,636.63	$ 1,799,788.78	$ (2,082,446.41)	$ (246,973.42)	$ 3,771.56	$ -	$ 6,514,777.14
PARS OPEB Trust		$ 8,815,338.59	$ -	$ -	$ (2,329.94)	$ 486,119.13	$ -	$ 9,299,127.78
TOTAL CASH		$ 15,855,975.22	$ 1,799,788.78	$ (2,082,446.41)	$ (249,303.36)	$ 489,890.69	$ -	$ 15,813,904.92

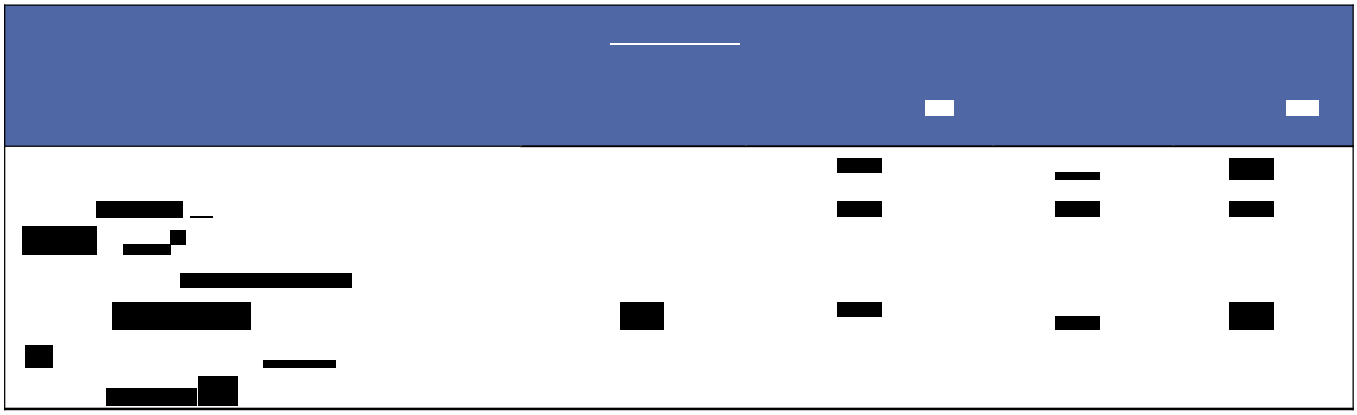
VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
TREASURER'S REPORT
MAY 31, 2026

		Beginning Balance	Receipts	Payroll	Accounts Payable	Earnings	Transfers	Ending Balance	
ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS									
Operating	**a/c 493426**	$ 3,728,591.12	$ 2,404,024.29		$ (227,242.99)		$ (1,550,000.00)	$ 4,355,372.42	
Payroll	**a/c 795823**	$ 81,393.75		$ (1,515,549.11)			$ 1,550,000.00	$ 115,844.64	
Joe's Bistro	**a/c 531401**	$ 2,522.77	$ 1,853.77					$ 4,376.54	
ICS MMDA	**a/c 856490**	$ 4,792.71				$ 1.00		$ 4,793.71	
Capital Reserve	**a/c 4063467**	$ 1,500,000.00						$ 1,500,000.00	
Independence Project	**a/c 821315**	$ 114.36	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 114.36	
TOTAL ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS		$ 5,317,414.71	$ 2,405,878.06	$ (1,515,549.11)	$ (227,242.99)	$ 1.00	$ -	$ 5,980,501.67	
MMDT	**a/c 0044263747**	$ 1,197,362.43	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 3,897.36	$ -	$ 1,201,259.79	
Total Unrestricted Cash		$ 6,514,777.14	$ 2,405,878.06	$ (1,515,549.11)	$ (227,242.99)	$ 3,898.36	$ -	$ 7,181,761.46	
PARS OPEB Trust		$ 9,299,127.78	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 9,299,127.78	as of May 31, 20
TOTAL CASH		$ 15,813,904.92	$ 2,405,878.06	$ (1,515,549.11)	$ (227,242.99)	$ 3,898.36	$ -	$ 16,480,889.24	





pfm asset management



PARS PUBLIC AGENCY RETIREMENT SERVICES

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
PARS OPEB Trust Program

Account Report for the Period
1/1/2026 to 1/31/2026

Heidi Kriger
Treasurer
Valley Collaborative
40 Linnell Circle
Billerica, MA 01821

Account Summary

Source	Beginning Balance as of 1/1/2026	Contributions	Earnings	Expenses	Distributions	Transfers	Ending Balance as of 1/31/2026
OPEB	$8,878,481.46	$0.00	$169,584.75	$2,351.61	$0.00	$0.00	$9,045,714.60
Totals	**$8,878,481.46**	**$0.00**	**$169,584.75**	**$2,351.61**	**$0.00**	**$0.00**	**$9,045,714.60**

Investment Selection

Source	
OPEB	**Target Index Balanced Strategy**

Investment Objective

Source	
OPEB	Dual goals are to provide a moderate amount of current income with moderate capital growth.

Investment Return

Source	1-Month	3-Months	1-Year	Annualized Return 3-Years	5-Years	10-Years	Plan's Inception Date
OPEB	1.91%	2.71%	15.32%	12.33%	7.08%	8.71%	6/24/2015

Information as provided by US Bank, Trustee for PARS; Not FDIC Insured; No Bank Guarantee; May Lose Value

Past performance does not guarantee future results. Performance returns may not reflect the deduction of applicable fees, which could reduce returns. Information is deemed reliable but may be subject to change.
Investment Return: Annualized rate of return is the return on an investment over a period other than one year multiplied or divided to give a comparable one-year return.
Account balances are inclusive of Trust Administration, Trustee and Investment Management fees

PARS PUBLIC AGENCY RETIREMENT SERVICES

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
PARS OPEB Trust Program

Account Report for the Period
2/1/2026 to 2/28/2026

Heidi Kriger
Treasurer
Valley Collaborative
40 Linnell Circle
Billerica, MA 01821

Account Summary

Source	Beginning Balance as of 2/1/2026	Contributions	Earnings	Expenses	Distributions	Transfers	Ending Balance as of 2/28/2026
OPEB	$9,045,714.60	$0.00	$160,228.38	$2,394.34	$0.00	$0.00	$9,203,548.64
Totals	**$9,045,714.60**	**$0.00**	**$160,228.38**	**$2,394.34**	**$0.00**	**$0.00**	**$9,203,548.64**

Investment Selection

Source	
OPEB	**Target Index Balanced Strategy**

Investment Objective

Source	
OPEB	Dual goals are to provide a moderate amount of current income with moderate capital growth.

Investment Return

Source	1-Month	3-Months	1-Year	Annualized Return 3-Years	Annualized Return 5-Years	Annualized Return 10-Years	Plan's Inception Date
OPEB	1.77%	3.96%	16.65%	14.10%	7.22%	8.92%	6/24/2015

Information as provided by US Bank, Trustee for PARS; Not FDIC Insured; No Bank Guarantee; May Lose Value

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Investment Return: Annualized rate of return is the return on an investment over a period other than one year multiplied or divided to give a comparable one-year return.
Account balances are inclusive of Trust Administration, Trustee and Investment Management fees

Headquarters - 4350 Von Karman Ave., Suite 100, Newport Beach, CA 92660 800.540.6369 Fax 949.250.1250 www.pars.org

PARS PUBLIC AGENCY RETIREMENT SERVICES

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
PARS OPEB Trust Program

Account Report for the Period
3/1/2026 to 3/31/2026

Heidi Kriger
Treasurer
Valley Collaborative
40 Linnell Circle
Billerica, MA 01821

Account Summary

Source	Beginning Balance as of 3/1/2026	Contributions	Earnings	Expenses	Distributions	Transfers	Ending Balance as of 3/31/2026
OPEB	$9,203,548.64	$0.00	-$385,779.10	$2,430.95	$0.00	$0.00	$8,815,338.59
Totals	**$9,203,548.64**	**$0.00**	**-$385,779.10**	**$2,430.95**	**$0.00**	**$0.00**	**$8,815,338.59**

Investment Selection

Source	
OPEB	**Target Index Balanced Strategy**

Investment Objective

Source	
OPEB	Dual goals are to provide a moderate amount of current income with moderate capital growth.

Investment Return

Source	1-Month	3-Months	1-Year	Annualized Return 3-Years	5-Years	10-Years	Plan's Inception Date
OPEB	-4.19%	-0.63%	14.15%	11.63%	6.01%	7.95%	6/24/2015

Information as provided by US Bank, Trustee for PARS; Not FDIC Insured; No Bank Guarantee; May Lose Value

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Investment Return: Annualized rate of return is the return on an investment over a period other than one year multiplied or divided to give a comparable one-year return.
Account balances are inclusive of Trust Administration, Trustee and Investment Management fees

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PARS PUBLIC AGENCY RETIREMENT SERVICES

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
PARS OPEB Trust Program

Account Report for the Period
4/1/2026 to 4/30/2026

Heidi Kriger
Treasurer
Valley Collaborative
40 Linnell Circle
Billerica, MA 01821

Account Summary

Source	Beginning Balance as of 4/1/2026	Contributions	Earnings	Expenses	Distributions	Transfers	Ending Balance as of 4/30/2026
OPEB	$8,815,338.59	$0.00	$486,119.13	$2,329.94	$0.00	$0.00	$9,299,127.78
Totals	**$8,815,338.59**	**$0.00**	**$486,119.13**	**$2,329.94**	**$0.00**	**$0.00**	**$9,299,127.78**

Investment Selection

Source	
OPEB	**Target Index Balanced Strategy**

Investment Objective

Source	
OPEB	Dual goals are to provide a moderate amount of current income with moderate capital growth.

Investment Return

Source	1-Month	3-Months	1-Year	Annualized Return 3-Years	Annualized Return 5-Years	Annualized Return 10-Years	Plan's Inception Date
OPEB	5.51%	2.88%	19.86%	13.28%	6.49%	8.47%	6/24/2015

Information as provided by US Bank, Trustee for PARS; Not FDIC Insured; No Bank Guarantee; May Lose Value

Past performance does not guarantee future results. Performance returns may not reflect the deduction of applicable fees, which could reduce returns. Information is deemed reliable but may be subject to change.
Investment Return: Annualized rate of return is the return on an investment over a period other than one year multiplied or divided to give a comparable one-year return.
Account balances are inclusive of Trust Administration, Trustee and Investment Management fees

Headquarters - 4350 Von Karman Ave., Suite 100, Newport Beach, CA 92660 800.540.6369 Fax 949.250.1250 www.pars.org

Monthly Market Review

Multi-Asset Class | February 2026

pfm asset management

U.S. Equity

- Domestic equity markets, as represented by the S&P 500 Index (S&P) and the Russell 3000 Index, returned 1.4% and 1.5% respectively in January.[1]
- Eight of the 11 sectors saw positive returns for the month. The Energy sector was the best performing sector, returning 14.4% for the month, followed by Materials at 8.7%. The Financials sector was the worst performing sector, returning -2.5% in January.
- Market performance continued to broaden in January as mid-caps (Russell Mid Cap Index) and small-caps (Russell 2000 Index) saw strong performance returning 3.1% and 5.4%, respectively. Large-caps (Russell 1000 Index) returned a slightly cooler 1.4% for the month. Value stocks outperformed growth stocks across all capitalizations in January.
- According to FactSet Earnings Insight as of January 30, 2026, the blended earnings growth rate (with 33% of companies reporting actual results) for the S&P 500 for Q4 2025 is 11.9%. If this estimate holds, it would be the fifth consecutive quarter of double-digit growth for the index. Supporting this estimate is the blended net profit margin, which is currently estimated at 13.2%, the highest rating in more than 15 years, despite ongoing tariff pressures. Looking forward, the continued strength of EPS growth is underpinned, in part, by estimates that see continued growth of net profit margins, with more record-breaking profits through year end.

Non-U.S. Equity

- Non-U.S. equity markets, represented by the MSCI ACWI ex-U.S. Index returned 6.0% in January. Developed markets, represented by the MSCI EAFE Index returned 5.2% as Europe (MSCI Europe) returned 4.5% and Japan (MSCI Japan) returned 6.6%. Emerging markets (EM), as represented by the MSCI Emerging Markets Index, returned 8.9%. The EM returns continues to be supported by the AI enthusiasm, with strong returns from Korea (MSCI Korea) and Taiwan (MSCI Taiwan), at 28.1% and 11.2% respectively, however the EM rally has begun to spread with Latin America (MSCI EM Latin American) returning 15.3%. All the international indices continue to benefit from the weakening dollar, as returns are stated in USD.
- Within the ACWI ex-U.S. Index, 10 of the 11 sectors posted positive returns. Information Technology was the best performing sector for the month, returning 12.8%, while the Materials sector was the second-best performer, returning 10.5%. Consumer Discretionary was the worst performing sector, posting a return of -0.8%.

Fixed Income

- In January, the Treasury yield curve saw a slight increase in yields across the duration spectrum. The 2-year yield rose 4 basis points (bps) while the 5-year rose 6 bps. The yield on the 10- and 30-year rose 7 bps and 2 bps, respectively.
- The Federal Reserve (Fed) met in January, leaving the federal funds target rate unchanged at an upper bound of 3.8%, in line with expectations after three consecutive rate cuts in 2025. Market expectations are currently predicting two further rate cuts in 2026.
- The Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Index returned 0.1% in January. Investment-grade (IG) credit returned 0.2%, AAA-rated bonds returned 0.1%, AA-rated bonds returned a flat 0%, A-rated bonds returned -0.1% and BBB-rated bonds returned 0.3%. High-yield corporates, as represented by ICE BofA U.S. High Yield Index outperformed investment grade returning 0.5% during the month. The Broad Treasury Index returned 0.1% as yields rose. Spreads narrowed slightly across the corporate credit spectrum, with both High-yield and IG near multi-decade lows.

Listed Real Assets

- During January, real estate investment trusts (REITs), as represented by the MSCI U.S. REIT Index and the FTSE NAREIT Index returned 3.0% and 3.1%, respectively. The Diversified and Data Center sectors saw the strongest performance for the month, while the Residential sector stood as the most challenged. Listed Infrastructure, represented by the MSCI World Core Infrastructure Index, returned 3.8% for the month, supported by strong energy demand..

Items to Watch

- Coming into 2026, we are watching for signs of resurgence in economic activity indicators due to improving growth outlook as a result of accommodative fiscal and monetary policies. While a partial government shutdown has once again delayed several key economic readings we look to private data such as the ISM Manufacturing PMI to continue to gauge economic health.
- In January, the ISM Manufacturing PMI rose to 52.6, indicating expansion for the first time in 12 months as improvements in new orders and production measures lifted readings. Some of this improvement is tempered by commentary noting that January is a “reorder” month which may cause the new-order measure to be temporarily heightened.
- The new Fed Chair nominee was chosen by President Trump in January. Kevin Warsh has been nominated to replace Chair Jerome Powell after his tenure ends in May and will become the new Fed Chair if approved by the Senate. Whether Powell will stay on board of governors has yet to be announced, leaving two voting seats in flux.

Sources

- Bloomberg
- FactSet

1 - All returns are expressed as total returns (price returns net of dividends).

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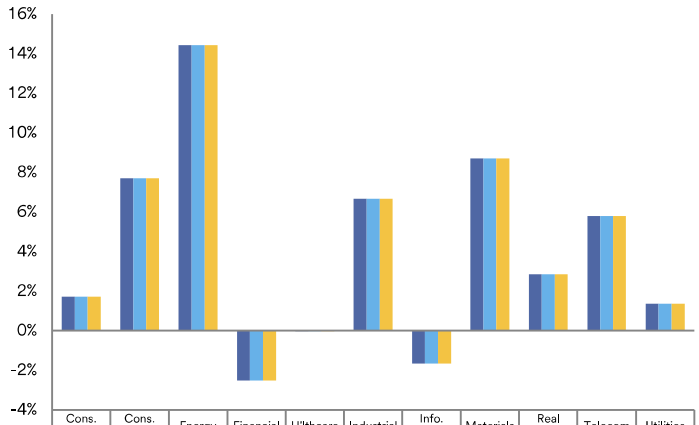
Total Return of Major Indices

Domestic Equity	MTD	QTD	YTD	1 YR
S&P 500	1.44%	1.44%	1.44%	16.32%
Russell 3000	1.54%	1.54%	1.54%	15.30%
Russell 2000	5.39%	5.39%	5.39%	15.84%
Russell 1000	1.37%	1.37%	1.37%	15.28%
International Equity	**MTD**	**QTD**	**YTD**	**1 YR**
MSCI ACWI ex-U.S.	5.98%	5.98%	5.98%	34.87%
MSCI EAFE	5.22%	5.22%	5.22%	31.18%
MSCI Emerging Markets	8.85%	8.85%	8.85%	42.84%
Fixed Income	**MTD**	**QTD**	**YTD**	**1 YR**
Bloomberg U.S. Agg	0.11%	0.11%	0.11%	6.85%
Bloomberg Global Agg	0.94%	0.94%	0.94%	8.56%
ICE BofA U.S. HY	0.48%	0.48%	0.48%	7.54%
Listed Real Assets	**MTD**	**QTD**	**YTD**	**1 YR**
MSCI U.S. REIT	3.02%	3.02%	3.02%	3.72%
FTSE NAREIT Index	3.05%	3.05%	3.05%	4.92%
MSCI World Core Infrastructure	3.75%	3.75%	3.75%	18.18%

Economic Indicators

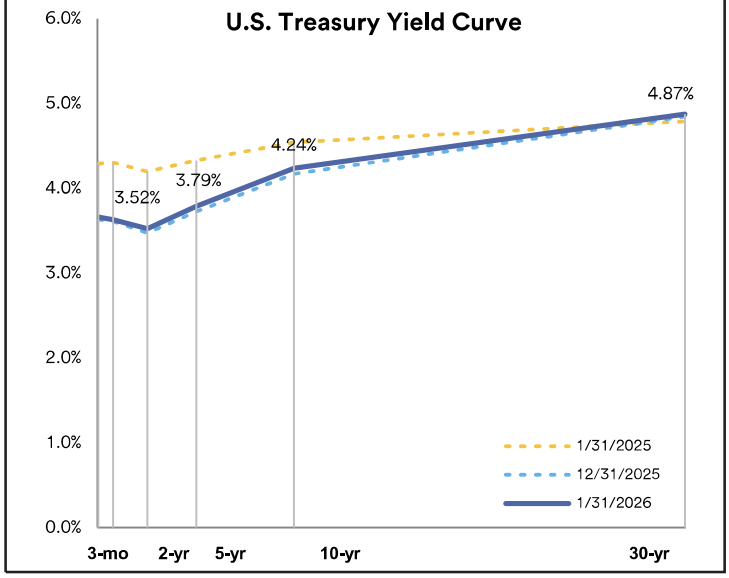
Domestic	Current	Previous Month
Unemployment Rate (%)	4.4%	4.5%
Initial Jobless Claims (4 week avg)	206.3 K	204 K
CB Leading Economic Indicators	-0.3	-0.1
Capacity Utilization	76.3%	76.1%
GDP (annual growth rate)	4.4%	3.8%
University of Michigan Consumer Confidence	56.4	52.9
New Home Starts	737 K	738 K
Existing Home Sales	4.4 MM	4.1 MM
Retail Sales (YoY)	3.3%	3.3%
U.S. Durable Goods (MoM)	5.3%	-2.1%
Consumer Price Index (YoY)	2.7%	2.7%
Producer Price Index (MoM)	0.0%	1.0%
Developed International*	**9/30/2025**	**6/30/2025**
Market GDP (ann'l rate)	1.3%	1.6%
Market Unemployment	5.0%	4.8%

Stock Market Sector Performance (S&P 500)

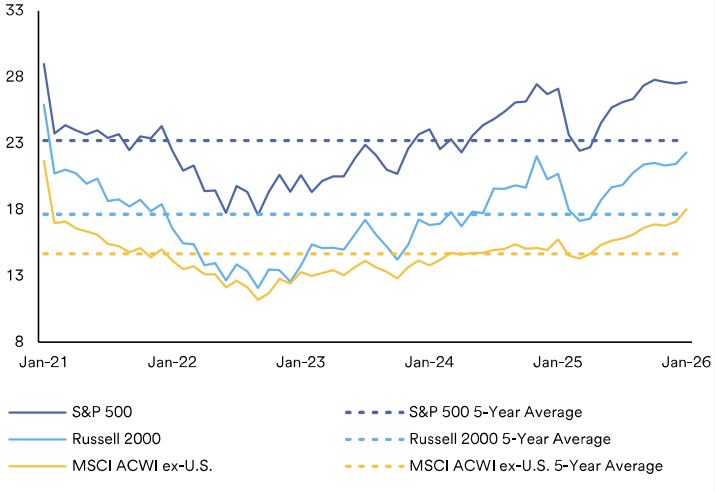


	Cons. Disc.	Cons. Staples	Energy	Financial	H'lthcare	Industrial	Info. Tech	Materials	Real Estate	Telecom	Utilities
MTD	1.71%	7.71%	14.43%	-2.50%	-0.02%	6.67%	-1.66%	8.70%	2.85%	5.80%	1.37%
QTD	1.71%	7.71%	14.43%	-2.50%	-0.02%	6.67%	-1.66%	8.70%	2.85%	5.80%	1.37%
YTD	1.71%	7.71%	14.43%	-2.50%	-0.02%	6.67%	-1.66%	8.70%	2.85%	5.80%	1.37%

U.S. Treasury Yield Curve



P/E Ratios of Major Stock Indices**



Source: Bloomberg. Data as of January 31, 2026, unless otherwise noted.

**Developed market data is calculated with respect to the weightings in the MSCI World ex-U.S. Index. Most current data is as of September 30, 2025 due to release dates of numerous countries.*
***P/E ratios are calculated based on one-year-forward estimates and adjusted to include only positive earning results for consistency.*

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NOT FDIC INSURED : NO BANK GUARANTEE : MAY LOSE VALUE

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Drive N. Billerica, MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris Scott, Executive Director
Date: June 11, 2026
Re: Valley Collaborative Board Meeting Calendar 2026-2027

Please find attached the Revised 2026-2027 Valley Collaborative Board Meeting calendar with changes to the December and April dates. The December 10th meeting is moved to December 15th and the April 8th meeting is moved to April 1st. As a friendly reminder, the September 17th & November 19th meetings will be held virtually.

Required Action:

- None

Attachments:

- 2026-2027 Valley Collaborative Board Meeting Calendar

*** DRAFT ***
2026 - 2027
Board Meeting Calendar

July 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

August 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24/31	25	26	27	28	29

September 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

January 2027						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

February 2027						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

March 2027						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April 2027						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2027						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June 2027						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

No School/Holiday/School Vacation

Early Release

Board of Directors Meeting (Regular School Day for Staff and Students)

** Please note, all meetings will be at 10:00AM at Valley's 11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billeirca location with the exception of September and November which will be virtual.

End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent

End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent

Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

Superintendent:	Dr. Chris A. Scott		June 11, 2026
Evaluator:	Dr. Jay Lang		June 11, 2026
	Name	**Signature**	**Date**

Step 1: Assess Progress Toward Goals (*Complete page 3 first; circle one for each set of goal[s].*)

Professional Practice Goal(s)	Did Not Meet	Some Progress	Significant Progress	Met	**Exceeded**
Student Learning Goal(s)	Did Not Meet	Some Progress	Significant Progress	**Met**	Exceeded
District Improvement Goal(s)	Did Not Meet	Some Progress	Significant Progress	Met	**Exceeded**

Step 2: Assess Performance on Standards (*Complete pages 4–7 first; then check one box for each standard.*)

Indicators

Unsatisfactory = Performance on a standard or overall has not significantly improved following a rating of *Needs Improvement*, or performance is consistently below the requirements of a standard or overall and is considered inadequate, or both.

Needs Improvement/Developing = Performance on a standard or overall is below the requirements of a standard or overall but is not considered to be Unsatisfactory at the time. Improvement is necessary and expected. For new superintendents, performance is on track to achieve proficiency within three years.

Proficient = ***Proficient* practice is understood to be fully satisfactory. This is the rigorous expected level of performance.**

Exemplary = A rating of *Exemplary* indicates that practice significantly exceeds *Proficient* and could serve as a model of practice regionally or statewide.

	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Exemplar
Standard I: Instructional Leadership				X
Standard II: Management and Operations				X
Standard III: Family and Community Engagement				X
Standard IV: Professional Culture				X

Massachusetts Department of ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION

End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent

Step 3: Rate Overall Summative Performance (*Based on Step 1 and Step 2 ratings; circle one.*)

Unsatisfactory **Needs Improvement** **Proficient** **Exemplary**

Step 4: Rate Impact on Student Learning (*Check only one.*)

Low	Moderate	High
		X

Step 5: Add Evaluator Comments

Comments and analysis are recommended for any rating but are required for an overall summative rating of *Exemplary*, *Needs Improvement* or *Unsatisfactory* or Impact on Student Learning rating of *high* or *low*.

Comments

Dr. Chris Scott's overall performance for the 2025-2026 school year is rated as Exemplary, as she has not only met but significantly exceeded the professional standards for a superintendent/executive director. Her strategic foresight is evident in the successful transition to the new 2026-2031 DIP, ensuring every goal – from iReady diagnostics to expanded vocational placements – is rooted in data and stakeholder feedback. Her dual focus on instructional excellence and fiscal integrity has solidified Valley Collaborative's reputation as a model for the Commonwealth, providing high-quality, individualized instruction while maintaining the lowest tuition rates in the region. By empowering staff at all levels and prioritizing a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment, Dr. Scott has created a stable, high-performing community that effectively prepares students and adults for independence.

Superintendent's Performance Goals

Goals should be SMART and include at least one goal for each category: professional practice, student learning, and district improvement.
Check one box for each goal.

Goal(s)	Description	Did Not Meet	Some Progress	Significant Progress	Met	Exceeded
Professional Practice:	**Valley Collaborative will foster diversity, equity, and inclusivity in order to promote a sense of belonging and engage for all stakeholders (students, adults, families, staff, districts, community partners).**					
Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services CORI Audit & Results						
Performed duties as MOEC Treasurer, Chair of Finance Committee, Chair of Ethics Committee, and Cha Policy Committee; also a member of Facilities Committee						
Valley's motto "leadership at every level" was supported again this year with leadership development wo offered six times over the course of the school year facilitated by Dr. Anthony Bent and Linda Balfour, tai the Administrative Leadership Team and Staff Leadership Team (aides, support staff, and professional sta						
Financial Management – Valley is projecting $2M+ surplus being returned to its member districts after anot strong financial performance in FY'26.						
Member District School Committee quarterly communications (newsletters)						
MOEC Financial Leadership Academy Presenter, focusing on enhancing the knowledge and skill of Colla leaders regarding finance issues that are unique to collaboratives compared to districts or municipalities. Participants learned about practices to enhance leadership skills and strengthen understanding of Collabora Finance. This Financial Leadership Academy also provided a unique opportunity to learn from a variety o experienced Executive Directors and Business Managers who shared aspects of Collaborative Leadership.						

Valley was proud to have Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith as the keynote speaker and guest speaker Dr. Anthony Sardella for Valley's Staff Orientation Day on Tuesday, September 2, 2025. Dr. Dalton-Smith is a Board-Certified internal medicine physician and work-life integration researcher. She is the founder of Restorasis, a professional development agency dedicated to restoring well-being in the workplace through its proprietary Types of Rest Framework™ to help companies support their employees with work-life integration and burnout prevention strategies. She helps high-achievers deal with their work-rest imbalance and find actionable answers to the thriving lifestyle they desire.					
Valley continues to work with Vector Solutions to fine-tune two separate modules: 1.) Learning Management System (LMS) and 2.) Evaluations & PD Tracking. This professional system is streamlining our professional learning outcomes and processes and marry together staffs' needs with our District Improvement Plan and their evaluation. Valley implemented the professional learning Vector capabilities and evaluation module for all staff in FY'25 and FY'26 has supported the implementation work by working through the implementation dips; enforcing the use of Vector across all programs at Valley Collaborative.					
Student Learning	**All students and adults will be provided with high quality programming in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environm in order to prepare them for successful adult living.**				
Year over Year Comparison: Valley partners with local communities and corporations in order to be able vocational stipends that the adults and students receive when they go to the training sites. The revenue f Small Business sites remains stable at approximately $500,000K.					
Valley continues to grow opportunities for individuals in the Adult programs and increase enrollment. As result, Valley's Adult Services DDS contracts continue to significantly expand. The DDS Transportation C has over doubled in the last 5 years and is now worth $1.1M, compared to $9M in FY26. As the enrollment o DDS programs continues to expand this contract will as well. Enrollment in the DDS program is currently impressive 140 individuals.					
Valley Collaborative's commitment to student learning became a central focus for all of its DESE staff, w support of Katie Novak. The Collaborative contracted with Katie for multiple professional learning and development sessions in 2025-2026, as well as five half-day and one full day of instruction in 2026-2027. Valley and Katie have made a long-term commitment to continue on this journey next year to develop and implem an MTSS plan to meet the unique needs of the Valley programs. Katie Novak is also the keynote speaker for the Opening Day of the 2026-2027 school year.					
Valley's 2024-2030 Technology Plan was updated to reflect initiatives and projected programmatic needs					

DESE Financial & Governance Review Criterion 2: Consistent and Stable Revenue Stream. Valley has a financial condition, which involves consistent revenue generation. This has been achieved through enroll management, which includes an analysis of program utilization, facilities utilization, and staffing levels. For example, in FY'26, based on MassAbility's new service delivery models and payment structures, it has b more advantageous for Valley programmatically and financially to focus solely on providing individuals with employment and CBDS services through our DDS contracts.					
Valley introduced the CRASE protocol (Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events) for School Safety at Valley Middle & Transitional High School during the 2025 school year and continued with ALICE at Valley Elementary School. During the 2026 school year, Valley continued to successfully implement both school safety protocols and continued to train staff. Additionally, students participated in hostile intruder drills with the support of local first responders at both school sites.					
District Improvement	**Valley Collaborative will provide professional learning in order to build capacity and retain high quality staff, while fostering and promoting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment.**				
SPED*Fi* is an integrated Business Solutions Suite for special education finance and administration. In FY' Billing module was fully implemented. In FY'24, the Admissions module was developed and presented. I the Admissions module and the Evaluation module were implemented. In FY'26, an additional Assessment module was added.					
FY'25 Annual Report and DESE Approval Letter					
FY'25 DESE Annual Independent Audit Report & Approval Letter					
Due to sound fiscal management, there has been a redistribution of millions of dollars of funds to District FY'15, FY'16, FY'17, FY'18, FY'19, FY'20, FY'21, FY'22, FY'23, FY'24, FY'25 & FY'26.					
Valley tuition and fees continue to be among, if not, the lowest in the Commonwealth and are unparallele our staff to student ratios					
One strategic objective targeted for the 2025-2026 school year focused on the creation of promotional materials, supported through the work of Valley's District Improvement Plan. A standardized template wa selected for each program to highlight specific program-based information for each program/school. The fina					

results are highly impressive.					
Valley developed and published promotional brochures to ensure better communication with its commun large. Additionally, Valley's exceptional Technology Department focused on numerous key projects durin course of the school year across the district. For example, we upgraded technology communications with th Billerica Police Department to improve response times and we will be installing a public announcement s at 40 Linnell Circle to ensure proper communication during first responder events.					
Quarterly Reports on Collaborative Finance: As per 603CMR 50.00: Educational Collaboratives – Education Laws and Regulations and in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E, please find below Valley Collaborative Quarterly Reports on Collaborative Business: quarterly information and updates to the programs and services provided by the collaborative and any regional collaborative efforts Valley Collaborative's Newsletter and Treasurer Report(s); and a report on significant changes in programs, services, budgets, and property as they arise; along with the Interim Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Assets					
The implementation of Valley's District Improvement Plan for 2026 - 2031 began this school year with Lori Likis continuing as our guiding consultant. Our teams focused on three strategic initiatives this school year, prioritizing professional development systems, promotional materials, and streamlining district wide communication to stakeholders. This plan continues Valley's core mission and vision, built on excellence and the philosophy of continuous improvement.					

Superintendent's Performance Rating for Standard I: Instructional Leadership

Overall Rating for Standard I Instructional Leadership (Circle one.)	The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes powerful teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.

Unsatisfactory **Needs Improvement** **Proficient** **Exemplary**

Comments and analysis (recommended for any overall rating; required for overall rating of *Exemplary, Needs Improvement* or *Unsatisfactory*)

Dr. Chris Scott has demonstrated exemplary instructional leadership during the 2025-2026 school year by cultivating a shared vision that prioritizes powerful teaching and learning through the first-year implementation of the 2026-2031 District Improvement Plan (DIP). A major achievement was the multi-year partnership with Dr. Katie Novak to implement a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), which included program self-assessments and staff training that received an average engagement rating of 4.85 out of 5. Under her guidance, the Collaborative successfully introduced the iReady diagnostic program for reading and math across all schools, ensuring that 95% of students completed fall assessments and results were used to develop targeted intervention plans. Furthermore, she oversaw the May 2026 implementation of a standards-aligned STEM curriculum (Explore Learning) for elementary grades. These efforts contributed to an "Exemplary" result from the DESE Coordinated Program Review, where observers noted that students were engaged in rigorous curriculum and staff interacted with students in a caring and compassionate manner.

Indicator/Element	Indicator Rating	Artifact/Action/Benchmark
S1B1: Student Engagemer		Year over Year Comparison: Valley partners with local communities and corporations in order to be able to vocational stipends that the adults and students receive when they go to the training sites. The revenue fror Business sites remains steadt approximately $500,000K.
S1B2: Quality of Effort & Wo		Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services CORI Audit & Results
S1B3: Meeting Diverse Nee		Performed duties as MOEC Treasurer, Chair of Finance Committee, Chair of Ethics Committee, and Chair Committee; also a member of Facilities Committee
S1C2: Adjustments to Practi		Valley continues to grow opportunities for individuals in the Adult programs and increase enrollment. As a re Valley's Adult Services DDS contracts continue to significantly expand. The DDS Transportation Contract ha doubled in the last 5 yearsand is now worth $1.1M, compared to $9M in FY26. As the enrollment of the DDS programs continues to expand this contract will as well. Enrollment in the DDS program is currently at an impressive 140 individuals.
S1D2: Student Learning Measures		Valley Collaborative's commitment to student learning became a central focus for all of its DESE staff, with t support of Katie Novak. The Collaborative contracted with Katie for multiple professional learning and devel sessions in 2025-2026, aswell as five half-day and one full day of instruction in 2026-2027. Valley and Katie have made a long-term commitment to continue on this journey next year to develop and implement an MTSS pla meet the unique needs of the Valley programs. Katie Novalso the keynote speaker for the Opening Day of t 2026- 2027 school year.
S1E1: Data-Informed Decision Making		Valley's 2024-2030 Technology Plan was updated to reflect initiatives and projected programmatic needs.

Examples of evidence superintendent might provide:

- □ Goals progress report
- □ Analysis of classroom walk-through data
- □ Analysis of district assessment data
- □ Sample of district and school improvement plans and progress reports
- □ Analysis of staff evaluation data
- □ Report on educator practice and student learning goals
- □ Student achievement data

- □ Analysis of student feedback
- □ Analysis of staff feedback
- □ Relevant school committee meeting agendas/materials
- □ Analysis of leadership team(s) agendas and/or feedback
- □ Protocol for school visits
- □ Other:_____

Superintendent's Performance Rating for Standard II: Management and Operations

Overall Rating for Standard II Operational Systems (Circle one.)	The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by en safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.

Unsatisfactory **Needs Improvement** **Proficient** **Exemplary**

Comments and analysis (recommended for any overall rating; required for overall rating of *Exemplary, Needs Improvement* or *Unsatisfactory*)

In the area of Management and Operations, Dr. Scott continues to exhibit superior fiscal stewardship, maintaining Valley's position as one of the most fiscally healthy collaboratives in the Commonwealth. For the FY'25 Independent Financial Audit, the Collaborative was once again "finding-free," illustrating deep commitment to sound financial oversight. She successfully managed the 25% surplus regulation by returning $1.2 million to member districts in the form of tuition and service credits while maintaining record-breaking participation in adult services. Operationally, she spearheaded the first year of the 2025-2029 5-Year Technology Plan, which replaced over 40% of staff and student devices and upgraded physical security systems. She also led the migration to the Vector professional learning and evaluation system, ensuring that 80% of evaluators are now using a unified platform to track IPDP compliance and professional growth data.

Indicator/Element	Indicator Rating	Artifact/Action/Benchmark
S2A1: Plans, Procedures, an Routines		DESE Financial & Governance Review Criterion 2: Consistent and Stable Revenue Stream. Valley h financial condition, which involves consistent revenue generation. This has been achieved through enrollment management, which includes an analysis of program utilization, facilities utilization, and staffing levels. For example, in FY'26, based on MassAbility's new service delivery models and paym structures, it has become more advantageous for Valley programmatically and financially to focus on providing individuals with employment and CBDS services through our DDS contracts.
S2A2: Operational Systems		SPEDFi is an integrated Business Solutions Suite for special education finance and administration. In the Billing module was fully implemented. In FY'24, the Admissions module was developed and prese FY'25, the Admissions module and the Evaluation module were implemented. In FY'26, an additional Assessments module was added.
S2A4: Student Health & Safet		Valley introduced the CRASE protocol (Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events) for School Safet Middle & Transitional High School during the 2025 school year and continued with ALICE at Valley Elementary School. During the 2026 school year, Valley continued to successfully implement both school safety protocols and continued to train staff. Additionally, students participated in hostile intruder drills with the support of local first responders at both school sites.
S2B2: Induction, Professional Development, and Career Grow Strategies		Valley's motto "leadership at every level" was supported again this year with leadership development workshops offered six times over the course of the school year facilitated by Dr. Anthony Bent and Li Balfour, targeting the Administrative Leadership Team and Staff Leadership Team (aides, support staff, professional staff).
S2D1: Laws & Policies		FY'25 Annual Report and DESE Approval Letter
S2D1: Laws & Policies		FY'25 DESE Annual Independent Audit Report & Approval Letter
S2E1: Fiscal Systems		Financial Management - Valley is projecting $2M+ surplus being returned to its member districts after another strong financial performance in FY'26.

S2E1: Fiscal Systems		Due to sound fiscal management, there has been a redistribution of millions of dollars of funds to Dis FY'15, FY'16, FY'17, FY'18, FY'19, FY'20, FY'21, FY'22, FY'23, FY'24, FY'25 & FY'26.
S2E1: Fiscal Systems		Valley tuition and fees continue to be among, if not, the lowest in the Commonwealth and are unpara given our staff to student ratios

Standard II: Management and Operations: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling

Indicator II-E – Fiscal Systems: Develops a budget that supports the district's vision, mission, and goals; allocates and manages expenditures consistent with district- and school-level goals and available resources.

Element II-E-1 Fiscal Systems – Proficient: Develops a budget that aligns with the district's vision, mission, and goals. Allocates and manages expenditures consistent with district/school-level goals and available resources.

Examples of evidence superintendent might provide

- □ Goals progress report
- □ Budget analyses and monitoring reports
- □ Budget presentations and related materials
- □ External reviews and audits
- □ Staff attendance, hiring, retention, and other HR data
- □ Analysis of student feedback
- □ Analysis of staff feedback
- □ Analysis of safety and crisis plan elements and/or incidence reports
- □ Relevant school committee meeting agendas/minutes/materials
- □ Analysis and/or samples of leadership team(s) schedule/agendas/materials
- □ Other:_____

Superintendent's Performance Rating for Standard III: Family and Community Engagement

Overall Rating for Standard III Family and Community Engagement (Circle one.)	The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff throug effective partnerships with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders that support the m of the district and its schools.

Unsatisfactory **Needs Improvement** **Proficient** **Exemplary**

Comments and analysis (recommended for any overall rating; required for overall rating of ***Exemplary, Needs Improvement*** **or** ***Unsatisfactory*****)**

Dr. Scott has been exemplary in Standard III: Family and Community Engagement by fostering a sense of belonging through transparent communication and expanded partnerships. She led extensive outreach to gather feedback from parents, students, and staff to finalize the initiatives of the 2026-2031 DIP, ensuring collective ownership of the district's future. To improve transparency, she established a Newsletter Committee that formalized site-specific newsletter templates, providing monthly updates to every stakeholder. Dr. Scott also met the strategic goal of expanding vocational placements by establishing at least two new partnerships with local employers and non-profits, preparing students and adults for successful community living. She utilized results from 2023-24 DEI surveys to set measurable five-year improvement targets and promoted outdoor learning through programs like elementary cross-country skiing.

Indicator/Element	Indicator Rating	Artifact/Action/Benchmark
S3A2: Community & Stakeholde Engagement		One strategic objective targeted for the 2025-2026 school year focused on the creation of promotional materials, supported through the work of Valley's District Improvement Plan. A standardized templa selected for each program to highlight specific program-based information for each program/school. The final results are highly impressive.
S3A2: Community & Stakeholde Engagement		Member District School Committee quarterly communications (newsletters)
S3A2: Community & Stakeholde Engagement		Valley developed and published promotional brochures to ensure better communication with its community at large. Additionally, Valley's exceptional Technology Department focused on numerous projects during the course of the school year across the district. For example, we upgraded technology communications with the Billerica Police Department to improve response times and we will be insta public announcement system at 40 Linnell Circle to ensure proper communication during first respo events.
S3C1: Culturally Proficient Communication		Quarterly Reports on Collaborative Finance: As per 603CMR 50.00: Educational Collaboratives Laws and Regulations and in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E, please find belo Collaborative Quarterly Reports on Collaborative Business: quarterly information and updates to the programs and services provided by the collaborative and any regional collaborative efforts Valley Collaborative's Newsletter and Treasurer Report(s); and a report on significant changes in programs services, budgets, and property as they arise; along with the Interim Statement of Revenues, Expen Changes in Net Assets
S3B1: Student Support		Facilitated Valley's Special Education Directors Regional meetings

Standard III – Family and Community Engagement: Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff through effective partnerships with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders that support the mission of the school and district.

Indicator III -A – Engagement: Actively ensures that all families are welcome members of the classroom and school community and can contribute to the effectiveness of the classroom, school, district and community.

Element III-A-1– Family Engagement – Proficient: Provides resources and support for all personnel to use culturally sensitive practices to ensure that all families are welcome and can contribute to the district, classroom, school and community's effectiveness. Works with administrators to identify and remove barriers to families' involvement, including families whose home language is not English.

Element III-A-2- Community and Business Engagement – Proficient: Establishes ongoing relationships with community organizations, community members, and businesses. Engages them to increase their involvement to maximize community contributions for district effectiveness.

Examples of evidence superintendent might provide

- □ Goals progress report
- □ Participation rates and other data about school and district family engagement activities
- □ Evidence of community support and/or engagement
- □ Sample district and school newsletters and/or other communications
- □ Analysis of school improvement goals/reports
- □ Community organization membership/participation/ contributions
- □ Analysis of survey results from parent and/or community stakeholders
- □ Relevant school committee presentations and minutes
- □ Other:_____

Superintendent's Performance Rating for Standard IV: Professional Culture

Overall Rating for Standard IV Professional Culture (Circle one.)	The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by nu and sustaining a districtwide culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for

Unsatisfactory **Needs Improvement** **Proficient** **Exemplary**

Comments and analysis (recommended for any overall rating; required for overall rating of *Exemplary, Needs Improvement* or *Unsatisfactory*)

Regarding Standard IV: Professional Culture, Dr. Scott has cultivated an environment of continuous learning and shared leadership through the successful "Leadership at Every Level" workshops led by Dr. Anthony Bent. A hallmark of her leadership is the Academy for Special Education Assistants (SEAs), where 90% of elementary support staff completed intensive ACE training by October 2025. This focus on professional growth is reflected in the Collaborative's exceptionally high staff retention rates and the long tenure of its administrative teams. Dr. Scott also represents Valley as a premier educational leader through her roles as MOEC Treasurer and Chair of various state-level committees, often serving as a "thought partner" for state financial reviews.

Indicator/Element	Indicator Rating	Artifact/Action/Benchmark
S4A1: Commitment to High Standards		MOEC Financial Leadership Academy Presenter, focusing on enhancing the knowledge and skill of Collaborative leaders regarding finance issues that are unique to collaboratives compared to districts or municipalities. Participants learned about practices to enhance leadership skills and strengthen

		understanding of Collaborative Finance. This Financial Leadership Academy also provided a unic opportunity to learn from a variety of experienced Executive Directors and Business Managers wh shared aspects of Collaborative Leadership.
S4A2: Mission & Core Values		The implementation of Valley's District Improvement Plan for 2026-2031 began this school year with Lori Likis continuing as our guiding consultant. Our teams focused on three strategic initiatives thi school year, prioritizing professional development systems, promotional materials, and streamlining district wide communication to stakeholders. This plan continues Valley's core mission and vision on excellence and the philosophy of continuous improvement.
S4A3: Meetings		2025- 2026 Principal Meetings: 15 meetings held throughout the school year
S4D1: Continuous Learning of Sta		Valley was proud to have Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith as the keynote speaker and guest speaker Dr. Anthony Bent for Valley's Staff Orientation Day on Tuesday, September 2, 2025. Dr. Dalton-Smith is a Board-Certified internal medicine physician and whole-life integration researcher. She is the founder o Restorasis, a professional development agency dedicated to restoring wellbeing in the workplace its proprietary 7 Types of Rest Framework.
S4D1: Continuous Learning of Sta		Valley continues to work with Vector Solutions to fine-tune two separate modules: 1.) Learning Management System (LMS) and 2.) Evaluations & PD Tracking. This professional system is strea our professional learning outcomes and processes and map them to our staffs' needs with our District Improvement Plan and their evaluation. Valley implemented the professional learning Vector capa and evaluation module for all staff in FY'25 and FY'26 has supported the implementation work by through the implementation dips; enforcing the use of Vector across all programs at Valley Collab

Standard IV– Professional Culture: Promotes success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff.
Indicator IV-C– Communications: Demonstrates strong interpersonal, written and verbal communication skills.
Element IV-C-1– Proficient: Demonstrates strong interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills.

Examples of evidence superintendent might provide

- □ Goals progress report

- □ District and school improvement plans and reports
- □ Staff attendance and other data
- □ Memos/newsletters to staff and other stakeholders
- □ School visit protocol and sample follow-up reports
- □ Presentations/materials for community/parent meetings
- □ Analysis of staff feedback
- □ Samples of principal/administrator practice goals
- □ School committee meeting agendas/materials
- □ Sample of leadership team(s) agendas and materials
- □ Analysis of staff feedback
- □ Other:_____

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Drive, N. *Billerica MA 01862 * Tel: (978)-528-7800 * www.valleycollaborative.org*

2025 – 2026 Summative Evaluation

Educator Name: (first and last): James George

Educator Title: Business Manager/Town Accountant

Primary Evaluator - Name/Title: Board Chair Dr. Roger (Jay) Lang, Chelmsford Public Schools Superintendent

Supervising Evaluator - Name/Title: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Valley Collaborative Executive Director

School(DESE)/Programs(DDS): All Valley Schools and Adult Service Programs

Please choose the Educator's Current Plan: One Year Self-Directed Growth Plan

Student Learning Goal(s): Ensure budget aligns to expanded high quality programming to meet the needs of the students and the districts we serve. Please see associated artifacts which can be found in 2025-2026 Educator Evaluation Artifacts Google Folder (organized according to DESE's Standards, Indicators, and Elements and DDS/MRC Indicators

Progress Toward Student Learning Goal(s): Proficient

Progress Toward Student Learning Goal(s) Rationale, evidence and feedback for improvement: Valley finished the year exceeding financial expectations. Valley still exceeded its revenue budget even though this year enrollment trends were stable, as expected.

Professional Practice Goal: Demonstrates strong context- and audience-specific interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills. Please see the associated artifacts which can be found in 2025-2026 Educator Evaluation Artifacts Google Folder (organized according to DESE's Standards, Indicators, and Elements and DDS/MRC Indicators.

Progress Toward Professional Practice Goal(s): Exceed

Progress Toward Professional Practice Goal(s) Rationale, evidence and feedback for improvement: Jim is a knowledgeable, competent team player both on the Valley Leadership Team and MOEC. He provides in-depth accounting services, which enable the leaders in both organizations to make informed decisions based on accurate data.

Please rate the educator on Standard I: Curriculum Planning & Assessment: **Exemplary**

Please list the rationale, evidence, and feedback for improvement for Standard I: Supports administrator teams to identify a range of appropriate data sources, including non-traditional information that offers a unique perspective on school and district performance, and models effective data analysis for staff. Is able to model this element.

Please rate the educator on Standard II: Management and Operations: **Exemplary**

Please list the rationale, evidence, and feedback for improvement for Standard II: Identifies ineffective accounting and payroll practices and procedures and works to improve their effectiveness or implement new practices and procedures. Ensures staff is knowledgeable and competent in the accounting and payroll functions they perform, and continually works to increase their knowledge and competence through training. Identifies and implements ways in which policies and procedures can be more clearly articulated and documented. Is able to model this element.

Please rate the educator on Standard III: Family Engagement: N/A

Please list the rationale, evidence, and feedback for improvement for Standard III: N/A

Please rate the educator on Standard IV: Professional Culture: **Exemplary**

Please list the rationale, evidence, and feedback for improvement for Standard IV: Demonstrates openness and commitment to learning; reflects on personal practice; and relies on student data, current research, and best practice to improve own leadership. Is able to model this element.

Please rate the educator on his/her Overall Performance: **Exemplary**

Please list the rationale, evidence, and feedback for improvement for Overall Performance: Jim, you are completing over a decade of work at Valley Collaborative. You have been both an accountant/consultant role and for many years now, in the Business Manager/Town Accountant role. Although your role is primarily remote, you ensure that all of the accountant responsibilities of running at $30M business is successfully completed in a highly competent manner. Your membership on our team is very important and appreciated. We are very pleased that you will continue in the role of Business Manager/Town Accountant in FY27. Your expertise and work ethic help to ensure that Valley is able to exceed all financial expectations. We appreciate your collegiality and your willingness to go the extra mile with the Valley Board of Directors and leadership team, auditors, and the MOEC executive board. Jim, I am grateful that you are continuing to mentor Patricia Sicard in her role as Assistant Business Manager.

What is the Educator's Plan moving forward?: One Year Self-Directed Growth Plan

Employee Comments (optional):

Employee Signature:  Date: 5/28/2026

Evaluator Signature:  Date: 5/28/2026

ANNUAL EVALUATION: Office Professionals

Name: Heidi Kriger
Job Title: Treasurer

Author: Chris Scott
Date: May 14, 2026 11:21 AM EDT
School: Valley District

Share: On

JOB KNOWLEDGE

How do you rate this employee's knowledge of the essential duties and responsibilities of his/her position and willingness to increase his/her knowledge, skills, and abilities? (The employee keeps current in relevant knowledge, while broadening skill levels.)

Excellent | Good | Marginal | Unacceptable

PLANNING & PRIORITIZING

How do you rate this employee's ability to assess needs and organize work in a manner that results in the timely and successful completion of responsibilities? (Employee exhibits capacity to anticipate changes, secure and organize resources for tasks, and establish priorities.)

Excellent | Good | Marginal | Unacceptable

INITIATIVE

How well does this employee demonstrate the ability to identify and carry out improved ways of accomplishing tasks? (The employee demonstrates an ability to isolate, define, and address problems while finding innovative and improved ways of performing tasks. The employee assumes additional duties when necessary.)

Excellent | Good | Marginal | Unacceptable

COOPERATION & PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

How do you rate this employee's ability to work cooperatively and communicate effectively with coworkers, supervisors, students, parents, and/or outside contacts? (The employee builds and maintains productive working relationships and builds consensus, shares relevant information and identifies, understands, and responds appropriately to the needs of constituents.)

Excellent | Good | Marginal | Unacceptable

JUDGMENT

How well does this employee independently perform his/her required responsibilities within district guidelines and policies, and exercise good judgment and confidentiality as situations require? (Employee exhibits ability to analyze a problem or issue, evaluate solutions, and arrive at a timely selection of the most appropriate solution.)

Excellent | Good | Marginal | Unacceptable

PROFESSIONALISM & WORK HABITS

How well does this employee exhibit the qualities of patience, flexibility, motivation, dependability, and time management necessary for consistent, high-quality support? (The employee exhibits the ability to communicate effectively, manage time, withstand pressure, and remain calm in all situations.) Does this employee present a professional image, in both dress and demeanor?

Excellent | Good | Marginal | Unacceptable

What are this employee's professional strengths and overall contribution to the productivity of the office?

Heidi demonstrates strong financial leadership and a deep understanding of municipal and school finance operations in her role as Treasurer. She consistently ensures the accurate management of accounts, timely processing of financial transactions, and compliance with all applicable regulations, policies, and reporting requirements. Her reliability and organizational skills contribute significantly to the smooth and efficient operation of the Business Office. Heidi is highly responsive and collaborative in her work. She maintains clear and professional communication. Her ability to prioritize tasks, meet critical deadlines, and maintain precise financial records supports the overall fiscal stability and operational effectiveness of the district.

In what areas does the employee need to grow, improve, or develop higher level skills?

Heidi demonstrates strong competence in her role as Treasurer at Valley Collaborative and maintains a high level of accuracy and reliability in core financial functions, internal controls, and compliance practices will help ensure continued accuracy, accountability, and operational efficiency. We support you in in exploring opportunities for continued professional development or expanding engagement at Valley Collaborative.

Supervisor Signature:

Chris Scott (signed by **Chris Scott** on 2026-05-14 11:21)

Co-Contributor Comments:

Co-Contributor Signature:

- no signature -

Employee Comments:

Employee Signature:

- no signature -

Heidi Bingo

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica, MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Ph.D., Executive Director
Date: June 11, 2026
Re: Approval of the 2026 – 2027 Valley Collaborative Employee Handbook and
2026 – 2027 Valley Collaborative Student & Family Handbook and Policies & Procedures Manual
2026-2027 Today & Tomorrow Program Handbook

Attached, please find the 2026 – 2027 Valley Collaborative Employee Handbook, the 2026 -2027 Student and Family Handbook and Policies and Procedures Manual, as well as the Today & Tomorrow Program Handbook.

The Valley Collaborative Employee Handbook for the 2026 – 2027 school year has been updated with a new longevity policy.

The notable change to the Today & Tomorrow Program Handbook includes the removal to references of the MassAbility (MRC) program.

The notable change to the Valley Collaborative Student and Family Handbook and Policies and Procedures Manual for the 2026 -2027 school year is the update to Valley's Physical Restraint and Time-Out Policy. The updated policy is in response to DESE's updated regulations and has been adopted from MOEC's commissioned report from Murphy, Hesse, Toomey, and Lehane.

Required Action:

- Vote to Approve
  - 2026 -2027 Valley Collaborative Employee Handbook
  - 2026-2027 Valley Collaborative Student & Family Handbook and Policies & Procedures Manual
  - 2026 – 2027 Today & Tomorrow Program Handbook

Attachments:

- 2026 -2027 Valley Collaborative Employee Handbook
- 2026-2027 Valley Collaborative Student & Family Handbook and Policies & Procedures Manual
- 2026 – 2027 Today & Tomorrow Program Handbook

Employee Handbook

Valley Collaborative
11 Executive Park Drive
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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

Welcome! Valley Collaborative (the "Collaborative") considers its employees to be one of its most valuable resources. Their dedication and commitment is unsurpassed, and their leadership and expertise is the heart of the Collaborative's ongoing and continued success. This Employee Handbook ("Handbook") has been written to serve as a guide for the employer/employee relationship. All Collaborative employees are required to read this Handbook completely and thoroughly and to become familiar with its provisions.

The Board of Directors for the Collaborative (the "Board of Directors") reserves the right to change, add or delete any of the provisions in this Handbook at any time. It is not intended to be comprehensive or to address all possible applications of, or exceptions to, the general policies and procedures described. Please address any questions concerning eligibility for a particular benefit, or the application of a policy or practice, to your principal or supervisor or the Human Resources Department. Where a particular benefit is subject to a formal plan, the terms of the formal plan document will control. Violation or failure to comply with the standards and policies outlined in this Handbook will be grounds for corrective action up to and including termination.

Unless you have a separate employment contract with the Collaborative, your employment with the Collaborative is on an at-will basis. This means that either you or the Collaborative may terminate the employment relationship, with or without cause at any time. This Handbook is not an employment contract, or a promise of employment for any specific period of time. This Handbook confers no rights on employees nor does it create any obligations for the Collaborative. Each employee is responsible for following the policies in this Handbook and any others that may be approved by the Board of Directors from time to time.

As a condition of employment, and upon receipt of this Handbook, employees are required to sign and return to the Human Resources Department the Acknowledgement of Receipt of Employee Handbook and Understanding of At-Will Employment Status attached to this Handbook as Appendix D.

ABOUT THE COLLABORATIVE

Valley Collaborative is a group of school districts legally bound in a collaborative governance structure under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 4E. The primary purpose of the Collaborative is to expand the quality of education in its member school districts and participating school districts. The member school districts are: Billerica Public Schools, Chelmsford Public Schools, Dracut Public Schools, Groton-Dunstable Regional School District, Nashoba Valley Technical High School, North Middlesex Regional School District, Tewksbury Public Schools, Tyngsboro Public Schools, and Westford Public Schools. The Collaborative is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of one representative from each of the member school committees.

The Collaborative is a Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education approved public school entity. The Collaborative provides high quality academic, therapeutic and transitional services to individuals referred by local school districts and social service agencies. The Collaborative also provides ongoing professional development and training experiences for educators and educational agencies. Recognizing that the educational environment rapidly changes, the Collaborative creates,

adapts, and provides flexible programming to address evolving needs. The Collaborative provides an environment within which students and adults can maximize educational and/or occupational skills. By sharing its resources with multiple school districts and social service agencies, its programs maintain superior quality and reasonable costs to those it serves, by meeting or exceeding state standards, and achieving economies of scale.

Employment

The Collaborative Board of Directors, acting through the Executive Director, has the sole authority to enter into or modify agreements, contracts or take personnel actions with employees. Employees are expected to meet the standards of their position as set by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education or the Collaborative Board of Directors.

Collaborative employees are required to sign an acceptance letter of his or her appointment of employment and job description ("Appointment Letter"). This Appointment Letter is not a contract of employment, but simply summarizes the position, supervisor, compensation and benefits, and other information relevant to employment with the Collaborative. Job descriptions may be changed from time to time, at which time an employee may be required to review and sign a new or amended Appointment Letter. Collaborative employees are employed on an at-will basis, and tenure is not available in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth.

The Collaborative reserves the right to transfer personnel between programs on a permanent or temporary basis to best meet the needs of its students or the member and participating school districts.

Upon offer of employment, job applicants may be required to have a physical exam at the employer's expense. The exam may include drug and alcohol screening, as well as the ability to lift. The offer of employment will also be contingent upon a criminal background check and, if applicable a satisfactory driver history report from the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

Employees are also required to follow all collaborative policies and procedures including those listed in the Handbook, those in other publications, as well as those that may be added or modified from time to time. Failure to follow collaborative policies and procedures or perform at a satisfactory level may result in corrective action up to and including termination.

The Collaborative reserves the right to determine the appropriate level of corrective action to be imposed, depending upon the facts and circumstances. The Human Resources Department may conduct an exit interview with any employee who is involuntarily terminated from the Collaborative's employment.

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Collaborative employees are expected to perform their duties and responsibilities satisfactorily and to meet the performance expectations of the Collaborative. Principals and supervisors will communicate Collaborative expectations to employees and inform them if their work is unsatisfactory. In appropriate circumstances, when an employee's job performance is unsatisfactory or fails to meet the expectations of the Collaborative, a principal or supervisor should counsel the employee with an end toward improving the employee's performance, and the employee may be given a reasonable opportunity to improve his/her work performance to meet the expectations of the Collaborative. An employee's inability to perform his/her duties and responsibilities satisfactorily or his/her failure to improve upon unsatisfactory performance may result in corrective action, up to and including termination. The Collaborative shall, in its sole discretion, determine what actions are appropriate to address an employee's inability to perform

his/her duties and responsibilities satisfactorily.

Performance Evaluation

Educational Staff: Educational staff are subject to evaluation in accordance with the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation pursuant to 603 CMR 35.00.

Administrative and other Staff: Administrative and other staff are subject to an evaluation of their performance, at least annually. Evaluations should be viewed as constructive, as they are designed to review progress on performance expectations, identify areas of strength and supports needed for making improvements, and restate or update job-related expectations going forward. Completed written performance evaluations must be signed by the relevant employee and principal or supervisor who conducted the evaluation. Performance evaluations will be maintained as a part of employee personnel records in the Human Resources Department.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND EDUCATIONAL STAFF

For educational staff, employment or continued employment is contingent upon furnishing and maintaining all valid and appropriate registrations, licenses, and certifications qualifying them for their positions, as required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, applicable law, or the Collaborative. It is the employee's responsibility to obtain and maintain such registrations, licenses, and certifications.

FIRST AID, CPR, AND STUDENT RESTRAINT TRAINING

Certain Collaborative positions require, as an essential qualification and precondition to employment, training and/or certification in first aid, CPR, and student restraint training. Employees will be informed of what training or certifications are a precondition for their position. For such positions, employment or continued employment will be contingent upon completing applicable trainings and obtaining and furnishing applicable certifications. It is the employee's responsibility to complete such trainings and to obtain and maintain such certifications. The Collaborative may offer training or courses by which employees can meet these requirements.

With respect to student restraints, the Collaborative maintains a Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy pursuant to 603 CMR 46.00 (the "Restraint Policy"). The Restraint Policy is attached to this Handbook as Appendix A. It is the responsibility of all program staff to read the Restraint Policy, as revised and updated from time to time, to completely and thoroughly become familiar with its provisions, and to ensure that they attend and participate in all required restraint training.

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Training is an ongoing part of employment. All employees are expected to participate in training activities from time to time, and are encouraged to avail themselves of professional development opportunities.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Non-Discrimination in Employment

The Collaborative is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The Collaborative does not discriminate in its programs, activities, facilities, employment, or educational opportunities on the basis of age, disability, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, gender identity, ancestry, sexual orientation, the results of genetic testing, active military service, pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions, or any other class of individuals protected from discrimination under state or federal law.

Unlawful discrimination of employees occurring in the workplace or in other settings in which employees may find themselves in connection with their employment will not be tolerated by the Collaborative. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has formally or informally complained about discrimination or has cooperated with an investigation of a discrimination complaint is prohibited. To achieve the goal of providing a workplace free from discrimination, the conduct that is described in this policy will not be tolerated, and the Collaborative will implement the procedure described below to address any potential inappropriate conduct.

The Collaborative commits itself and its employees, within the context of state and federal civil rights laws, to ensure equitable participation of employees of all backgrounds in all of its daily operations. This policy applies to all employment practices and employment programs sponsored by the Collaborative. This policy shall apply, but not be limited to the areas of recruitment, selection, compensation, benefits, professional development and training, reasonable accommodation for disabilities, religious practices, promotion, transfer, discipline, termination, layoff, and all other terms and conditions of employment. The Collaborative takes allegations of discrimination seriously. The Collaborative will respond promptly to complaints and where it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, the Collaborative will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose any necessary corrective action.

Valley Collaborative's employee recruitment is aimed at reaching all groups, including members of linguistic, ethnic, and racial minorities, females and males, and persons with disabilities. Valley Collaborative conducts a semiannual review of its employment policies and procedures to ensure its employee recruitment practices are aimed at reaching all groups, including members of linguistic, ethnic, and racial minorities, females and males, and persons with disabilities.

Discriminatory Harassment

The Collaborative's separate harassment policy details its commitment to a workplace free of any verbal or physical conduct which is unwelcome, severe or pervasive, and related to membership or perceived membership in a protected class. In short, harassment of employees, students, vendors or volunteers of the Collaborative will not be tolerated.

Reasonable Accommodation

Employees who believe they are disabled as defined under state and/or federal law and who are seeking an accommodation to allow them to perform the essential functions of their positions may contact the Human Resources Department, 40 Linnell Circle, Billerica, Massachusetts 01821, (978-528-7800).

Discrimination Complaints

If any employee believes that he or she has been subjected to unlawful discrimination, the employee has the right to file a complaint with the Collaborative. This may be done in writing or verbally to the Human Resources Department or to a supervisor. The Human Resources Department is also available to discuss any concerns, and to provide information about this policy or the Collaborative complaint process.

Complaints with respect to sexual harassment may be directed to the Title IX Coordinator and complaints with respect to disability-based discrimination may be directed to the 504 Coordinator:

Kari Morrin
Director of Human Resources and Title IX and 504 Coordinator
11 Executive Park Drive,
N. Billerica, MA 01862
978-528-7863
kmorrin@valleycollaborative.org

DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

I. WHERE TO FILE A COMPLAINT

Any Valley Collaborative student, employee, or third party who believes that a Valley Collaborative student, employee, or third party has discriminated against or harassed them because of their race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs, or activities may file a complaint with the Kari Morrin, Director of Human Resources, 504 Coordinator and Title IX Coordinator, 11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica, MA 01862, 978-528-7863, kmorrin@valleycollaborative.org who will serve as the grievance officer in such matters.

II. CONTENTS OF COMPLAINTS AND TIMELINES FOR FILING

Complaints under this procedure should generally be filed within twenty (20) days of the alleged discrimination or harassment. Complaints may be submitted orally or in writing. The complainant may select another person to help with the filing of the complaint. Any responsible employee who receives an oral complaint will memorialize the allegations in writing and forward the written allegations to the Kari Morrin, Director of Human Resources, 504 Coordinator and Title IX Coordinator, 11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica, MA 01862, 978-528-7863, kmorrin@valleycollaborative.org or designee by the following school day. The written complaint should include the following information:

1. The name and grade level (or address and telephone number if not a student or employee) of the complainant;
2. The name (and address and telephone number if not a student or employee) of the complainant's representative, if any;
3. The name(s) of the person(s) alleged to have committed or caused the discriminatory or harassing action, or event (respondent);
4. A description, in as much detail as possible, of the alleged discrimination or harassment;
5. The date(s), time(s), and location(s) of the alleged discrimination or harassment;
6. The names of all persons who have knowledge about the alleged discrimination or harassment (witnesses) as can be reasonably determined; and
7. A description, in as much detail as possible, of how the complainant wishes to see the matter resolved.

III. INVESTIGATIONS AND RESOLUTION OF THE COMPLAINT

Complaints will be investigated promptly and resolved as quickly as possible. (Any person who alleges discrimination on the basis of a disability relative to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a person, who because of a disability is believed to need special instruction or related services, pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Massachusetts General Law chapter 71B, and/or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, may use the procedure outlined in the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Parents' Rights Brochure, rather than this procedure. Information on this alternative process may be obtained from Kari Morrin, Director of Human Resources, 504 Coordinator and Title IX Coordinator11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica, MA 01862, 978-528-7863, kmorrin@valleycollaborative.org. Respondents will be informed of the charges as soon as the grievance officer deems appropriate based upon the nature of the allegations,

the investigation required, and the action contemplated, and in no case later than fifteen (15) school days following receipt of the complaint. The grievance officer will interview witnesses who are deemed to be necessary and appropriate to determine the facts relevant to the complaint, and will gather other pertinent information. Interviews of students will be conducted in such a way as to reflect the age and emotional condition of the student. The complainant(s) and respondent(s) shall have an equal opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence. Such interviews and gathering of information will be completed within fifteen (15) school days of the receipt of the complaint.

Within twenty (20) school days of receiving the complaint, the grievance officer will meet with the complainant and/or his/her representative and the respondent to review information gathered and, if appropriate, to propose a resolution designed to stop the discrimination or harassment, prevent its recurrence and to correct its effect.

Within ten (10) school days of meeting with the complainant and/or his/her representative and the respondent, the grievance officer will provide written disposition of the complaint to the complainant and/or his/her representative and to the respondent(s), including a statement regarding whether the complaint was found to be credible and whether discrimination was found to have occurred. Where the grievance officer finds that discrimination has occurred, Valley Collaborative will take steps that are reasonably calculated to end discrimination that has been found; prevent recurrence of any discrimination, and correct its discriminatory effects on the complainant and others, if appropriate. The grievance officer will contact the complainant within thirty (30) school days following conclusion of the investigation to assess whether there has been on-going discrimination or retaliation, and to determine whether additional supportive measures are needed. If the grievance officer determines that additional supportive measures are needed, he or she shall offer such measures to the complainant within thirty (30) school days following conclusion of the investigation.

Notwithstanding the above, it is understood that in the event a resolution contemplated by the grievance officer involves disciplinary action against an individual, the complainant will not be informed of such disciplinary action, unless it directly involves the complainant (e.g., a directive to "stay away" from the complainant, as might occur as a result of a complaint of harassment). Any disciplinary action imposed upon an individual will be subject to applicable procedural requirements. All the timelines indicated above will be implemented as specified, unless the nature of the investigation or exigent circumstances prevent such implementation in which case the matter will be completed as quickly as practicable. If the timelines specified above are not met, the reason(s) for not meeting them must be clearly documented.

Confidentiality of complainants/respondents and witnesses will be maintained, to the extent consistent with the obligations of the Valley Collaborative relating to the investigation of complaints and the due process rights of individuals affected.

IV. RETALIATION PROHIBITED

Retaliation against someone because he/she has filed a complaint under this procedure is strictly forbidden. Retaliation against someone who has participated in an investigation is strictly prohibited. Valley Collaborative will take appropriate steps as necessary to prevent retaliation. Acts of retaliation may result in disciplinary action.

Upon request, the grievance officer will provide the complainant with the names and addresses of those state and federal agencies which handle discrimination and harassment matters.

HARASSMENT

Harassment of students by other students, employees, vendors and other third parties will not be tolerated in the Valley Collaborative. The alleged harassment must involve conduct that occurred within the school's own program or activity, such as whether the harassment occurred at a location or under circumstances where the

school owned, or substantially controlled the premises, exercised oversight, supervision or discipline over the location or participants, or funded, sponsored, promoted or endorsed the event where the alleged harassment occurred, against a person in the United States. This policy is in effect while students are on school grounds, school property or property within the jurisdiction of the Collaborative, school buses, or attending or engaging in school sponsored activities.

Harassment prohibited by the Collaborative includes, but is not limited to, harassment on the basis of race, sex, gender identity, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, marital status or disability. Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion pursuant to disciplinary codes. Employees who have been found to violate this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including, termination of employment, subject to contractual disciplinary obligations.

Employee-to-Student Harassment means conduct of a written, verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass distress, agitate, disturb or trouble students when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's education or of a student's participation in school programs or activities; or
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as the basis for decisions affecting the student.

Student- to-Student Harassment means conduct of a written, verbal, or physical nature that is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb or trouble students, when:

- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile learning environment.

Harassment as described above may include, but is not limited to:

- Written, verbal, or physical (including texting, blogging, or other technological methods) harassment or abuse;
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, or other school matter.
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student.

By law, what constitutes harassment is determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with the characteristic on which the harassment is based. Individuals should consider how their words and actions might reasonably be viewed by others.

The Collaborative will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of harassment through designation of Title IX Coordinator or building based employees, who may include principals or their designees. The Executive Director will recommend, in consultation with the principals, opportunities to the designated recipients for appropriate training.

Sexual harassment of students by other students, employees, vendors and other third parties will not be tolerated in the Valley Collaborative. The alleged harassment must involve conduct that occurred within the school's own program or activity, such as whether the harassment occurred at a location or under circumstances where the school owned, or substantially controlled the premises, exercised oversight, supervision or discipline over the location or participants, or funded, sponsored, promoted or endorsed the event where the alleged harassment occurred, against a person in the United States. This policy is in effect while students are on school grounds, school property or property within the jurisdiction of the Collaborative, school buses, or attending or engaging in school sponsored activities.

Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion pursuant to disciplinary codes.

Sexual harassment in the workplace is unlawful. Employees who have been found to violate this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including, termination of employment, subject to contractual disciplinary obligations.

The Collaborative will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of sexual harassment through designation of a Title IX Coordinator and building based employees, as set forth below

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. The definition includes unwelcome conduct on the basis of sex that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the school's education program or activity. It also includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment includes conduct by an employee conditioning an educational benefit or service upon a person's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct, often called quid pro quo harassment and, sexual assault as the Federal Clery Act defines that crime.

Sexual violence is a form of sexual harassment. Sexual violence, as the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) uses the term, refers to physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent (e.g., due to the student's age or use of drugs or alcohol, or because an intellectual or other disability prevents the student from having the capacity to give consent). A number of different acts fall into the category of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sexual abuse and sexual coercion. Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 119, Section 51 A, requires that public schools report cases of suspected child abuse and neglect, immediately orally and file a report within 48 hours detailing the suspected abuse to the Department of Children and Families. For the category of sexual violence, in addition to Section 51A referrals, these offences and any other serious matters shall be referred to local law enforcement.

While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct, which if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment, depending on the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

- Unwelcome sexual advances-whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life; comment on an individual's body, comment about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons;
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;
- Inquiries into one's sexual experiences; and,
- Discussion of one's sexual activities.

The legal definition of sexual harassment is broad and in addition to the above examples, other sexually oriented conduct, whether it is intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating an environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, to male, female, or gender non-conforming students or employees may also constitute sexual harassment.

Because the Collaborative takes allegations of harassment, including sexual harassment, seriously, we will respond promptly to complaints of harassment including sexual harassment, and following an investigation where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

Please note that while this policy sets forth our goals of promoting an environment that is free of harassment including sexual harassment, the policy is not designed or intended to limit our authority to discipline or take remedial action for conduct which we deem unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of harassment or sexual harassment.

A complainant is an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual

harassment. A respondent is an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment or a violation of this policy.

Retaliation against a complainant, because the Complainant has filed a harassment or sexual harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment or sexual harassment investigation or proceeding, is also prohibited. It is unlawful to retaliate against a Collaborative employee for filing a complaint of sexual harassment or for cooperating in an investigation. A student or employee who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including student suspension and expulsion or employee termination.

The complainant does not have to be the person at whom the unwelcome sexual conduct is directed. The complainant, regardless of gender, may be a witness to and personally offended by such conduct.

NOTICE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The federal regulations require a school district to respond when it has actual knowledge of sexual harassment. Schools have actual knowledge when an allegation is made known to any school employee. Schools must treat seriously all reports of sexual harassment that meet the definition of harassment and the conditions of actual knowledge and jurisdiction as noted whether or not the complainant files a formal complaint. A formal complaint is a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that the Collaborative investigate the allegation of sexual harassment. Schools are required to investigate every formal complaint and respond meaningfully to every known report of sexual harassment.

Upon receipt of allegations the Title IX Coordinator shall promptly contact the complainant confidentially to discuss the availability of supportive measures, consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures, inform the complainant that supportive measures are available with or without the filing of a formal complaint, and explain the process for filing a formal complaint. Supportive measures include, but are not limited to, non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to education programs or activities without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the Collaborative's educational environment, or to deter sexual harassment. Supportive measures may include counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, school building/campus escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the building/campus, and other similar measures.

Where there has been a finding of responsibility, the regulations require remedies designed to restore or preserve access to the school's education program or activity.

DUE PROCESS PROTECTIONS

Due process protections in connection with investigation and decision-making regarding a complaint include the following:

1) If the allegations do not meet the definition of sexual harassment or do not satisfy the requirements regarding location or connection to an educational program of the collaborative, the allegations shall be dismissed for purposes of Title IX, but may be investigated and addressed under other prohibitions in the student discipline code, relevant collective bargaining agreements or other laws under which they fit;

2) A presumption of innocence throughout the grievance process, with the burden of proof on the school;

3) A complainant's wishes with respect to whether the school investigates will be respected unless the

Title IX Coordinator determines that signing a formal complaint to initiate an investigation over the wishes of the complainant is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances;

4) A prohibition of the single investigator model, instead requiring a decision -maker separate from the Title IX Coordinator or investigator;

5) Proof by a preponderance of the evidence, subject to limitations;

6) The opportunity to test the credibility of parties and witnesses through disclosure of evidence and opportunity to submit additional questions, subject to "rape shield" protections;

7) Written notice of allegations and an equal opportunity to review the evidence upon filing a formal complaint;

8) An objective evaluation of all relevant evidence, inculpatory and exculpatory, and avoidance of credibility determinations based on a person's status as a complainant, a respondent, or a witness;

9) Title IX Coordinators, investigators, and decision-makers must be trained and free from bias or conflict of interest;

10) A right to appeal from a determination regarding responsibility and from a dismissal of a formal complaint or the allegations therein, where the determination or dismissal involved any of the following: procedural irregularity that affected the outcome; newly-discovered evidence that could affect the outcome; or the Title IX Coordinator, the investigator, or the decision-maker had a conflict of interest or bias that affected the outcome;

11) As long as the process is voluntary for all parties, after being fully informed and written consent is provided by both parties, a school may facilitate informal resolution of a formal sexual complaint, but no such informal resolution can be used where the allegations are that an employee sexually harassed a student.

The Collaborative may establish an informal investigation process that may, upon the request of the complainant be followed by a formal process.

The Title IX Coordinator or the school building Principal shall be the initial entity to receive the sexual harassment complaint. In all cases the Title IX Coordinator shall be informed, as soon as possible, of the filing of the complaint. Nothing in this policy shall prevent any person from reporting the prohibited conduct to someone other than those above designated complaint recipients. An employee with actual knowledge of conduct that may violate this policy must report to the Title IX Coordinator.

The Collaborative may remove a respondent on an emergency basis after undertaking an individualized safety and risk analysis and determining that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations justifies removal. The Collaborative will provide the respondent with written notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal in accordance with any applicable laws, collective bargaining agreements and student handbooks.

The Executive Director in consultation with the Title IX Coordinator shall designate the principal of each school in the Collaborative, or their designee (or some other appropriate employee(s)) as the initial entity to receive the sexual harassment complaint. Also, in a matter of sexual harassment, the Collaborative shall require that the Title IX Coordinator be informed, as soon as possible, of the filing of the complaint. Nothing in this policy shall prevent any person from reporting the prohibited conduct to someone other than those above designated complaint recipients.

INVESTIGATIONS

The Title IX Coordinator shall designate an investigating officer. The investigation shall be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances and in compliance with

applicable law. The investigation will be prompt, thorough, and impartial, and will include, at least, a private interview with the person filing the complaint and with witnesses. Also, the alleged harasser will be interviewed. When the investigation is completed, the complaint recipient will, to the extent appropriate, inform the person filing the complaint and the person alleged to have committed the conduct of the results of that investigation.

The investigator shall give the parties equal opportunity to present fact and expert witnesses and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence; shall give each party the same opportunity to select an advisor of the party's choice who may, but need not be, an attorney; shall send written notice of all interviews or meetings; shall send to the parties evidence directly related to the allegations, with at least 10 days for the parties to inspect, review, and respond; and shall prepare and submit an investigative report that fairly summarizes the relevant evidence to the decision-maker, who shall be designated by the Title IX Coordinator (but shall not be the investigator).

The investigator shall strive to complete investigations within thirty (30) school days of the filing of the formal complaint. Although the Collaborative's goal is to complete investigations generally within thirty (30) school days, the time may be extended for good cause upon written notice to the complainant and respondent. Additionally, the timeline for investigation may be suspended during any informal resolution procedure or meeting. Each party is entitled to be accompanied in interviews by an advisor, who may be a parent/guardian or an attorney, but who may only have limited participation in interviews. Translators will be provided upon request.

After all interviews are conducted and evidence is obtained, the parties and if applicable, their advisors, will have an equal opportunity to inspect, review and respond to any evidence obtained. Prior to completion of the investigative report, the investigator will provide each party all evidence subject to inspection and review and provide each party at least ten (10) school days to provide a response to the investigator. Evidence to be shared may be redacted to protect confidential information under the Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") or other federal or state laws and regulations.

DETERMINATIONS

The decision-maker shall issue a written determination regarding responsibility with findings of fact, conclusions about whether the alleged conduct occurred, the rationale for the result as to each allegation, any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent, and whether remedies will be provided to the complainant.

The decision maker assigned will have no conflicts with or biases against either the complainant of the respondent and the decision maker will not be the Title IX Coordinator assigned in the matter or the investigator for the complaint. The decision maker shall review all of the evidence and issue a written determination within fifteen (15) school days of receipt of the matter from the investigator, absent extenuating circumstances. If the decision maker substantiates the allegations of sexual harassment, the decision maker may recommend or impose discipline against the respondent. If the decision maker does not substantiate the allegations of sexual harassment, the complaint will be dismissed.

The decision-maker shall provide the written determination to the complainant and respondent. Confidential student record information and personnel information may be redacted consistent with and as required by state and federal law.

APPEALS

Appeals must be submitted to the Title IX Coordinator within five (5) school days of receipt of the written determination and contain a written statement in support or challenge of the outcome.

When an appeal is filed, the Collaborative shall notify the other party and ensure that the individual deciding the appeal is not the same person as the decision maker who reached the determination regarding responsibility and that the individual has no conflicts of interests and is free of bias. The non-appealing party shall have five (5) school days from the date of receipt of the notice of the appeal to submit a written statement to support or

oppose the outcome.

The individual deciding the appeal shall issue a written decision describing the result of the appeal and rationale for the decision and provide the decision to both parties generally within ten (10) school days of receipt of the non-appealing party's written statement, or in the event no statement is submitted, the date the statement would have been due.

RECORD KEEPING REQUIREMENTS

Schools must create and maintain records documenting every Title IX sexual harassment complaint. This could include mediation, restorative justice, or other models of alternative dispute resolution. Schools must keep records regarding the school's response to every report of sexual harassment of which it becomes aware even if no formal complaint was filed, including documentation of supportive matters offered and implemented for the complainant.

This policy, or a summary thereof that contain the essential policy elements shall be distributed by the Valley Collaborative to its students and employees and each parent or guardian shall sign that they have received and understand the policy.

The Collaborative's Title IX Coordinator is as follows:

Kari Morrin
Director of Human Resources and Title IX and 504 Coordinator
11 Executive Park Drive
N. Billerica, MA 01862
978-528-7863
kmorrin@valleycollaborative.org

Complainants may also file a complaint with:

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination
1 Ashburton Place, Room 601
Boston, MA 02108.
Phone: 617-994-6000.

Office for Civil Rights (U.S. Department of Education)
5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor
Boston, MA 02109.
Phone: 617-289-0111.

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission,
John F. Kennedy Bldg.
475 Government Center
Boston, MA 02203.

LEGAL REF. M.G.L. 151B:3A
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
DESE 603 CMR 26:00
34 CFR 106.44 (a), (a)-(b)
34 CFR 106.45 (a)-(b) (1)
34 CFR 106.45 (b)(2)-(b)(3,4,5,6,7) as revised through June 2020
34 CFR 106.45 (b)(2)-(b)(3,4,5,6,7) as revised through June 2020

Note: A summary of the attached Policy, as adopted, must be sent to parents/guardians, students, employees, unions, and prospective employees of the Collaborative including Title IX Coordinator(s), investigator(s) and the decision-maker. The above referenced employees must attend training sessions on the implementation of the Policy.

Corrective Action

If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has been committed by one of the Collaborative's employees, the Collaborative will take action as is appropriate under the circumstances. Such action may range from (1) Verbal Warning, (2) Letter of Concern, (3) Written Reprimand, (4) Suspension without Pay, (5) Termination of Employment.

State and Federal Remedies

While the Collaborative hopes that all employees will feel comfortable coming forward and allowing the Collaborative to pursue and internal resolution of the matter in addition to the above, if an employee believes that they have been subjected to unlawful discrimination or retaliation, they may file a formal complaint with either or both of the government agencies set forth below. Using the Collaborative's complaint process does not prohibit employees from filing a complaint with these agencies.

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

John F. Kennedy Federal Building Government
Center, 15 New Sudbury Street Fourth Floor,
High Rise, Room 475
Boston, MA 02203-0506

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)

Boston Office:
One Ashburton Place, Room 601
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 994-6000

Worcester Office:
484 Main Street, Room 320
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 453-9630

Springfield Office:
424 Dwight Street, Room 220
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)739-2145

Corrective Action

If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has been committed by one of the Collaborative employees, students, visitors, applicants, vendors, or contractors, or any other third parties, the Collaborative will take such action as is appropriate under the circumstances. Such action may range from (1) Verbal Warning, (2) Letter of Concern, (3) Written Reprimand, (4) Suspension without Pay, (5) Termination of Employment.

State and Federal Remedies

While the Collaborative hopes that all employees will feel comfortable coming forward and allowing the Collaborative to pursue and internal resolution of the matter, in addition to the above, if an employee believes they have been subjected to harassment or retaliation of any type, including sexual harassment, they may file a formal complaint with either or both of the government agencies set forth below. Using the Collaborative's complaint process does not prohibit employees from filing a complaint with these agencies. Each of the agencies requires that claims be filed within 300 days from the alleged incident or when the complainant became aware of the incident.

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

John F. Kennedy Federal Building Government
Center, 15 New Sudbury Street Fourth Floor,
High Rise, Room 475
Boston, MA 02203-0506

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)

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Boston Office:
One Ashburton Place, Room 601
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 994-6000

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AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Collaborative complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") and applicable state law pertaining to employees with disabilities. It is the Collaborative's policy to not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in job application, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.

A qualified employee or applicant with a disability is an individual who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of their position. The Collaborative will endeavor to provide reasonable accommodations to applicants and employees with disabilities unless doing so causes a direct threat to the employee or others, and/or if the accommodation creates an undue hardship to the Collaborative. Please speak with the Human Resources Department to request an accommodation.

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

The Collaborative maintains and implements a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 37O. The Collaborative's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is attached to this Handbook as Appendix B. The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan sets forth certain duties of Collaborative employees pertaining to bullying prevention and intervention. It is the responsibility of all employees to read the Collaborative's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, as revised and updated from time to time, completely and thoroughly and to become familiar with its provisions, especially those pertaining to the duties of Collaborative employees.

CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS

In order to ensure a safe teaching and learning environment and pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 38R, the Collaborative shall have access to Criminal Offender Records Information ("CORI") and fingerprint-based criminal background information, for the purpose of determining the suitability of current and prospective employees, volunteers, consultants, school transportation providers, subcontractors providing services to Collaborative students, all potential employers of students in internship or cooperative education programs, and others who may have direct and unmonitored contact with students.

Criminal Offender Record Information ("CORI")

The Collaborative shall obtain from the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services ("DCJIS"), the state agency authorized to provide CORl to certified agencies, all available CORI for all current and prospective employees, volunteers, consultants, school transportation providers, subcontractors providing services to Collaborative students, all potential employers of students in internship or cooperative education programs, and others who may have direct and unmonitored contact with students. Such CORI shall be accessed not less than every three (3) years with respect to such individuals.

Fingerprint-Based Criminal Background Checks: The Collaborative shall obtain a state and national fingerprint-based criminal background check for all current and prospective employees, volunteers, consultants, school transportation providers, subcontractors providing services to Collaborative students, all potential employers of students in internship or cooperative education programs, and others who may have direct and unmonitored contact with students.

All criminal history checks, including access to CORI and fingerprint-based criminal background information shall be conducted solely for the purpose of meeting the Collaborative's obligations under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 38R and for other lawful purposes, and in conformity with all applicable laws and regulations. Individuals will be notified that a criminal history check will be conducted.

Access to CORI and the results of fingerprint-based criminal background checks within the Collaborative will be limited to those individuals who are authorized to have such access and have a "need to know." Criminal history information may be shared with each member district with which an individual works or to which the individual provides services. Criminal history information is not subject to public records law, and will be kept confidentially in the Human Resources Department, separate from personnel files.

The Collaborative, subject to applicable law and regulations, shall have sole discretion in making determinations concerning the suitability of subjects of criminal history checks. Any individual who refuses to submit to a criminal history check will not be hired, permitted to continue employment, or permitted to provide services to the Collaborative. Refusal to submit to a criminal history check by a current employee will be cause for immediate termination.

If a criminal record is received, the authorized individual will closely compare the record with the subject's identifying information to ensure that the record relates to the subject. If the Collaborative intends to make an adverse decision based on the results of a criminal history check, the subject will be notified, provided with a copy of the criminal history information obtained, informed of the relevant criminal information that is the basis for the adverse decision, given an opportunity to dispute the accuracy of the report, and provided with information concerning the process for correcting a criminal record so that the subject can pursue correction with the relevant authority, such as the DCJIS.

FITNESS FOR DUTY

Overview

The Collaborative is committed to providing a safe working environment and to protecting the health and safety of students, employees, visitors and Collaborative property. This policy provides a mechanism for identifying and intervening in the event the Collaborative has reason to believe that an employee's physical or mental condition could pose a threat of harm to the safety of others and property.

Definitions

a. **Fitness for Duty** -The physical and mental health condition that permits the employee to perform all essential job duties in an effective manner and protects the health and safety of oneself, others, and property.

b. **Reliable Report** - Self-disclosure or third-party opinion about an employee's possible lack of fitness for duty that is considered credible, taking into consideration such factors as the relationship of the reporter to the employee, the seriousness of the employee's condition, the possible motivation of the reporter, and how the reporter learned the information.

c. **Working Hours** - Those hours beginning with the employee's start time and ending with the employee's quitting time, as well as any time an employee is on-call. All work activities during working hours are included whether they occur on or outside Collaborative properties.

d. **Medical Evaluation** - An examination performed by a Collaborative designated health professional, including but not limited to a health history, physical and/or psychological examination and any medically indicated diagnostic studies. The cost for this evaluation is paid by the Collaborative.

e. **Medical Certification** - A document from a medically appropriate, licensed provider

attesting to an employee's fitness for duty following an extended medical absence.

Employee Responsibility

- Report to work fit for duty
- Notify the principal or supervisor when not fit for duty
- Notify the principal or supervisor when observing a co-worker who may not be fit for duty
- Cooperate with a directive and/or referral for a medical evaluation

Principal/Supervisor Responsibility

- Observe the attendance, performance and behavior of employees they supervise
- Interview an employee who appears to be unfit for duty and refer that employee for a medical evaluation when appropriate
- Record the reasons/observations that triggered the fitness for duty medical evaluation referral
- Utilize this policy in a fair and consistent manner, respecting the employee's privacy and the confidentiality of medical information
- Coordinate with the Human Resources Department to obtain medical certification when employee returns to work after absence for medical reasons longer than five (5) days

Procedures

A triggering event occurs when a principal or supervisor observes or receives a reliable report of an employee's possible lack of fitness for duty. Observations may include, but are not limited to, an employee's self-reports, manual dexterity, coordination, alertness, speech, vision acuity, concentration, response to criticism, interactions with parents, children, co-workers, and supervisors, suicidal or threatening statements, change in personal hygiene, and memory. Procedures following a triggering event include, but are not limited to:

1. Principal or supervisor interviews employee, when possible.
2. Principal or supervisor assesses magnitude of safety risk. Contact the Human Resources Department for assistance.
    A. No Risk: Keep notes of events.
    B. Minor Risk: Encourage employee to use Employee Assistance Program or seek medical treatment; document event.
    C. Significant Risk:
        i. Place employee on paid leave of absence pending medical evaluation (sick leave or paid administrative leave, depending on the situation).
        ii. Refer employee for medical evaluation.
        iii. Arrange for employee's safe transportation home if situation warrants.

    D. Severe Risk:
        i. Contact police if necessary.
        ii. Place employee on paid leave of absence pending medical evaluation (sick leave or paid administrative leave, depending on the situation).
        iii. Refer employee for medical evaluation.
        iv. Arrange for employee's safe transportation home.

If, after the medical evaluation, the employee is determined not to be fit for duty, the employee may be offered a leave of absence if required under state or federal law. Employees who are not fit for duty at the end of a leave of absence may be separated from employment. Employees whose physical or mental condition qualifies as a disability may be offered reasonable accommodations, if those accommodations will permit the employee to safely perform the essential functions of his/her position without substantial risk of harm to self or others,

and/or they do not impose an undue hardship on the Collaborative.

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

The Collaborative has a zero-tolerance policy for workplace violence. The Collaborative is committed to providing an environment free of weapons and dangerous instruments, to minimizing the risk of violence in the workplace, and to responding appropriately should workplace violence occur. The Collaborative will take reasonable steps to protect employees, students, and visitors from potential violence by outsiders when it has advance notice from a reliable source that such violence is a possibility.

The Collaborative prohibits violent acts, harassment, intimidation, threats, assaults, or similar behaviors on Collaborative properties. W here appropriate, the Collaborative will take action related to threats or acts of violence that occur off Collaborative premises. Forms of violence include:

- Physical - shoving, inappropriate touching, hitting, destruction of property, sabotage, stalking or homicide
- Verbal - threats, inappropriate remarks, threats of destruction of personal or Collaborative property
- Visual - threatening or abusive body gestures
- Written – threatening or violent notes, letters, cartoons, graffiti

The Collaborative strictly prohibits the possession of weapons or dangerous instruments in the workplace or on Collaborative premises or at Collaborative sponsored events. The Collaborative reserves the right to inspect all Collaborative premises and items within such premises for weapons and to confiscate such weapons. Such weapons include, without limitation, firearms, including BB guns, whether loaded or unloaded, knives, switchblades, stilettos, batons, nightsticks, any martial arts weapons, and electronic or chemical defense weapons. Dangerous instrument means any instrument, article or substance that, under the circumstances, is capable of causing death or serious physical injury.

Even without an actual threat, employees should report any behavior they have witnessed that they regard as threatening or violent, when that behavior is job related or might be carried out on a Collaborative controlled site, or is connected to Collaborative employment. Employees are responsible for making this report regardless of the relationship between the individual who initiated the threat or threatening behavior and the person(s) who was threatened or was the focus of the threatening behavior. If the employee's principal or supervisor is not available, the employee should report the threat to another supervisor or another member of the management team.

Any person who makes threats, exhibits threatening behavior, or engages in violent acts on Collaborative property will immediately be removed from the premises and will not be allowed on Collaborative premises pending the outcome of an investigation. In the event that an investigation shows that this policy has been violated, the Collaborative will take appropriate action, which may include, but is not limited to, suspension and/or termination of any business relationship, reassignment of job duties, suspension or termination of employment, and/or criminal prosecution of the person(s) involved.

If it has been determined that an employee/individual should not be allowed in a work area, and he/she refuses to leave, local law enforcement will be contacted to escort the employee/individual off the property.

If the Collaborative becomes aware of acts or threats of violence occurring off Collaborative premises in violation of this policy, the Collaborative will conduct an investigation and initiate an appropriate response. W here an employee has reportedly engaged in such behavior off Collaborative premises, the Collaborative may choose to suspend the employee pending an investigation into the circumstances of the alleged behavior. If, in the sole judgment of the Collaborative, it is determined that the employee's conduct violated any terms of this

policy, that employee may be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination.

In connection with the Collaborative's adult service programs, and in accordance with 101 CMR 19.04, the Collaborative maintains a Workplace Violence Prevention and Crisis Response Plan, which is attached to this handbook as Appendix C.

Domestic Violence - Employees who have obtained a restraining order against another person are encouraged to notify their principal or supervisor and/or the Human Resources Department so that the Collaborative may take whatever steps are necessary to avoid the possibility of injury to the employee on Collaborative premises. The Collaborative will make every effort to keep this information confidential to the extent possible under the circumstances. Please also see the Collaborative's Domestic Violence Leave Policy for additional information concerning domestic violence.

DRUG-FREE / ALCOHOL-FREE WORKPLACE

The Collaborative is committed to providing a drug-free and alcohol-free work and educational environment, and to complying with all applicable laws pertaining to maintaining a drug and alcohol-free work and educational environment. Employees are required to report to work in an appropriate mental and physical condition.

Employees are strictly prohibited from reporting to work or any Collaborative sponsored event under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Further, the manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of drugs or alcohol, on Collaborative premises or at a Collaborative sponsored event is strictly prohibited. Some of the drugs which are covered under this policy include, among others, marijuana, heroin, hashish, cocaine, hallucinogens and/or medication not prescribed for current personal treatment by a licensed physician.

Any employee who is convicted of any violation of the Massachusetts criminal laws regarding illegal drugs shall report such conviction in writing to the Executive Director within five (5) days of the conviction.

With respect to medications properly prescribed by a licensed physician, employees are expected to follow any directions of their health care provider concerning such prescription medications, and must immediately notify their principal or supervisor if any prescription drug is likely to have an impact on their fitness for duty or job performance.

The Collaborative supports employees who are willing to seek treatment for problems related to alcohol or substance abuse and, to this end, eligible employees may request assistance through wellness programs offered through the Commonwealth Group Insurance Commission (the "GIC"). Employees who voluntarily disclose their substance abuse issues may be permitted to take an unpaid leave of absence for the purposes of entering into rehabilitation. Where required by law, the employee's job will be protected during this leave of absence. Where an unpaid, job-protected leave of absence is not required by law, the Collaborative may grant the employee a leave of absence, with or without job- protection upon completion of the rehabilitation program.

NO SMOKING, VAPING, OR TOBACCO

Use of any vaping or tobacco products within the Collaborative or member district school buildings, school facilities, or on Collaborative property, school grounds or school buses by any individual including school personnel and students is prohibited at all times. An employee determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to corrective action up to and including termination. Staff requiring assistance breaking a vaping, smoking or tobacco habit may be eligible for assistance through wellness programs offered through the GIC.

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 2A, it is unlawful for any student enrolled in a public primary or secondary school in the Commonwealth to use tobacco or vaping products of any kind on school grounds.

REPORTING ARRESTS

If an employee is arrested, the incident must be reported by the employee on the next working day to his or her principal or supervisor, who must notify the Executive Director. The Executive Director may authorize the employee's immediate suspension until such time as an investigation discloses that the charge is not prejudicial to the best interest of the Collaborative.

CORRECTIVE ACTION GUIDELINES

All corrective action will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The corrective action imposed will depend upon, but not be limited to, the seriousness of the misconduct and its impact on the Collaborative and its member and participating districts.

It is the Collaborative's general policy to correct employee misconduct before it rises to the level requiring termination. Accordingly, the Collaborative generally uses the following five-step, progressive corrective action process. Those steps consist of: (1) Verbal Warning, (2) Letter of Concern, (3) Written Reprimand, (4) Suspension without Pay, (5) Termination of Employment.

The Collaborative reserves the right to skip or omit steps as deemed reasonable and appropriate based on the severity and frequency of the infraction under consideration, including opting for termination without prior corrective action where appropriate. Accordingly, the Collaborative may terminate any employment immediately with or without Cause.

The following is a list of conduct that constitutes Cause for corrective action, up to and including immediate termination. Because it is impractical to attempt to list all rules and standards that apply to or affect the work of the Collaborative, the work environment, or Collaborative employees, this list is not meant to be exhaustive or to limit the nature of violations that could result in corrective action, but rather is illustrative of conduct that is prohibited.

- Conduct that is unprofessional, inappropriate, or interferes with Collaborative needs or normal operations;
- Inappropriate or unauthorized removal, possession, or use of Collaborative information, property, or documents;
- The possession, use, or sale of alcohol, illegal drugs, or the misuse of legal drugs while on Collaborative premises or while conducting Collaborative business, or while operating Collaborative vehicles or equipment, or reporting to or remaining at work under the influence of alcohol ordrugs;
- Fighting, assault, disruptive activity, or threatening violence that impacts the workplace;
- Willfully or grossly neglecting the performance of the duties, responsibilities and obligations owed to the Collaborative;
- Willfully or repeatedly failing to perform the duties and responsibilities of the job to the satisfaction of the Collaborative;

- Grossly negligent, intentional, or improper conduct leading to actual or potential damage to Collaborative property;
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials in the workplace, such as explosives, firearms, or other dangerous weapons or materials;
- Disclosure of confidential client or student information to an unauthorized person or entity;
- Conduct unbecoming of the acceptable standards of the profession;
- Acts of sabotage, including deliberate interference with or hindering Collaborative operations;
- Making or publishing false or malicious statements concerning the Collaborative, its employees, students, clients, or any other individual or organization associated with the Collaborative;
- Failure to observe and abide by Collaborative policies, rules, and practices, including safety practices and rules;
- Willful or repeated failure to observe the Collaborative's dress code;
- Unauthorized distribution of literature or posting notices, writings, or signs of any form;
- Discussing or disclosing confidential Collaborative matters or information with unauthorized individuals or in public areas where conversations can be overheard;
- Engaging in activities that could be considered detrimental or a discredit to Collaborative, or failing to report knowledge of such activities;
- Supplying false or misleading information or omitting material information when applying for employment or at any time during the course of employment;
- Unauthorized use or misuse of Collaborative property or equipment, including telephones and computers, or other information technology;
- Violation of an anti-harassment or anti-discrimination policy;
- Threatening, bullying, or intimidating conduct directed at management, supervisors, fellow employees, clients, students, or visitors;
- Excessive tardiness or absenteeism and failing to report any anticipated absence or lateness to a principal or supervisor;
- Insubordination or the refusal by an employee to follow a principal's or supervisor's instructions concerning a job-related matter;
- Committing an incident of serious workplace conduct or repeatedly violating any Collaborative policy or practice;
- Disrespectful conduct while performing Collaborative duties, using vulgarity or profanity, or failing to show proper respect or courtesy to any student, client, visitor, or employee;

- Abusing sick leave privileges;
- Engaging in misconduct harmful to the Collaborative, including an intentional act of fraud, embezzlement, theft or any other material violation of law that occurs during or in the course of employment with the Collaborative;
- Worker's Compensation fraud;
- Theft, destruction or misuse of Collaborative property or the property of another employee;
- Conviction of, or plea of guilty or *nolo contendere* to, a crime involving moral turpitude, dishonesty, fraud, or any felony of any nature whatsoever (this section shall not include a *first-time* conviction of a DUI, OUI, or DWI provided, however, that such conviction does not result in incarceration or as not otherwise provided within this Handbook);
- Falsifying or altering any Collaborative record, report, or data, such as an application for employment, a time record, an expense record, receipt, or invoice;
- Incompatibility or the inability to function in concert with other employees, rising to the level of disrupting the working environment;
- Failure to obtain or maintain any registration, license or other authorization or approval required to maintain or that the Collaborative reasonably believes is required in order to perform duties; and
- Any other conduct that is detrimental to the operation of the Collaborative or which shows disregard for the interests of Collaborative, its clients, or its employees.

The Collaborative provides a communication channel for all complaints and grievances as follows:

1. Employees may appeal a decision by his or her principal or supervisor or other administrator to the Executive Director.
2. Employees may appeal a decision by the Executive Director to the Board of Directors.
3. All hearings and complaints before the Board of Directors are conducted in the presence of the administrator who made the decision that is the subject of the grievance.

Complaint Resolution Procedure

Misunderstandings or conflicts can arise in any organization. The Collaborative encourages employees to develop effective means of resolving differences that may arise among employees and between employees and administrators; reduce potential areas of grievances; and establish and maintain recognized channels of communication between employees, administration, and the Board of Directors. It is the Collaborative's desire that grievance procedures provide for prompt and equitable resolution of differences at the lowest possible administrative level, and that each employee be assured the opportunity for an orderly presentation and review of complaints and concerns.

Most situations resolve themselves naturally; however, should a situation persist that you believe is detrimental to you or to the Collaborative, you should follow the procedure described here:

Step One: Discuss the issue with your principal or supervisor. If you don't reasonably believe a discussion with your principal or supervisor is appropriate, you may proceed directly with Step Two.

Step Two: Request a meeting with the Human Resources Department, which will consider the facts, conduct an investigation, and review the matter with the Executive Director. You will normally receive a response regarding your concern within ten (10) working days of meeting with the Human Resources Department.

Step Three: If you are not satisfied with the results of Step Two and wish to pursue the complaint further, you may prepare a written summary of your concerns and request that the matter be reviewed by the Executive Director. The Executive Director, after a full examination of the facts (which may include a review of the written summary of your statement, discussions with all individuals concerned, and a further investigation if necessary), will normally render a decision within fifteen (15) working days.

Step Four: If you are not satisfied with the results of Step Two and Step Three, you may pursue the complaint further by preparing a written summary of concerns and submitting it within ten (10) days from the Executive Director's decision to: Collaborative Board of Directors, 40 Linnell Circle, Billerica, MA 01821. The summary will be presented to the Board of Directors at their next scheduled meeting. You may attend the meeting to appeal your case. The meeting will be held consistent with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. Decisions by the Board of Directors are final.

REHIRE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to outline rehire eligibility of former employees who leave the Collaborative voluntarily and in good standing. The Collaborative believes that hiring qualified individuals to fill positions contributes to the overall strategic success of the services provided to the member and participating districts, students, adults, parents and guardians.

Rehire means employing an individual who has left the Collaborative voluntarily and in good standing. The individual may be rehired in the same previously held position or in a different position that best meets the needs of the Collaborative and its member and participating districts.

- All individuals rehired after voluntary resignation are considered new hires.
- The new appointment will commence on the first day the employee returns to work.
- The salary will be determined at time of rehire and placed at the appropriate salary schedule and step as appropriate for a new hire and is subject to the Board of Directors' limitations for annual increases.
- Benefits, including benefits through the GIC will be restored as soon as is practicable based on the rehire date.
- Vacation time (if applicable) and accrued time will be the same as a new employee. The balance available on the termination date will not be restored and no time is accrued for the period of absence.

A rehired employee, who voluntarily terminates less than two (2) years after the date of rehire, is not eligible for rehire in most circumstances. Subsequent employment of this individual will require approval of the Board of Directors.

GENERAL POLICIES

PERSONALCONDUCT

The Collaborative's reputation in the member districts, participating school systems and communities it serves will be determined by the services it provides, and by the employees who represent it. The Collaborative continues to be proud of those who work for the Collaborative, and the Board of Directors intends for Collaborative employees to be proud of the positions of trust they hold. The Collaborative is especially proud of the confidence and trust placed in it by parents, educators and administrators who expect the Collaborative to provide quality programs and educational instruction to its students. The Collaborative must continue to respect that confidence and trust each and every day.

The Board of Directors and the Collaborative expect the behavior of its employees to be above reproach and to maintain the highest degree of integrity and honesty at all times.

It is your responsibility, as an employee of the Collaborative, to conduct yourself in a manner that contributes to a workplace environment that will be free of behavior that may be discriminatory, advance the mission and goals of the Collaborative, and foster a harmonious working environment that encourages employees to perform at their best.

The Collaborative recognizes that unprofessional and unacceptable personal conduct affecting the workplace contributes to low employee morale, absenteeism, turnover and loss of productivity.

Every employee of the Collaborative is expected to conduct himself or herself in a professional and respectful manner in the workplace. Conduct that brings discredit to the Collaborative, interferes with operation, or is offensive to students, parents, or fellow employees will not be tolerated and may subject the employee to corrective action up to and including termination.

Employees must be familiar with their ethical obligations as public employees and, in certain circumstances, as professionals, and to adhere to them in their relationships with students, parents, fellow employees, and officials of the member districts.

Collaborative employees are expected to follow the policies and procedures of the school in which they work. All employees should introduce themselves to the building principal on their first day in the building and request from the principal information on any special school rules and regulations. Collaborative employees must inform the building principal of any special considerations regarding the Collaborative class or individual students.

WORK OUTSIDE THE COLLABORATIVE

No employee of the Collaborative will engage in or have a financial interest in, directly or indirectly, any activity that conflicts or raises a reasonable question of conflict with the duties and responsibilities of the Collaborative. Nor will any employee engage in any type of private business during work time or on Collaborative property.

Employees considering employment or a consulting opportunity that is "in addition to" their regular job with the Collaborative must certify to the Executive Director, if requested, that such work will not interfere with the efficient performance of the employee's duties; constitute a conflict of interest with the employee's duties; be in competition with the work of the Collaborative; involve disclosure of information or materials developed as an employee of the Collaborative; occur during the employee's regular working hours; conflict with the goals and mission of the Collaborative; or involve confidential information related to the Collaborative.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Employees are prohibited from engaging in political activity and from seeking support or contributions for political parties or candidates from employees, students or family members during regular working hours or at Collaborative sponsored events. No employee is authorized to use his/her professional association with the Collaborative for the purpose of affecting an election or nomination for office of any candidate for public office. Failure to abide by this policy will be grounds for corrective action up to and including termination.

ETHICS / CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The State Ethics Commission requires Collaborative employees to abide by the Conflict of Interest Law. The State Ethics Commission is an independent, non-partisan state agency which provides advice and education on the requirements of the Conflict of Interest Law (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 268A), and the Financial Disclosure Law (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 268B), and civilly enforces these laws.

The Massachusetts State Ethics Commission

One Ashburton Place, Room 619
Boston, MA 02108
Phone (617) 371-9500
Fax (617) 723-5851
www.mass.gov/ethics

The Conflict of Interest law seeks to prevent conflicts between private interests and public duties, foster integrity in public service, and promote the public's trust and confidence in that service by placing restrictions on what employees may do on the job, after hours, and after leaving public service. The following is a brief list of actions prohibited by the law. Detailed explanations can be located in the Summary of the Conflict of Interest Law for Municipal Employees, which has been provided to you.

On the Job Restrictions

Bribes -	A bribe is anything of value corruptly received by a public employee in exchange for the employee being influenced in his/her official actions. Giving, offering, receiving, or asking for a bribe is illegal.
Gifts and Gratuities -	Asking for or accepting a gift because of your official position, or because of something you can do or have done in your official position, is prohibited. Public employees may not accept gifts and gratuities valued at $50 or more given to influence their official actions or because of their official position.
Misuse of Position -	Using your official position to get something you are not entitled to, or get someone something they are not entitled to, is prohibited. Causing someone else to do things is also prohibited.
Self-Dealing and Nepotism -	Participating as a municipal employee in a matter in which you, your immediate family, your business organization, or your future employer has a financial interest is prohibited.

False Claims - Presenting a false claim to your employer for a payment or benefit is prohibited, and causing someone else to do so is also prohibited.

Appearance of Conflict - Acting in a manner that would make a reasonable person think you can be improperly influenced is prohibited. A public employee should consider whether their relationships and affiliations could prevent him/her from acting fairly and objectively when he/she performs their duties for the Collaborative.

Confidential Information - Improperly disclosing or personally using confidential information obtained through your job is prohibited.

After-Hours Restrictions

Second Job - Taking a second paid job that conflicts with the duties of your public duties is prohibited.

Divided Loyalties - Receiving pay from anyone other than the Collaborative on a matter involving the Collaborative is prohibited. Acting as agent or attorney for anyone other than the Collaborative in a matter involving the Collaborative is also prohibited whether or not you are paid.

Inside Track - Being paid by the Collaborative, directly or indirectly, under some second arrangement in addition to your job is prohibited, unless an exemption applies.

After You Leave Public Employment

Forever Ban - After you leave your Collaborative position, you may never work for anyone other than the Collaborative on a matter that you worked on as a Collaborative employee. The purpose of this restriction is to bar former employees from selling to private interests their familiarity with the facts of particular matters that are of continuing concern to their former public employer. This restriction does not prohibit former public employees from using the expertise acquired in government service in their subsequent private activities.

One Year Cooling Off Period - For one (1) year after you leave your Collaborative job you may not participate in any matter over which you had official responsibility during your last two (2) years of public service.

When the Commission determines that the conflict of interest law has been violated, it can impose a civil penalty of up to $10,000 ($25,000 for bribery cases) for each violation. In addition, the Commission can order the violator to repay any economic advantage he/she gained by the violation, and to make restitution to injured third parties. Violations of the conflict of interest law can also be prosecuted criminally. Violations of the conflict of interest law may result in corrective action up to and including termination.

The Collaborative is obligated to provide the summary of the law, as posted on the Commission website, to every employee "within thirty (30) days of becoming an employee, and on an annual basis thereafter…." Each employee is required to sign a written acknowledgement that he/she has been provided with such a summary, and such written acknowledgement must be filed with the Human Resources Department.

Also, every Collaborative employee "shall, within thirty (30) days after becoming an employee, and every two (2) years thereafter, complete the online training program. Upon completion of the online training program, the employee shall provide notice of such completion to be retained for six (6) years" by the Human Resources Department. Online training is mandated by state law and can be completed at www.mass.gov/ethics.

RECEIPT OF GIFTS

Employees are prohibited from accepting any gifts or favors of monetary value ($50 or more) from students, users of Collaborative services family members, employees, suppliers of services of the Collaborative, or from anyone whose interests may be served by the employee's performance or non-performance of his/her duties. Acceptance of nominal gifts in keeping with special occasions, such as Christmas, marriage, retirement, or illness, is permitted.

SOLICITATION AND DISTRIBUTION

The Collaborative wishes to provide a stable, calm environment to enhance the professional environment in which it serves its students. To ensure that there is no interference with this responsibility, to enhance a professional environment and to keep Collaborative's facilities as clean, safe and litter free as possible, you must adhere to the following policy:

Non-Employees

- Persons who are not employed by the Collaborative are not permitted to distribute or post any material or solicit employees for any purpose whatsoever on the Collaborative's grounds, or inside the Collaborative's premises at any time.

Employees

- Each employee's work deserves his/her full attention during scheduled working time. Therefore, no employee shall engage in the solicitation of another employee for any purpose, or in the distribution of any literature to another employee, if either employee is expected to be working at the time.
- No employee shall engage in the distribution of literature in any work area.
- When on free time or break time, employees may solicit as long as they do not solicit employees who are working. Free time such as break time or lunch time is not considered workingtime.
- No employee may engage in the solicitation of any non-employee for any purpose, or the distribution of any literature to any non-employee at any time on the Collaborative's grounds, or inside Collaborative's premises at any time.

Off-Duty Employees

- When off-duty, you must leave the work building after your scheduled work period ends.

Bulletin Board Postings

- No employee may post any notice or other literature in the workplace, including bulletin boards, without prior approval.

The Human Resources Department must be notified immediately in the event that any employee observes any unauthorized persons on the Collaborative's grounds, or inside the Collaborative's premises and/or the unauthorized distribution of any form of literature.

Violations of this policy will result in corrective action up to and including termination.

WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

The Collaborative is committed to operating in a legal and ethical manner. All Collaborative employees and administrators are expected to practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and to comply with all applicable ethical obligations, laws and regulations.

This policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to report concerns about unethical, illegal, or dishonest activity or other misconduct involving the Collaborative's operations and affairs. Such activity may include but is not limited to:

1. fraud or deliberate misrepresentation in the preparation, review or audit of the Collaborative's financial statements;
2. fraud or deliberate misrepresentation in the recording and maintaining of financial records of the Collaborative;
3. deficiencies in or noncompliance with the Collaborative's internal accounting controls;
4. misrepresentation or false statement regarding a matter contained in the Collaborative's financial records, financial reports, or audit reports;
5. theft or misuse of the Collaborative funds or other assets;
6. conduct that violates the policies contained in this Handbook; and
7. any other illegal or improper conduct.

Any employee who, in good faith, reports a concern will not be subject to adverse employment consequences or retaliation. Similarly, any employee who refuses to obey an order or instructions that would require the employee to violate a law, rule, or regulation also is protected from adverse employment action or retaliation. Any employee with knowledge or concern about any activity described above is encouraged to report such concerns to their principal or supervisor, the Human Resources Department, or the Executive Director. Such reports may be made either verbally or in writing. In order to permit a thorough and complete investigation of the activity at issue, such reports must contain as much specific information as possible as to the time, date, and nature of the reported activity, but need not be signed by the employee.

Reports of concerns shall be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation. All reports will be promptly investigated by, or under the direction of, the Executive Director, and appropriate corrective action will be taken, if warranted by the investigation. The Collaborative has the authority to retain outside legal counsel, accountants, private investigators, or any other resource deemed necessary to conduct a full and complete investigation of the allegations.

Anyone reporting a concern must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for suspicion of the activity at issue. Reports or allegations that prove to have been made maliciously, recklessly, or with the knowledge that the report or allegations are false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense and may result in corrective action, up to and including termination. Disclosure of reports of concerns to individuals not involved in the investigation will also be viewed as an offense subject to corrective action.

ANTI-THEFT

Stealing or attempting to steal from the Collaborative or from other employees will not be tolerated. Materials may not be removed from school premises without approval. The Collaborative reserves the right to define "materials" in specific instances but, generally, if it doesn't belong to you, leave it on the

premises.

This policy extends beyond "materials." Falsifying timesheets is also considered theft. Stealing is grounds for immediate termination and may cause the Collaborative to bring criminal charges.

PERSONNEL FILE

Employee files are maintained by the Human Resources Department and are considered confidential. Principals and supervisors other than the Human Resources Department may only have access to personnel file information on a need-to-know basis. A principal or supervisor considering the hire of a former employee or transfer of a current employee may be granted limited access to that file to view performance reviews, warnings, trainings and resumes. Personnel files may not be taken outside of the department.

To keep necessary records up to date, it is MANDATORY that employees notify the Human Resources Department of any changes in:

- Name
- Address and/or Telephone Number
- Family Status (marriage, divorce)
- W-4 Deductions
- Beneficiary Update
- E-mail Address
- Emergency Contact Information
- Benefit election based on an event-change in marital status, birth or adoption of a child, etc.
- Licensure, certification or degree changes

Employees having changes to any of the above information must contact the Human Resources Department to obtain a change form. The updated form must be returned within ten (10) days of the change to ensure proper notification to all departments.

Personnel files are the property of the Collaborative. You may review your personnel file or obtain copies of your file within five (5) business days of a written request. If you do not agree with any of the information in your personnel file, you may submit a written statement explaining your position, which will be included in the file. It is the Collaborative's policy not to release any information about you, other than the dates of employment and job title, to external sources without your prior written consent, except where such release is authorized or required by law.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

The Collaborative complies with Regulation 210 CMR 17.00 Standards for the Protection of Personal Information of Residents of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 93H). In this regard, the Collaborative will meet or exceed the standards to be met in the safeguarding of personal information contained in both paper and electronic records to (i) ensure the security and confidentiality of such information; (ii) protect against anticipated threats or hazards to the security and integrity of such information; and (iii) protect against unauthorized access to or use of such information in a manner that creates a substantial risk of identity theft or fraud.

Any information pertaining to employees, to the operation of the Collaborative, to students and others served by the Collaborative, which is received or learned by an employee in the course of employment, must be maintained private and confidential. Further, employees must adhere to all state and federal laws

and regulations regarding the confidentiality of student and employee records or information.

Employment records will be contained in a locked file cabinet, and accessed only under the direct supervision or direction of the Executive Director or her designee. Employment records are not allowed to be removed from the Collaborative offices. This policy does not preclude principals or supervisors, if asked, from giving personal references for employees.

Electronic records for payroll may be accessed through authorized digital access by the Business Manager and the Payroll clerk. In the absence of the Payroll clerk, the Business Manager may designate another employee access to electronic records for the purpose of payroll only.

Any Collaborative employee in violation of this policy is subject to corrective action up to and including termination.

STUDENTRECORDS

The Collaborative recognizes that official student records are maintained by the member, participating, or sending districts and school systems responsible for the student's placement in the Collaborative. All requests for records should be sent to the member/participating/sending districts. To the extent the Collaborative maintains student records, employees must adhere to all of the requirements of the student records regulation, 603 CMR 23.00.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS / EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Executive Director, unless otherwise delegated, has the sole responsibility for handling statements to the public, including, without limitation, to the media and speaking with the press concerning issues pertaining to the Collaborative. All appearances by an employee as a representative of the Collaborative or professing to speak on behalf of the Collaborative must be authorized by the Executive Director. All communications, press releases or speeches that propose to represent a position of the Collaborative on issues or policies must be approved by the Executive Director. Communications subject to this policy include, without limitation, face-to-face meetings, phone conversations, written statements, e-mail, social media, etc. This policy is not intended to preclude employees from expressing their views as individuals on matters of interest to them. It is only intended to assure that only persons authorized to do so are representing the Collaborative in the public view.

INTERNET USE

Internet use is a privilege, which is provided to employees and students to conduct research and support educational endeavors. Communications over the network are often public in nature; therefore, general rules and standards for professional behavior and communications will apply. Employees may not use the network, electronic mail, and telecommunications to share confidential information about students or other employees. The Executive Director or his/her designee must approve publication of web pages on either the Collaborative or a member district network prior to publication.

Collaborative administrators and those responsible for managing the local area network may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and to ensure that employees are using the system responsibly. Staff should not expect files stored on district servers to be private. The use of a password to access Collaborative computers does not guarantee a right to privacy of any information stored on, sent from or received by that computer.

The following behaviors are not permitted on Collaborative or district networks:

- Unauthorized sharing of confidential information about students or employees.
- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures; accessing, transmitting, displaying, or using obscene language and material.
- Participating in partisan politics.
- Participating in any communications that facilitate gambling, the illegal sale or use of drugs or alcohol, criminal gang activity or any other violation of the law. This includes threatening, intimidating or harassing any other person or engaging in "spamming" ("spamming" means sending annoying or unnecessary messages to large numbers of people.)
- Engaging in any form of discrimination, including sexual harassment or harassment based on any protected classification.
- Engaging in practices that threaten the integrity of the network (i.e., loading files that may include viruses.)
- Violating copyright laws.
- Using others' passwords without express authorization.
- Trespassing in others' folders, documents or files.
- Intentionally wasting resources.
- Employing the network for commercial purposes or financial gain.
- Violating regulations prescribed by the network provider.

All information transmitted by, received from, or stored in Collaborative systems are the property of the Collaborative. Therefore, no expectation of privacy in connection with the use of these systems or with the transmission, receipt, or storage of information on these systems should be expected. The use of a personal password does not give the employee a right of privacy in the information on the system.

The Collaborative may monitor the use of these systems at any time at its discretion. Such monitoring may include printing and reading all e-mail entering, leaving, or stored in Collaborative systems. Network administrators or their designee will report all inappropriate behavior to the employee's principal or supervisor and/or administrator who will take appropriate corrective action. Any other reports of inappropriate behavior, violations, or complaints will be routed to the employee's principal or supervisor for appropriate action. Violations may result in a loss of access and/or corrective action up to and including termination and action as deemed appropriate consistent with the local, state, and federal law. When applicable, law enforcement agencies may become involved. (Children's Internet Protection Act - April 20, 2001).

SOCIAL MEDIA

This policy is adopted in addition to, and not as a substitute for, the internet use policy contained in this Handbook.

The Collaborative recognizes that the use of social media can support its educational goals. The Collaborative also understands that social media can be a fun and rewarding way for employees to share their life and opinions with family, friends, and co-workers. However, the use of social media also presents certain risks to the Collaborative, its students, its employees, and its operations. Thus, it is important for employees to use social media responsibly and safely.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the responsible use of social media for employees. For the purpose of this policy, “social media” means any online, electronic, or Internet medium, tool, community, or space for social or professional interaction, networking, sharing user generated content,

or public or semi-public communication. Social media can take many different forms, including Internet forums, blogs & microblogs, online profiles, wikis, podcasts, pictures and video, email, text, instant messaging, music-sharing, and chat, to name just a few. Examples of social media include but are not limited to the following: LinkedIn, Facebook, MySpace, Wikipedia, YouTube, Twitter, Skype, Vine, Snapchat, dating websites, and blogs. Given the rapid pace of technological change, it is not possible to identify all types of social media. As such, all online, electronic or computerized means of communication are subject to this policy.

It is essential that social medial tools are used appropriately and safely. Employees must exercise common sense and conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process or Collaborative operations. To this end, the following rules apply to employee use of social media.

1) Employees are prohibited from engaging in improper fraternization with students using email and social media sites, or via cell phone, texting or the telephone.

   a. Employees are prohibited from connecting with current Collaborative students or the families of students via personal social media and shall not respond to social media invitations from students unless approved by their principal or supervisor. There may be situations in which a Collaborative employee may have an existing relationship to a student or the family of a student independent of the Collaborative, in which case they may have an existing social media relationship with such individual(s). In such situation, the employee must receive approval from the employee's principal or supervisor to establish or maintain such social media relationship.

   b. All electronic communication and contact with students relating to education or Collaborative operations should be through the Collaborative's official computer, email, and telephone system. Such communication by personal mobile phone, text message, personal email, or personal social media is prohibited, except in emergency situations. Employees are strictly prohibited from giving out their private cell phone, home phone numbers, or personal email to students or their families, unless approved by the Executive Director.

2) Employees should be mindful that the things they say or do on social media are publically available and searchable and may be forever accessible. Employees are free to express their point of view on social media but are responsible for what they post and, thus, should use good judgment and common sense. Generally, comments, expressions, and other postings on social media must be honest and respectful of others, and respect confidential, personal, and proprietary information.

3) Employees may not post or publish anything on social media in the name of the Collaborative or in a manner that could reasonably be attributed to the Collaborative without prior authorization from the Executive Director. Similarly, employees may not post or publish anything on social media as a representation of any opinion or view of Collaborative or any individual on behalf of the Collaborative without prior authorization from the Executive Director. If the business of the Collaborative is the subject of content being published or posted, employees should be clear and open about the fact that they are an employee and that the opinions or views expressed are not those of the Collaborative. Below are examples of postings on social media that violate this and other Collaborative policies if unauthorized.

4) Recognizing that the actions of employees reflect on the Collaborative, even with respect to personal communications on social media not discussing or relating to the Collaborative,

employees are expected to maintain appropriate content and tone in their use of social media. Employees must use professional judgment in all use of social media to avoid circumstances that could be considered inappropriate or contrary to the mission and objectives of the Collaborative.

5) The Collaborative may maintain official social media sites, such as a Collaborative Facebook page. Only authorized employees whose position entails using social media on behalf of the Collaborative may post or publish comments or materials to the Collaborative's official social media sites on behalf of the Collaborative. Employees whose positions entail such use of social media may only post or publish content that has been authorized by the Executive Director.

6) Employees may not use social media for personal use during work hours in a manner that distracts from or interferes with their job duties or the operation of the Collaborative. This policy is not meant to restrict employees from using social media while on break or otherwise off the clock.

7) Employees must respect the privacy and dignity of students and employees. Without exception, employees are prohibited from posting or publishing on social media information pertaining to students, including, without limitation, student names, pictures of students or employees, or references to particular students, even if not by name. Employees must always adhere to individual student privacy and the rights of employees to have their personal information kept confidential.

8) Employees may not use social media to threaten, harass, bully, discriminate, insult, or defame co-workers or students or to make any threats of violence. Threats of violence, even if made in jest, will be taken very seriously. Employees may not disparage the Collaborative on social media by maliciously or knowingly posting or publishing false information regarding the Collaborative. Below are examples of postings on social media that violate this and other Collaborative policies. These are just examples, and in no way are meant to be exhaustive.

- Posting "I could kill by boss."
- Posting "My co-worker is an idiot."
- Posting jokes about a bomb threat.
- Derogatory comments based on color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
- Sexual jokes or references concerning co-workers or passengers.
- Posting a rear-view picture of a co-worker bending over.
- Comments intended to harm a co-worker's or passenger's reputation.
- Comments statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating.
- Comments that disparage students or their families.

9) Employees must respect the intellectual property rights of the Collaborative and may not use the Collaborative's trademarks, logos, or copyrighted materials on social media for Commercial purposes.

10) Employees may not request, pressure, or require co-workers to share passwords to social media. Employees may not pressure or require co-workers to engage in an unwanted "friendship" online or otherwise establish an online or social media relationship.

11) Because violations of this policy have the potential to undermine the safe and effective operation of the Collaborative, employees are encouraged to report violations of this policy to the Human

Resources Department. The Collaborative prohibits any form of retaliation against an employee who has made a good faith report of a potential violation of this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who engages in such retaliation against a co-worker will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination.

The Collaborative will ensure that employees adhere to this policy and will investigate allegations that employees have violated this policy or have posted inappropriate materials on-line. Violations of this policy will constitute cause for corrective action, up to and including termination.

PERSONALELECTRONIC DEVICES

Personal electronic devices, such as mobile phones, iPods, and tablets should be turned off or set to silence mode during instructional classroom time, including assemblies, or any other activities that take place during the work day.

DRESS CODE

Appropriate and professional attire is expected of all employees at all times. Employees must remain mindful of the impression their appearance may have on those around them and in particular, students. Examples of inappropriate attire include, without limitation, T-shirts, hats, short skirts or shorts, inappropriately revealing clothing, clothing with the potential to offend others graphics, offensive language), and potentially unsafe jewelry or accessories. This list is in no way exhaustive and is only meant to be illustrative. The Collaborative will, in its sole discretion, deem what constitutes appropriate or inappropriate clothing or attire for the workplace.

TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS / USE OF COLLABORATIVE VEHICLES

Vehicle Operators

Collaborative employees whose duties include transporting students must:

(a) be twenty-one (21) years of age or older;

(b) obtain and maintain throughout the course of their employment, for so long as their duties include transporting students, all necessary licenses from the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles, including a 7-D license;

(c) obtain and maintain throughout the course of their employment, for so long as their duties include transporting students, certificates in CPR, first Aid, and other relevant life saving techniques;

(d) be properly trained to operate each of the vehicles that such operators will be required to operate in the course of their employment;

(e) obey all Collaborative instructions, requirements and procedures concerning the operation and maintenance of vehicles, any applicable manual that the Collaborative may adopt from time to time and the respective manufacturers' manuals for the Collaborative's vehicles;

(f) undergo training in bullying prevention and intervention as required by the Collaborative; and

(g) satisfy background checks conducted by the Collaborative as a condition of their employment.

Collaborative employees whose duties include transporting students must do so only in Collaborative owned vehicles. The only exception is where, in an emergency situation, an employee is directed by a principal, supervisor, or the Executive Director to transport a student in their own vehicle.

Using Collaborative Vehicles

Any employee operating a Collaborative vehicle must have a valid Massachusetts license and current 7-D license on file with the Human Resources Department. The only exception is when authorized by a principal, supervisor, or the Executive Director to operate a Collaborative vehicle in an emergency situation. Collaborative vehicles may only be used for Collaborative operations and purposes. Employees are strictly prohibited from using Collaborative vehicles for personal use, and from transporting unauthorized passengers in Collaborative vehicles.

Collaborative vehicles must be operated and used in strict compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, those laws and regulations applicable to the transport of minors, and minors with special needs. Employees will be required to pay all fines for tickets or citations for infractions (i.e. speeding or other moving violations, or parking tickets) incurred while using a Collaborative vehicle.

If an employee is involved in an automobile accident in a Collaborative vehicle, the employee should immediately call the police, and her/his principal or supervisor, and the employee should remain with the vehicle at the scene of the accident and wait for the police to arrive.

Employees who drive Collaborative vehicles or who regularly transport students must report any kind of moving vehicle violation issued to them, whether at work or during off hours, to their principal or supervisor immediately following the violation.

Failure to abide by this policy is cause for corrective action, up to and including termination.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND SAFETY PROGRAM

The provisions of the Massachusetts Workers' Compensation Act cover all Collaborative personnel and premiums are paid by the Collaborative. It is the intent of the Collaborative and its workers compensation insurance carrier to establish and maintain a safety program conforming to the best practices in the industry. To be successful, Collaborative programs must embody the proper attitudes towards injury and illness prevention on the part of management and employees. It also requires cooperation in all safety matters, not only between management and employees, but also between each employee and his/her fellow employees. Only through such a cooperative effort can a safety program in the best interest of all be established and preserved. Employees are expected to comply with all safety and health requirements whether established by management or by federal, state or local law. Employees should report to principals or supervisors any unsafe working conditions or defective equipment in order to maintain a safe working environment.

The Collaborative's objective is a safety program that will reduce the number of injuries and illnesses to a minimum. The joint cooperation of employees and management in observance of this policy is essential.

Employees will be provided a safe and healthy work environment. Employees who are ill or injured on the job will receive assessment and/or treatment, if appropriate, in order to ensure recovery and a prompt return to work. This will be accomplished by:

- Affirmation efforts by management to prevent employee injuries
- Prompt diagnosis and treatment of work-related illnesses and injuries
- Timely submission and analysis of accident/injury reports
- Workers' Compensation benefits will be provided in accordance with Massachusetts's law

Any accident or injury to employees and those directly witnessed by other employees must be reported, no matter how minor, immediately following the accident so that workers compensation forms can be processed. The employee is responsible for initiating the process and must notify his/her principal or supervisor of the accident. The principal or supervisor is responsible for completing and monitoring the accident reporting process.

FAILURE TO REPORT AN INJURY WITHIN 24 HOURS MAY JEOPARDIZE AN EMPLOYEE'S RIGHT TO FILE A CLAIM.

Workers' Compensation Claim Procedure

If an employee is injured or becomes ill, supervisory personnel must follow the following procedure:

1. Ensure that the employee is comfortable.
2. Seek proper medical attention and examination/diagnosis, if necessary, at the closest medical facility. If not an emergency, the secretary handling workers compensation claims will direct you to a facility.
3. Call the Collaborative Office and speak with the Human Resources representative handling workers' compensation to report the incident and complete or have the necessary forms completed for Collaborative insurance purposes. **THE INCIDENT MUST BE REPORTED TO THE OFFICE IMMEDIATELY. FORMS MUST BE COMPLETED WITHIN 24 HOURS OF THE INCIDENT.**
4. Complete the *Staff Incident Report and Medical Authorization Form,* sign and deliver the form to the Human Resources Department within 24 hours of the incident.
5. In all cases, the safety and comfort of the injured person is the first priority.

In addition, the injured employee is responsible for the following:

- Employees, who as a result of an accident seek continued medical attention, must notify the Human Resources representative handling workers' compensation of the name and address of the physician/hospital providing treatment.

- Employees who as a result of an accident, will be absent from work, must follow the Collaborative absence notification procedures, and must indicate that their absence is due to a workers' compensation injury.

The Collaborative may provide modified work (light duty), if available and appropriate, until such time as employees are able to resume their normal work activities. Physical examinations may be required when injuries involve first aid, but are required for medical treatment, musculoskeletal symptoms, or when the employee's duties must be modified or restricted.

Employees who are absent from work because of work-related injuries will be placed on FMLA leave if they are eligible for such leave. Employees who are not eligible for FMLA leave may apply for a Leave of Absence within ten (10) days from the date of injury. Failure to apply for a Leave of Absence within ten

(10) days may result in voluntary resignation.

Workers' Compensation Return to Work Program

The Collaborative endeavors to return workers to employment at the earliest possible date following a work-related injury or illness. Accordingly, the Collaborative has developed a transitional work policy to enable employees who are incapable of performing their jobs because of work-related injury or illness to return to work in an alternate position.

The Collaborative defines transitional work as temporary, modified work assignments within the worker's physical abilities, knowledge and skills. Where possible, transitional positions will be made available to workers who have been injured or who are sick because of work-related injuries or illness, in order to minimize or eliminate lost time. The Collaborative may elect to change any aspect of a transitional position such as working shift, location, etc., based on the needs of the Collaborative. The Collaborative cannot guarantee a transitional position and is under no obligation to offer, create or encumber any specific position for purposes of offering transitional duty.

This policy is not intended to instruct the procedures applicable to employees eligible for reasonable accommodation under Massachusetts law, the ADA or leave benefits under the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA"). Inquiries about the ADA or FMLA should be directed to the Human Resources Department.

In the event that an employee refuses the offer of transitional work that is within the employee's physical restrictions and ability, the Collaborative is not obligated to provide an alternative position.

The policy only applies to full-time and part-time employees who are not capable of performing their jobs as a result of work-related injury or illness and who are therefore eligible for and receiving workers' compensation benefits. Transitional work is offered on a temporary basis only and is not considered a permanent adjustment to the employee's job duties.

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COMPENSATION / PAYROLL

EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS AND CATEGORIES

The Collaborative has established classifications and categories of employees as set forth in this policy that determines compensation and the application of certain benefits and leave for its employees.

The Collaborative has a need for a variety of work schedules. Employees will be informed of their initial employment classification status as exempt or non-exempt, their category of employment, their work hours, and the length of their work year at the time of their job offer and/or during their orientation.

If the terms and conditions of an employee's employment change, the Human Resources Department will inform the employee of any change with respect to their employment classification status as exempt or non-exempt, their category of employment, their work hours, and the length of their work year.

Classification as Exempt vs. Non-Exempt

The Collaborative classifies employees' eligibility for overtime in accordance with the federal Fair Labor Standards Act and applicable state law:

- **Exempt Employees** are paid on a salaried basis and receive a pre-determined compensation regardless of the number of hours worked per week. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime pay.
- **Non-Exempt Employees** are paid on an hourly basis, and will be paid overtime for all hours worked over forty (40) hours in a work week, in accordance with federal and state law.

Categories of Employment:

Employees are categorized as full-time, part-time, temporary, or as a substitute as follows:

Full-Time: Employees who work a regular schedule of thirty (30) hours or more per week are categorized as full-time employees. Full-time employees are generally eligible for all benefits offered by the Collaborative as set forth in this Handbook.

Part-Time: Employees who work a regular schedule of less than thirty (30) hours per week are categorized as part-time employees. Part-time employees may be eligible for health and other benefits through the GIC depending on how many hours they regularly work. Part-time employees may also participate in retirement programs for which they are eligible. Part-time employees are not eligible for parental leave or professional development tuition reimbursement. Part-time qualified employees are eligible for paid leave as set forth in this Handbook, subject to proration where applicable.

Temporary: Temporary employees hold a position, either full-time or part-time, for a limited and specific time period, such as summer positions or casual labor. Temporary employees are not eligible for any benefits offered by the Collaborative, except those mandated by state or federal law.

Substitutes: Substitutes are employees not assigned to a regular work schedule and are called to work on an "as needed" basis. Substitutes are not eligible for any benefits offered by the Collaborative, except those mandated by state or federal law. Substitutes have no obligation to the Collaborative to accept the work offered and the Collaborative is under no obligation to offer any minimal number of hours or work assignments for any specified period of time.

The Work Year

The number of days in the work year varies for employees depending on their position. For example, the work year for certified educational staff and educational aides will be based on the academic year, including summer programs where applicable, while the work year for non- educational staff will be based on a twelve (12) month, full year basis. Employees will be informed of the number of days in their work year at the time of their job offer and/or during their orientation. Only full-year employees (260 days) are eligible for paid vacation and paid holidays.

CALCULATION OF PAY

Exempt employees are paid on a salaried basis and receive a pre-determined compensation regardless of the number of hours worked per week, and are not eligible for overtime pay.

Non-exempt employees are paid at an hourly rate based on the number of hours worked in a given pay period. Non-exempt employees are prohibited from working any hours other than their scheduled hours, unless approved by the Executive Director.

Non-Exempt employees who work more than forty (40) hours in a work week will be paid time and a half for each hour worked in excess of forty (40) hours. All overtime must be pre-approved by the Executive Director. Absences from the workplace, whether for break, leave, holidays, sick leave, etc., are not considered hours worked for the purposes of calculating overtime.

Employees who work six (6) or more hours in one (1) day have an option to take an unpaid thirty (30) minute lunch break. Employees will not be paid for their thirty (30) minute lunch break, but will be paid if they do not take a thirty (30) minute lunch break. If taken, no work activity can take place during the thirty (30) minute lunch break, and employees are permitted to leave Collaborative premises during this time.

PRORATEDSALARIES

School-Year Employees: For employees whose work year is based on the academic year, their compensation will be calculated and paid on a prorated basis over the course of their work year, as determined by their position.

Full-Year Employees: For employees whose work year is based on the full year, their compensation will be calculated and paid over the course of the full year.

Other Salaries: All other salaries, including those of employees not classified in any of the above listed categories, will be set by the Board of Directors on an individual basis.

PAYROLL PROCEDURES

The Collaborative will issue payroll on a bi-weekly basis. Paydays are usually every other Friday.

If the normal payday falls on a Collaborative recognized holiday, payroll will be distributed one (1) work day prior to the aforementioned schedule.

The Collaborative requires employees to participate in an automatic direct deposit payroll service, commonly referred to as an electronic funds transfer ("EFT"). Direct deposit eliminates the need to

physically deposit checks at the bank or financial institution. Direct deposits are not subject to check clearing restrictions that banks and institutions may impose; your funds are immediately available. Direct deposit ensures accurate consistent deposits to your account on the due date for each scheduled pay period.

To enroll in the direct deposit program an employee must obtain a direct deposit form from the Human Resources Department. Complete and return the form to the Human Resources Department with routing and account information completed. It may take up to thirty (30) days for direct deposit to begin. If an employee's marital status changes or the number of exemptions previously claimed increases or decreases, a new Form W -4 must be submitted to the Human Resources Department.

KEEPING ACCURATE TIME

Non-exempt employees and, in certain circumstances, exempt employees, must keep and submit their time in accordance with Collaborative procedures. Time must be kept accurately and reflect all regular and overtime hours worked (non-exempt employees only), absences, late arrivals, early departures and lunch breaks. Employees will be instructed on the procedures for keeping and submitting time for their position and will be trained on how to accurately keep and submit their time using the Collaborative's time keeping system. Any employee who fails to report or inaccurately reports any hours worked in accordance with Collaborative procedures will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination.

It is a violation of the Collaborative's policy for any employee to falsify their time or alter another employee's time. It is also a serious violation of the Collaborative's policy for any employee to instruct another employee to incorrectly or falsely report hours worked. If any principal or supervisor instructs you to incorrectly report your hours, you should report it immediately to the Human Resources Department.

SAFE HARBOR POLICY

It is the Collaborative's policy and practice to accurately compensate employees and to do so in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws.

Review Your Pay Stub

The Collaborative makes every effort to ensure that its employees are paid correctly. Occasionally, however, inadvertent mistakes can happen. When mistakes do happen and are called to its attention, the Collaborative will promptly make any corrections necessary. Please review your pay stub when you receive it to make sure it is correct. If you believe a mistake has occurred or you have any questions please use the reporting procedure outlined below.

To Report Concerns or Obtain More Information

If you have any questions about compensation or deductions from your compensation, please contact the Human Resources Department. If you believe you have been subject to any improper deductions or if your pay does not accurately reflect your hours worked you should immediately report the matter to your principal or supervisor. If the principal or supervisor is unavailable or if you believe it would be inappropriate to contact that person, you should immediately contact the Human Resources Department. If you are unsure of whom to contact, or if you have not received a satisfactory response within five (5) business days after reporting the incident, please immediately contact the Executive Director.

Every report will be fully investigated and corrective action will be taken where appropriate, up to and including termination for any employee(s) who violate this policy. In addition, the Collaborative will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who report alleged violations of this policy or who

cooperate in the Collaborative's investigation of such reports.

MILEAGE ALLOWANCE AND TRAVEL PERMISSION

Staff using personal cars in the course of their duties will be reimbursed at the rate determined by the Internal Revenue Service rate for business mileage. The IRS Standard Mileage Rates are determined annually in January.

Travel expenses between home and work are not reimbursable. Most Collaborative related travel will originate from a Collaborative location. But in those cases where it is advantageous, (time and distance considered) to leave directly from your residence, the request for reimbursement should be based upon total miles traveled for the Collaborative, less normal daily mileage to and/or from your work location. Any reimbursement for travel outside of the member towns must be approved in advance on an individual basis

Daily mileage records must be maintained and must accompany original parking receipts, toll receipts, and other travel-related receipts when submitting for reimbursement. Employee's work schedule and a map outlining the miles of the route must be provided by all staff who work at multiple sites. Expense reimbursement should be submitted to the Collaborative business office at the end of each calendar month and after obtaining principal or supervisor approval, no later than sixty (60) days after the date of travel. Mileage reimbursement requests greater than s i x t y
(60) days old will not be reimbursed. W here there are extenuating circumstances, the Business Manager may approve reimbursement requests subsequent to the deadline.

Staff submitting mileage allowance and/or travel permission items for reimbursement must submit accurate documents and requests. Falsification of any reimbursement request will be grounds for corrective action up to and including termination.

SCHOOL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY REPLACEMENT / RESTITUTION

The Collaborative Board of Directors, acting through the Executive Director, will authorize payment for the cost of replacing or repairing property of an employee such as eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures, watches, or articles of clothing necessarily worn or carried by the employee, or vehicles when such items are damaged or stolen in the line of duty as a result of malicious acts and without fault of the employee. Other personal property of employees or personal teaching aids belonging to the employee are not included.

The maximum payment anyone can claim is $1,000 or actual cost, whichever is less in the case of vehicles, and $500 or actual cost, whichever is less, for other property. An employee is limited to a maximum annual claim of $1,000. Loss or damage claims must be reported to the Human Resources Department and, if appropriate, to the police as soon as the employee becomes aware of such loss or damage.

Employees must seek reimbursement, and show proof of replacement or repair in the form of receipts. Employees will not be compensated for losses or damage for which compensation, wholly or partially, can be paid under the employee's private insurance policy.

This policy does not extend to student property.

LONGEVITY PAYMENT

The Collaborative provides longevity pay as a means of recognizing and rewarding long-term service and commitment to the organization. Employees become eligible for annual longevity payments upon completing a specified number of years of continuous service with the Collaborative and must be employed at a minimum of 0.5 FTE. Longevity payments are distributed annually on the first payroll in December based on years of service, as outlined below.

Longevity Schedule A for Employees Hired Prior to July 1, 2026	
Years of Continuous Service	**Annual Longevity Payment**
1 - 4 years	$750
5 - 9 years	$1,000
10 - 14 years	$1,500
15 - 19 years	$2,000
20+ years	$2,500

Longevity Schedule B for Employees Hired After July 1, 2026	
Years of Continuous Service	**Annual Longevity Payment**
10 - 14 years	$1,500
15 - 19 years	$2,000
20+ years	$2,500

Employees hired prior to July 1, 2026 are grandfathered into Longevity Schedule A. Longevity Schedule B is specifically for employees hired on or after July 1, 2026.

Under this policy, continuous service shall mean uninterrupted employment with the Collaborative and may include years of service in different positions. Interruption of employment for the purpose of FMLA leave, parental leave, or military leave of up to five (5) years of cumulative service under the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act shall not be deemed an interruption in service for the purpose of calculating continuous service for longevity pay.

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ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE POLICIES

CALENDAR

The Collaborative fiscal year is from July 1 through June 30. A Collaborative calendar will be distributed annually to all employees at the start of the fiscal or school year. The Executive Director must approve any changes or exceptions to the calendar.

EMPLOYEE ATTENDANCE

It is important for Collaborative employees to attend work regularly and to arrive at work on time. Failure to do so detrimentally affects employee morale and the services provided to students. Absenteeism or tardiness that is excessive or unauthorized in the judgment of the Collaborative is grounds for corrective action, up to and including termination.

Teachers and other instructional staff are required to be at their teaching stations fifteen (15) minutes before class starts and to remain for fifteen (15) minutes after students depart. Educational employees may never leave a student alone.

Employees unable to report to work or unable to report to work on time must follow the Collaborative absence notification procedures set forth in this Handbook.

EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

An excused absence is an absence taken for approved leave in accordance with the paid or unpaid leave policies set forth in this Handbook. All other absences, while they may be explainable, shall be considered unexcused.

Excessive unexcused absences or tardiness will subject the employee to corrective action up to and including termination. Poor attendance is also considered a conduct and performance issue and the type of corrective action may depend on any previous corrective action for conduct and/or performance.

Any no call/no show is considered grounds for immediate corrective action, except in the case of an emergency or as otherwise provided by the paid and unpaid leave policies set forth in this Handbook. The Collaborative will determine, in its sole discretion, what circumstances constitute an emergency. Any absence of three consecutive working days, without proper notice provided to the Collaborative, will be considered abandonment of employment and, therefore, a voluntary resignation.

ABSENCE NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

Employees who are sick, tardy or otherwise need to take an unscheduled absence must contact their principal or direct supervisor to provide notice of the employee's absence or tardiness. Such notice must provide the reason for the employee's absence or tardiness. Absent unforeseeable circumstances, such as an emergency or sudden illness, employees are required to notify their principal or supervisor at least one (1) hour prior to the employee's starting time (two (2) hours for school bus drivers and monitors). Where the need for an absence or tardiness is not foreseeable, employees must provide notice to their principal or supervisor as soon as practicable. Timely notice is important to enable the Collaborative to arrange for a substitute where appropriate. Speak with your principal or supervisor for instructions on the best method of contact.

No individuals other than the employee's principal or supervisor can accept notice regarding absence or tardiness, and the Collaborative will not acknowledge notice placed with any other party, employee or department. Employees are responsible for contacting the Collaborative personally, except where the employee is unable to do so or a specific leave policy allows notification by someone other than the employee. Calls generally will not be accepted from spouses or family members, except for an emergency.

Failure to provide notice of an absence or tardiness in accordance with this policy may subject the employee to corrective action, up to and including termination. Failure to notify the Collaborative of absence for three (3) consecutive workdays will be considered abandonment of employment and, therefore, voluntary resignation.

Should an employee leave work during the school day (due to illness, doctor's appointments, etc.), they need to notify their principal or supervisor of the time of departure and return (if applicable).

APPROVED LEAVE

The Collaborative provides paid and unpaid leave in accordance with the policies below. Depending on the type of leave and the applicable leave policy (or policies), employees must request and/or provide notice of such leave in accordance with the policies set forth below. Also, depending on the type of leave the applicable policy (or policies), the Collaborative may require medical or other applicable documentation certifying the need for such leave in accordance with the applicable policy (or policies). Failure to provide notice or submit such documentation may result in loss of pay or corrective action, up to and including termination.

All requests for paid or unpaid leave are subject to approval by the Collaborative in accordance with federal and state law.

LEAVE WITH PAY

It is the Collaborative's policy to provide eligible employees with paid sick leave, personal leave, bereavement leave, holidays, leave for jury duty, court leave, and vacation as follows:

Sick Leave

Eligible full-time employees will receive the equivalent of five (5) paid sick days (awarded to the employee in hours consistent with their contracted hours per day) at the beginning of the school year, and will be eligible to accrue and be able to use up to a maximum of twelve (12) paid sick days per fiscal year. For the sake of clarity, the maximum of twelve (12) paid sick days per fiscal year includes the five (5) paid sick days received at the beginning of the fiscal year and the amount of sick days, if any, that may accrue on a monthly basis throughout the remainder of the fiscal year. Sick days accrue on a monthly basis for each employee based on the number of months in their work year, and are available for use upon accrual.

Part-time employees (employees must work a minimum of a .5 FTE to be eligible for paid sick leave) will accrue and be able to use sick days on a prorated basis calculated by their regularly scheduled work hours as compared to the full-time work hours for their position. For example, an employee who works .5 FTE will accrue and be able to use up to six (6) paid sick days per fiscal year.

Eligible employees who have not used all of their accrued sick days in a fiscal year may carry over the equivalent of five (5) sick days into a subsequent fiscal year but may accrue no more than the equivalent of fifteen (15) sick days at any time. Employees will not be compensated for accrued and unused sick

time upon their termination or separation of employment from the Collaborative in accordance with applicable law.

Employees may use paid sick leave under this policy for the following reasons:

1. To care for the employee's own physical or mental illness, injury, or medical condition;
2. To care for the employee's child, spouse, parent, or parent of a spouse, who is suffering from a physical or mental illness, injury, or medical condition;
3. To attend the employee's routine medical appointment or a routine medical appointment for the employee's child, spouse, parent, or parent of spouse;
4. To address the psychological, physical or legal effects of domestic violence.

Employees must provide notice of their absence for a sick day in accordance with the Collaborative absence notification procedure. Where the need for a sick day is foreseeable, for example for a scheduled medical appointment, employees should provide as much advance notice as possible. The Collaborative reserves the right to request medical documentation substantiating the need for sick leave. Employees who misuse or abuse sick leave, for example, by engaging in activity that is not consistent with the allowable purposes for sick leave (e.g., using sick leave when not sick) or by exhibiting a clear pattern of taking sick leave when they are scheduled to perform work perceived as undesirable or on days just before or after a weekend or holiday, will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination.

To the extent paid leave under this policy also qualifies as FMLA leave, the paid leave must be taken concurrently with any such FMLA leave.

Personal Days

All eligible full-time employees will receive the equivalent of two (2) paid personal days per fiscal year (awarded to the employee in hours consistent with their contracted hours per day). Paid personal days may be taken for personal business which otherwise cannot be conducted outside of normal work hours, and must be approved by your principal or supervisor. Personal days cannot be carried over from year to year and they are not paid out on termination of employment.

Part-time employees (employees must work a minimum of a .5 FTE to be eligible for paid personal leave) will accrue and be able to use paid personal days on a prorated basis calculated by their regularly scheduled work hours as compared to the full-time work hours for their position. For example, an employee who works .5 FTE will accrue and be able to use up to (1) paid personal days per fiscal year.

Requests for personal days must be submitted to your principal or supervisor. Requests for personal days before and after holidays, school vacations, or leaves of absence will not be granted except in rare cases of emergency. Unauthorized absences before or after holidays, school vacations, and leaves of absence will result in corrective action, up to and including termination. For eligible full-time new hires, personal days will be prorated as set forth below based on the date of hire.

Month Hired	Personal Days Received
July	2
August	2
September	2
October	2
November	2
December	2
January	1
February	1
March	1
April	1
May	1
June	0

Bereavement

Eligible full time employees will receive up to the equivalent of three (3) days (awarded to the employee in hours consistent with their contracted hours per day) of paid bereavement in the event of the death of an immediate family member. Under this policy, immediate family members mean an employee's spouse, sibling, parent, child, father/mother in law, and any member of an employee's immediate family. Requests for bereavement leave must be submitted to your principal or supervisor. Proof of death and relationship to the deceased may be required. If more than three (3) days are needed, vacation time or personal days may be used, or an unpaid leave of absence may be approved by your principal, supervisor, and/or the Executive Director if vacation time or personal days are not available.

Part-time employees (employees must work a minimum of a .5 FTE to be eligible for paid bereavement leave) will receive paid bereavement days on a prorated basis calculated by their regularly scheduled work hours as compared to the full-time work hours for their position. For example, an employee who works .5 FTE will receive the equivalent of 1.5 bereavement days per fiscal year.

Jury Duty and Court Leave

Employees may be compensated for jury duty or testifying as a subpoenaed witness in a judicial proceeding. Requests for jury duty and/or court leave must be submitted to your principal or supervisor. In order to be compensated for such leave, employees must submit to their principal or supervisor a copy of their summons or subpoena on the first working day following receipt of such notice. Employees are required to keep their principal or supervisor apprised of their status and are expected to work whenever their respective court schedule permits. Upon completion of a term of jury duty or court leave, employees must submit verification of days served (received in your mail) to the Human Resources Department.

The Collaborative will pay your regular rate of pay for the equivalent of your first three (3) days of jury duty or days as a witness under subpoena based on the number of hours you would have worked on those days of absence. For jury duty or duty as a witness under subpoena longer than three (3) days, employees will be compensated.

Holidays

Eligible employees who are employed on a twelve (12) month, year-round basis will be paid for all legal and Collaborative recognized holidays within the months that they work. The Collaborative is also closed between December 24th and January 1st, and these days are paid for year-round employees. Any additional paid holidays will be established annually. Where a holiday falls on a weekend, it will be observed on either the preceding Friday or following Monday.

The Collaborative observes organizational-wide holidays each year as follows:

- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Good Friday
- Patriot's Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Day

Part time employees who are employed on a twelve (12) month, year-round basis and whose scheduled day falls on a paid Holiday, will be paid their regularly scheduled work hours for that day.

Vacation

It is the Collaborative's policy to provide paid vacation time to eligible employees. Only employees who work on a twelve (12) month, full year basis, and a minimum of a .5 FTE, are eligible for paid vacation. Collaborative employees working on the academic year work schedule are not entitled to any paid vacation.

Eligible employees who have worked continuously for Valley Collaborative for ten (10) years or more from their date of hire, will receive the equivalent of fifteen (15) vacation days per fiscal year. All other eligible full-time employees will receive the equivalent of ten (10) paid vacation days per fiscal year. Vacation is accrued on a monthly basis, and is available for use as accrued, with your principal's or supervisor's approval. Part-time employees will receive vacation time on a prorated basis calculated by their work hours as compared to the full-time work hours for their position, which shall accrue on a monthly basis, and is available for use as accrued, with your principal's or supervisor's approval. If a scheduled Collaborative holiday falls within your vacation period, that holiday is not counted against your vacation time.

Requests for vacation time must be submitted to your principal or supervisor with as much advance notice as possible. All vacation must be approved by your principal or supervisor, subject to the Collaborative's scheduling needs.

Eligible employees who have not taken all of their accrued vacation in a fiscal year may carryover the equivalent of ten (10) vacation days per fiscal year but may accrue no more than the equivalent of twenty (20) vacation days at any time.

Eligible employees will be compensated for accrued and unused vacation upon their termination or

separation of employment from the Collaborative in accordance with the law.

UNPAID LEAVE

The Collaborative provides unpaid leave for the reasons set forth below in accordance with the policies set forth below.

While on unpaid leave, employees should communicate with the Human Resources Department concerning their leave and expected return. Failure to return to work upon the expiration of a leave of absence or refusing an offer of reinstatement for which the employee is qualified will result in voluntary resignation or termination.

No leave of absence will be granted for employees' vacation plans, as adequate vacation time is afforded to eligible employees.

A leave of absence will not be granted to allow an employee time off to seek employment elsewhere or to work for another employer. Employees who start employment elsewhere while on a leave of absence will be considered to have voluntarily resigned, except military reserve duty.

TYPES OF UNPAID LEAVE

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

The Collaborative complies with all requirements of the FMLA. The FMLA provides up to t w e l v e (12) weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons:

- For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth;
- To care for the employee's child after birth or placement for adoption or foster care;
- To care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition; or
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform his or her job.

Military Family Leave Entitlements

Qualified exigency Leave: Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or who has been notified of a call to covered active duty in the US Armed Forces, whether as a member of a regular component of the Armed Forces or as a member of the National Guard and Reserves may use their twelve (12) week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include short-notice deployment, attending certain military events, arranging for childcare on an urgent basis, attending a child's school activities, attending counseling, spending time with a covered service member while he or she is on short term leave for rest and recuperation, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, and any additional activity that the Collaborative agrees constitutes a qualifying exigency.

Military Caregiver Leave: FMLA also includes a leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to twenty-six (26) weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single twelve (12) month period. For purposes of this leave, an eligible employee includes the service member's parent, spouse, son or daughter, or nearest blood relative, or individual designated as next of kin in writing by the service member. A covered service member is:

1. a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves,

who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty, while on active duty that may render the service-member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service-member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list; or

2. a veteran who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness if the veteran was a member of the Armed Forces at any time during the period of five (5) years preceding the date on which the veteran undergoes that medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy.

For the purposes of Military Caregiver Leave, a serious injury or illness means

1. a serious injury or illness that was incurred by the member in line of duty, while on active duty; or

2. a serious injury or illness that existed before the beginning of the member's active duty and was aggravated by service in the line of duty, while on active duty in the Armed Forces and that may render the member medically unfit to perform the duties of the member's office, grade, rank, or rating.

Benefits and Protection

During FMLA leave, The Collaborative will maintain your GIC benefits for the duration of your FMLA leave as if you remained continuously employed, so long as you have indicated your intent to return to work at the end of your FMLA leave. The Collaborative will continue to pay its portion of your GIC premiums provided that you pay your contributions on a timely basis. Arrangements to pay the employee share of such benefits must be made by contacting the Human Resources Department. If you do not return to work upon the completion of your FMLA leave, the Collaborative may recover the cost of any payments made to maintain your GIC benefits, unless the failure to return to work was for reasons beyond your control. Use of FMLA leave will not result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of FMLA leave. However, employees will not accrue paid leave such as vacation or sick leave during any period of FMLA leave. Notwithstanding, where employees substitute paid leave for FMLA leave the substituted paid leave will be deducted from the employee's vacation and sick leave accrual. FMLA leave periods will be treated as continuous service for the purpose of calculating pension and retirement plan vesting and eligibility.

Employees who return to work on or before the expiration of their FMLA leave will be restored to their original or an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms. Employees on FMLA leave are not entitled to any greater rights than they would otherwise have been entitled, had they continued as active employees at the Collaborative. Some key employees may not be entitled to reinstatement at the conclusion of their FMLA leave. Key employees will be notified of their status at the time of their leave request.

Eligibility Requirements

Employees are eligible for FMLA leave if they have been employed by the Collaborative for a total of twelve (12) months and have worked at least 1,250 hours during the twelve (12) months prior to the start of the requested leave.

When FMLA eligible spouses are both employed by the Collaborative, they will be granted a combined total of 12 weeks of FMLA leave for the birth, placement for adoption, or foster care of a child.

Definition of Serious Health Condition

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Use of Leave

An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operations. Intermittent leave is not, however, available to care for a child during the first twelve (12) months after the birth, adoption, or placement in foster care. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis.

If you use intermittent leave, you must comply with the Collaborative's regular absence notification procedure for each day on which you are absent, including specifically referring to the FMLA leave.

Substitution of Paid Leave for Unpaid Leave

Employees who are eligible for FMLA leave must use accumulated vacation, personal days, and sick leave concurrently with their FMLA leave until all such paid leave is exhausted. Employees must comply with the Collaborative's normal paid leave policies.

The Leave Year

The Collaborative has designated a rolling leave year, which determines FMLA leave eligibility by reference to the amount of FMLA leave taken during the twelve (12) months immediately preceding the request for FMLA leave. This "rolling" leave year does not apply to Military Caregiver Leave. The leave year for Military Caregiver Leave is a single twelve (12) month period that begins on the first day of the employee's leave.

Employee Request/Notice of FMLA Leave

Employees must submit the initial request for FMLA leave to their principal or the Human Resources Department on the Collaborative's Employee Request for Family or Medical Leave Form, and via Employee Portal which can be obtained from the Human Resources Department. Employees must provide thirty (30) days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. If an employee fails to give timely notice when the need for FMLA leave is foreseeable, the Collaborative may delay the FMLA leave until thirty (30) days after notice is provided. If the need for FMLA leave is not foreseeable, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with the Collaborative's regular absence notification procedures.

Required Certification Documentation and Designation by the Collaborative

All employees who request FMLA leave must complete the appropriate forms outlined below to certify the reason for FMLA leave and submit them to the Human Resources Department:

- Certification of Health Care Provider Form for Employee's Serious Health Condition
- Certification of Health Care Provider Form for Family Member's Serious Health Condition
- Certification of Serious Injury or Illness of Covered Service Member for Military Family Leave
- Certification of Serious Injury or Illness of a Veteran for Military Caregiver Leave
- Certification of Qualifying Exigency for Military Family Leave

The Collaborative may require additional medical verification to determine whether the circumstances qualify for FMLA leave and to verify documentation provided. The Collaborative may also require recertification for FMLA leave (which includes intermittent or reduced work schedule leave), every thirty (30) days or as is otherwise reasonable in accordance with the FMLA.

Employees will be notified in writing by the Human Resources Department as to whether their request

for FMLA leave has been approved or denied, and whether more information is needed. Employees will receive this notification after all necessary forms have been submitted to the Human Resources Department and reviewed. The Collaborative may conditionally designate leave as FMLA leave pending receipt of the required certification. The Collaborative is responsible for designating any period of leave as FMLA leave if it qualifies, even if the employee has not requested FMLA leave. The Collaborative may deny an FMLA request where an employee has not met the eligibility requirements under the FMLA or has not submitted sufficient certification.

Employees may be required to provide a fitness for duty statement before they return after an FMLA leave for their own serious health condition. If you will be required to provide this statement, you will be notified at the time that your leave is approved.

"No Moonlighting"

Absent extenuating circumstances, employees who are taking FMLA leave for their own or a covered family member's serious health condition or to care for a child after birth, adoption, or placement in foster care are not permitted to work for any other employer while on FMLA leave from their job with the Collaborative. Employees who accept employment with other employers while on FMLA leave from the Collaborative will be considered to have voluntarily resigned their employment and will not be eligible for reinstatement at the end of their previously approved leave.

Additional Employer Responsibilities

The Collaborative will also comply with the FMLA by not interfering with, restraining, or denying the exercise of any right provided under FMLA; or discharging or discriminating against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FMLA.

FMLA Question and Concerns

If you have any questions about your FMLA rights or responsibilities or if you disagree with a decision the Collaborative makes regarding FMLA leave entitlement, please contact the Human Resources Department to resolve your concerns as soon as possible.

Enforcement

To enforce rights under the FMLA, an employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

FMLA does not affect any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination, or supersede any State or local law or collective bargaining agreement that provides greater family or medical leave rights.

Please consult the Human Resources Department for any additional information relating to FMLA leave.

Important Notice Regarding Genetic Information

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) prohibits the Company (and other entities covered by GINA Title II) from requesting or requiring genetic information of an individual or family member of the individual, except as specifically allowed by GINA. In order to comply with GINA, we are asking that employees not provide any genetic information when responding to a request for medical information or complying with the FMLA's employee return to work certification requirements. "Genetic information" as defined by GINA, includes an individual's family medical history, the results of an individual's or family member's genetic tests, the fact that an individual or an individual's family member sought or received genetic services, and genetic information of a fetus carried by an individual or an individual's family member or an embryo lawfully held by an individual or family member receiving assistive reproductive services.

Parental Leave

Full time employees who have been employed for a minimum of three (3) consecutive months as full-time employees will be granted up to eight (8) weeks of unpaid parental leave for the purpose of (i) the birth of a child; (ii) adopting a child under the age of 18; or (iii) adopting a child under the age of 23, if the child is mentally or physically disabled. Eligible employees must give their principal or supervisor at least two weeks' notice of their anticipated date of departure and intention to return to work, or provide such notice as soon as practicable if the delay is for reasons beyond the employee's control. Such notice must be submitted via Employee Portal.

If two employees working for the Collaborative are eligible for parental leave for the same child, they are entitled to a combined total of eight (8) weeks of leave between them.

Upon return from parental leave, an employee will be restored to a previous or a similar position with the same status, pay, and seniority, as of the date of the leave. Notwithstanding, an employee will not be restored to a previous or a similar position if other employees of equal length of service and status in the same or similar position have been laid off due to economic conditions or other changes affecting employment during the period of such parental leave. If an employee takes leave beyond the eight (8) weeks provided under this policy, The Collaborative cannot guarantee reinstatement at the end of his/her leave (unless otherwise required by applicable law) The Collaborative will deem an employee's unauthorized failure to return to work from parental leave on the agreed upon return date as a voluntarily resignation.

Employees may voluntarily substitute and use unused vacation and personal days concurrently with parental leave under this policy. Employees may also voluntarily substitute and use paid sick leave for any part of parental leave that meets the reasons for which paid sick leave may be used as set forth in the paid sick leave policy.

Use of parental leave will not result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of parental leave. However, employees will not accrue paid leave such as vacation or sick leave during any period of FMLA leave. Notwithstanding, where employees substitute paid leave for unpaid leave under this policy, the substituted paid leave will count towards the employee's vacation and sick leave accrual. FMLA leave periods will be treated as continuous service for the purpose of calculating pension and retirement plan vesting and eligibility.

The Collaborative will maintain employees' GIC benefits during parental leave under this policy. However, the Collaborative will not continue to pay its portion of the employee's GIC premiums while the employee is on parental leave. The employee will be responsible for payment of 100% of such premiums while on parental leave under this policy. However, if parental leave under this policy also concurrently constitutes FMLA leave, the Collaborative will continue to pay its portion of such premiums pursuant to the FMLA policy in this Handbook.

To the extent an employee is entitled to FMLA leave in connection with the birth or adoption of a child, leave under this parental leave policy must be taken concurrently with any such FMLA leave.

Employees on parental leave under this policy may use, but are not required to use, any accrued, unused vacation leave, personal days, or sick days concurrently with such leave.

Domestic Violence Leave

The Collaborative is committed to the health and safety of its employees and their families. If employees or their family members are victims of abusive behavior (domestic violence, sexual assault, kidnapping, and stalking), they are encouraged to communicate with the Human Resources Department about the

situation.

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 149, Section 52E ("An Act Relative to Domestic Violence"), employees are eligible for up to a fifteen (15) days of unpaid leave in any twelve (12) month period to address the psychological, physical, or legal effects of abusive behavior. Specifically, employees are eligible for leave under this policy to seek or obtain medical attention, victim services, or legal assistance; secure housing; seek or obtain a protective from a court; appear in court or before a grand jury; meet with a district attorney or other law enforcement official; attend child custody proceedings; or address other issues directly related to abusive behavior against an employee or a family member of an employee. For purposes of this policy, "family member" means parent, step-parent, child, step-child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, married spouse, persons in a substantive dating or engagement relationship who reside together, persons having a child in common regardless of whether they are married or live together, or persons in a guardian relationship. Alleged perpetrators of abusive behavior are not eligible for leave under this policy.

Employees are required to exhaust all accrued paid leave (vacation, sick leave, and personal days) prior to taking leave under this policy. Use of leave under this policy will not result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of parental leave.

Except in cases of imminent danger to the health or safety of an employee or the family member of an employee, an employee seeking leave under this policy must provide advance notice appropriate under the circumstances to their principal or supervisor. In case of imminent danger to the health or safety of an employee, the employee is not required to provide advance notice, but must notify his or her principal, supervisor, or the Human Resources Department within three (3) work days of taking leave under this policy. Such notification may be communicated by the employee, a family member, or the employee's counselor, social worker, health care provider, a member of the clergy, shelter worker, legal advocate, or other professional who has assisted the employee or the family member of the employee.

The Collaborative may request that an employee taking leave under this policy provide documentation substantiating the need for the leave. Employees can satisfy such request by providing any one of the following documents substantiating the abusive behavior:

- A court issued protective order;
- An official document from a court, provider, public agency;
- A police report or statement of a witness or victim provided to police;
- Official legal documentation attesting to the perpetrator's guilt;
- Medical documentation of treatment for the abusive behavior;
- A sworn statement from the employee attesting to being a victim of abusive behavior;
- A sworn statement from a professional who has assisted the employee or the family member of the employee, for example, a counsel, social worker, or member of the clergy, shelter worker, or legal advocate.

If proper documentation is provided, the Collaborative will not take any adverse action or discriminate against an employee for taking leave under this policy. Upon the employee's return from such leave, an employee is entitled to restoration to the employee's original job or to an equivalent position. If an unscheduled absence occurs for reasons covered by this policy, the Collaborative will not take any negative action against the employee if the employee provides the documentation described above within thirty (30) days of the absence.

The Collaborative will keep confidential all information related to an employee's leave under this policy. Such information will only be accessed on a need to know basis. Such information will not be disclosed by the Collaborative unless disclosure is requested or consented to in writing by the employee, ordered by a court or required by law, required in a law enforcement investigation, or necessary to protect any other Collaborative employees. Any documentation provided in connection with leave under this policy will be maintained in the employee's employment record but only for so long as required for the Collaborative

to determine whether the employee is eligible for leave under this policy.

To the extent leave under this policy also qualifies as FMLA leave, leave under this policy must be taken concurrently with any such FMLA leave.

Military Leave

Any Collaborative employee who voluntarily or involuntarily performs duty in the uniformed services of the United States, e.g. the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, Public Health Service commissioned corps and each of the respected reserve components are covered by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). USERRA protects employees' seniority-related rights and benefits. Appropriate military leaves of absence, benefits and reinstatements will be granted and maintained pursuant to state and federal law. Employees who are considering or who have been called to service in the uniformed services should contact the Human Resources Department for further details and obligations regarding military leaves. Requests for military leave must be submitted to your principal or supervisor on an Employee Leave Request Form.

Small Necessities Leave Act

Collaborative employees who meet eligibility requirements for FMLA leave are also eligible for additional unpaid leave under the Small Necessities Leave Act ("SNLA"). The SNLA provides up to twenty (24) hours of unpaid leave for eligible employees for the following reasons:

1. To participate in educational activities of their children;
2. To take a child to a routine medical appointment; or
3. To accompany an elderly relative to a routine medical appointment or to appointments for other professional services related to the elder's care.

If the need for this leave is foreseeable, the employee must give seven (7) days' notice before the date the leave is to begin. If the need for the leave is unforeseeable, the employee must give as much notice as possible under the circumstances. Employees taking SNLA time off are required to substitute and use unused vacation and personal days concurrently with SNLA leave under this policy. Employees are also required to substitute and use paid sick leave for any SNLA leave that meets the reasons for which paid sick leave may be used as set forth in the paid sick leave policy.

Peace Corps

Consistent with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 41B, any Collaborative teacher who serves in the Peace Corps of the United States shall be entitled to an unpaid leave of absence, with no reduction of earned benefits, during their term of service. Upon completion of their term of service, such teacher shall be restored to the previous or similar position, at the same pay level, length of service credit and benefits as of the date of said leave. Teachers who wish to continue their GIC benefits coverage will be responsible for payment of 100% of the applicable insurance premiums on the first day of each month, during the leave of absence. The Collaborative will not pay its portion of such premiums while an employee is on leave for service in the Peace Corps.

Personal Leave

Where the reason for a leave of absence does not qualify for leave under any other Collaborative leave policy, an employee may request a personal leave of absence of up to six (6) weeks in a twelve (12) month period, measured by looking backwards from the first date of leave. Employees are eligible for this leave if they have been employed by the Collaborative twelve (12) consecutive months prior to their first date of leave. Requests for personal leave must be submitted to your principal or supervisor on an Employee

Leave Request form, accompanied by a brief written statement outlining the purpose and duration of the leave.

The decision to grant a personal leave of absence will be based on the operational needs of the Collaborative. Employees on a personal leave of absence are required to exhaust all available vacation and other paid leave while on leave. Upon the expiration of the leave, the employee may be returned to his or her former position if available. If the employee's position is not available, the employee may be offered another available position for which he or she is qualified. If no position is available when the employee is able to return to work, the employee will be terminated and his/her application will be considered for any vacant positions for which he/she may be qualified. The Collaborative will not pay its share of the employee's benefits, including GIC premiums during an unpaid personal leave of absence. Employees will be responsible for payment of 100% of the applicable premiums on the first day of each month, during the leave of absence.

Board Approved Unpaid Leave of Absence

An employee may request a Board of Directors approved unpaid leave of absence for up to one (1) year. Requests for Board approved unpaid leave must be submitted to your principal or supervisor on an Employee Leave Request form, accompanied by a brief written statement outlining the purpose and duration of the leave. The approval of this request will be at the sole discretion of the Board of Directors. At the very minimum, the employee must provide the reason necessitating the request, the length of time requested, and show evidence of his/her commitment to return to work at the conclusion of the leave. No benefits will be earned during the leave. All benefits earned prior to the leave will remain intact during the leave and will resume upon return to work. The Collaborative will not pay its share of the employee's benefits, including GIC premiums, during an unpaid Board Approved leave of absence. Employees will be responsible for payment of 100% of the applicable premiums on the first day of each month, during the leave of absence.

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EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

GROUP INSURANCE COMMISSION

The Collaborative participates in the Commonwealth Group Insurance Commission (the "GIC") which provides benefits to eligible Collaborative employees, including health insurance, dental benefits, vision benefits, long term disability, life/AD&D insurance, wellness programs, flexible spending benefits, retirement benefits, and more. Eligibility for GIC benefits depends, in part, on the amount of hours an employee regularly works. The GIC defines eligible employees as employees who work at least 18.75 hours in a 37.5 hour workweek or 20 hours in a 40 hour workweek and must contribute to their Employer's public sector retirement system. The Collaborative will provide employees with an annual GIC Benefits Decision Guide published by the Commonwealth. Employees are encouraged to become familiar with and review the GIC Benefits Decision Guide for information regarding benefits eligibility, benefits options, and enrollment. Employees are also encouraged to contact the Human Resources Department with any questions concerning benefits through the GIC. For eligible employees who elect coverage through the GIC, the Collaborative will pay 75% of the premiums for either individual or family coverage; the remaining amount (25%) is deducted from the employee's pay. All benefits are governed by the terms of the applicable benefits plans through the GIC.

Valley Collaborative offers an annual stipend to employees who are eligible for health care benefits through the GIC but elect to waive coverage as they have medical coverage through an alternate source. Eligible employees will be asked to complete a waiver. By waiving medical care coverage through VALLEY COLLABORATIVE, eligible employees are eligible to receive a maximum taxable payment of $1,000 (less if the waiver applies to less than the whole Plan Year), paid in two pro rata installments in approximately December and June of the Plan Year, provided that they are still employed on the payment date. This waiver will remain in effect for the entire Plan Year, and the waiver will continue in effect unless the employee enrolls in VALLEY COLLABORATIVE's medical care coverage during a subsequent open enrollment period or within 60 days of a qualifying life event as so deemed by the GIC.

PRE-TAX HEALTH COVERAGE (SEC 125 PLAN)

Section 125 of the U.S. tax code allows employees to purchase various benefits, including health insurance coverage, on a pre-tax basis. This is called a Section 125 plan, or a cafeteria plan. Employers are not required to contribute to the purchase of these benefits. The Commonwealth makes available a plan allowing employee who are not eligible for GIC coverage to purchase health insurance on a pre-tax basis through the Health Connector. Under the plan, payments for this health insurance would be deducted from the employee's paycheck. All Collaborative employees (receiving a W -2 or 1042) who are not eligible for health insurance through the GIC are eligible to purchase coverage through the Health Connector on a pre-tax basis.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

Full-time employees are eligible for tuition reimbursement for graduate and undergraduate courses which have been preapproved by the Executive Director. Employees are reimbursed up to $750.00 per fiscal year for tuition, books, and lab fees. Employees only receive reimbursement for completed courses in which they receive a grade of "B" or higher. Please contact the Human Resources Department for further information.

Full-time professional employees (such as therapists) are eligible for reimbursement up to $750.00 for membership dues for professional associations which have been preapproved by the Executive Director. Professional employees are not eligible for reimbursement of such dues in addition to tuition reimbursement,

but rather are limited to an aggregate reimbursement of $750.00 for year for tuition and/or membership dues.

Employees wishing to obtain reimbursement for the cost of certification in technology related areas are eligible for full reimbursement of the course up to a maximum of one certification per fiscal year, subject to approval by the Executive Director.

RETIREMENT

The Collaborative is subject to the laws of the Commonwealth regarding retirement policies, and all teachers and other employees eligible for a retirement plan must participate in it. Eligible Collaborative employees will have funds contributed to the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement Board or the Massachusetts State Retirement Board.

OPEB Retirement Eligibility –

An "Eligible Employee" is an individual employed with Valley Collaborative on or after July 1, 2015, who is fifty-five (55) years of age or older and who has provided a minimum of ten (10) years of service to Valley Collaborative.

The Collaborative has established a 403(b)-retirement saving plan. This plan allows you to defer a portion of your income on a pre-tax basis and to invest those funds tax deferred. The 403(b) plan is meant to provide you with retirement savings and other benefits in addition to what you will get from social security and other retirement plans. Eligible employees may enroll in the 403(b)-plan effective the first day of employment. Contact the Human Resources Department with any questions concerning eligibility for the 403(b) plans.

SHORT-TERM DISABILITYINSURANCE

The Collaborative maintains a short-term disability insurance program administered through Hartford Insurance Company in which employees may participate. Participating employees pay 100% of the premiums for short-term disability coverage. The Collaborative does not pay any portion for such coverage. Short-term disability benefits are covered by the relevant policy documents. Please contact the Human Resources Department for more information.

[END OF EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK]

Student & Family Handbook
and
Policies & Procedures Manual



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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE STUDENT AND FAMILY HANDBOOK & POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Welcome! This Student and Family Handbook & Policies and Procedures Manual (this "Handbook") is intended to serve as a guide to help students and their families learn about policies and rules of the Collaborative as well as to set forth basic rights, responsibilities, and expectations of students.

Please understand that no set of rules or guidelines can cover every conceivable situation that may arise at a school or the Collaborative. The rules, policies and procedures set forth in this handbook are intended to apply under normal circumstances. However, from time to time, there may be situations that require immediate or nonstandard responses. This handbook does not limit the authority of the Collaborative to deviate from normal rules and procedures set forth in this handbook. The Collaborative reserves the authority to deal with individual circumstances as they arise in the manner it deems most appropriate taking into consideration the best interests of the Collaborative, its faculty, employees, students, and the community.

Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook. The Collaborative is hopeful that the handbook will answer many questions you may have about the Collaborative, its programs, rules, and policies. **Parents and students are instructed to sign and return Parent/Student Acknowledgement of Receipt of the Student and Family Handbook & Policies and Procedures Manual (Appendix G) and return it to the Collaborative school/ program in which the student participates.** Please feel free to contact the principal of the Collaborative program of which your child is enrolled should you have any questions concerning this Handbook.

ABOUT THE COLLABORATIVE

Valley Collaborative (the Collaborative) is an affiliation formed by geographically proximate public school districts for the purpose of better serving the needs of eligible students. Member school districts include Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Groton-Dunstable Regional, Nashoba Valley Technical School District, North Middlesex Regional, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough, and Westford.

The Collaborative is a Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) approved public school entity that provides high quality academic and transitional services, and related therapies (speech and language, physical therapy, occupational therapy, home facilitation, behavior intervention, etc.) to individuals referred by local school districts and social service agencies. The Collaborative also provides ongoing professional development and training experiences for educators and educational agencies.

The Collaborative's academic programs are designed to provide individualized educational programs in the least restrictive setting. Student progress in each program is carefully monitored. Programming is adjusted as needed to assure progress and transition to the next less restrictive program as soon as appropriate.

The Collaborative strives to maintain a close partnership with the local sending school and parents[1] of students served by the Collaborative, and is proud to serve and meet the evolving needs of students, the community, and member and

[1] For the purpose of this Handbook, the word "parent" shall mean the biological, adoptive, or foster parent of a child; a guardian (but not the state if the child is in state care); an individual acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, step-parent or other relative) with whom the child lives; an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare; or an individual assigned to be an educational surrogate parent.

sending school districts.

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Valley Collaborative is committed to maintaining a work and learning environment free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, pregnancy, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital/civil union status, ancestry, place of birth, age, citizenship status, veteran status, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, limited English speaking ability, or homelessness, as defined by state and federal laws. Additionally, we prohibit retaliation against individuals who oppose such discrimination and harassment or who participate in an equal opportunity investigation. Inquiries regarding compliance with these policies may be directed to:

Kari Morrin
Director of Human Resources, Title IX and 504 Coordinator
11 Executive Park Drive
N. Billerica, MA 01862
978-528-7863
kmorrin@valleycollaborative.org

or to the United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (OCR), 617-289-0111, www.ed.gov/ocr

NONDISCRIMINATION IN VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Valley Collaborative offers a variety of customized vocational experiences across its Transitional High School programs.

Valley's transitional programming offers supported work opportunities and learning through small student-to-staff ratios and group training models. Vocational training is first applied to a student's school schedule one to two days a week and then increase in frequency based on the student's age and progression through the program. Related Service Providers target vocational skills during class days and help students apply those skills to real-life vocational training at worksites through a train-the-trainer model, by working in tandem with job coaches.

Valley's alternative programming offers students the ability to explore vocational industries, including but not limited to hospitality, communications, landscaping, and early education, with less support than is offered in our transitional programs. Alternative programming offers students greater independence in vocational training experiences and training. Additionally, transition services are available for students exiting our DESE programs but entering one of our adult service programs, funded by Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and/or Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC). All courses of study offered by Valley shall be open and available to students regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.

Valley does not determine what courses or units of study are required of a student without regard to the race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation of that student.

Valley does not schedule students into courses or units of study on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

No student, on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, limited English-speaking ability or sexual orientation, shall be discriminated against in accessing the courses of study and other opportunities available through the Valley Collaborative.

In addition, the collaborative requires each employer recruiting at the collaborative to sign a statement that the employer complies with applicable federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination in hiring or employment practices and the statement specifically includes the following protected categories: race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, disability, religion, limited English speaking ability, sexual orientation and homelessness. Prospective

employers include those participating in career days and work-study and apprenticeship training programs, as well as those offering cooperative work experiences. (Appendix M)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The Collaborative is dedicated to doing what is in the best interest of the people we serve with a common goal to be supportive and compassionate.

2. The Collaborative values the reputation we have built through understanding and quickly responding to the needs of students, the community, and member and sending school districts.

3. The Collaborative is committed to providing cost effective services.

4. The Collaborative takes pride in its professionalism, high standards, integrity, and dedication to excellence in education and technology.

5. The Collaborative strives to create new opportunities through diverse, flexible, and cutting-edge solutions.

6. The Collaborative nurtures a collegial, supportive work environment built on trust, respect, and continuous professional growth and teamwork.

7. The Collaborative empowers all employees through collaborative problem solving, shared decision-making, and strong leadership and direction.

8. By collaboratively pooling resources, we are able to realize economies of scale, which the Collaborative's member and sending school districts could not achieve individually.

COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM AND SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS

School Closing Announcements

On occasion, the Collaborative may need to close school because of bad weather or an emergency situation. Announcements for school cancellations, delayed openings, and early release will be made on AM radio, WBZ (1030), television channels 4, 5, and 7, Blackboard Mass Notifications, and the Collaborative website: www.valleycollaborative.org.

Early Release

In case of inclement weather or an emergency that develops in the middle of the day, the Executive Director may make the decision to release students early. In the event of an early release, the Collaborative will contact the parents of students before they are sent home. If a parent is out of contact on a particular day, they should let the driver and their child's teacher know in the morning where the Collaborative should send their child in the event of an early release.

NOTE: Parents of students should make sure that their child has a current emergency card with proper emergency contact information, including the contact information of alternative caretakers.

STUDENT SAFETY AND EMERGENCIES

Lost and Missing Children

Very rarely, a child may leave home in the morning but not arrive at school, or may leave school but not return home. If a child is lost or missing, their parent should call the Collaborative school or program in which their child is enrolled first. If no one answers, they should call "911." The Collaborative will work with local authorities, including the local police department and the Department of Children and Families (DCF), as appropriate, to locate missing children and will keep the parents informed until the child is found.

Runaway Student

A "runaway student" shall be defined as: the student has left the classroom, assigned areas with staff, or school environment without permission and is exhibiting unsafe and/or noncompliant behavior. A student that has left his or her designated space, but is within the immediate area and within the staff's visual field is not a runaway student.

If a student runs off school grounds the following procedure will be implemented:

- Immediately call the local police department.
- Notify the Executive Director.
- Complete an Incident Report form as soon as possible.
- The principal or Executive Director will notify the parent and LEA.
- The Executive Director will notify the DESE.
- The Collaborative will file all notifications and Incident Reports in Student Record.

Medical Emergencies

Please refer to the student's school's policy for handling all health emergencies in the particular school or program in which the student is enrolled. Such emergency policies shall contain (1) local emergency response system telephone numbers (including ambulance, poison control number, local emergency care providers, etc.); (2) persons to be notified, i.e., parent, licensed prescriber, etc.; (3) names of persons in the school trained to provide first aid and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation; (4) scheduled programs for staff to be trained in first aid and CPR; (5) provision of necessary supplies and equipment and; (6) reporting requirements.

Release of Student to Adults Other than Parents

Collaborative schools and programs will not allow anyone other than a child's custodial parents to take the child away from school. If a parent wants a relative, friend, or care provider to pick up a student at school, the parent must give written permission or call the program or school. If a parent calls, the program or school must verify that it was the parent making the call. The individual must show identification before the program or school will release the student.

Whole School or Community Emergencies

There may be instances where there is a disaster or community emergency. In such instances, the Collaborative will work to reunite parents with their children if the program school is in containment or needs to be evacuated. Occasionally, there may also be a need to increase the level of security because of a possible disturbance in the community. When this happens, visitors may not be allowed into the Collaborative or school, and students and staff may not be allowed to leave.

Emergency Procedures

The Collaborative will develop and ensure that staff are familiar with emergency procedures, including emergency evacuation and lock down procedures for their building. During an evacuation, the priority is to get all students out of the building in an orderly, prompt, and safe manner. Staff should make arrangements in advance with the building principal (or designee) to provide additional assistance for the evacuation of any student requiring such assistance.

Collaborative emergency procedures and preparation include:

- A minimum of 2 evacuation and lock down drills conducted for each classroom annually;
- Initial training, including a walk-through of the setting, identification of sprinkler and fire extinguisher locations, and location of emergency number postings;
- Embedded program strategies to help all students understand the nature of the drills;
- Special provisions for the evacuation of any mobility-impaired student;
- Identification of the location of emergency information for students to be taken during an evacuation;
- A written log of each evacuation or lock down drill report sheets that includes date, time elapsed, participants (students and staff), witnesses, etc.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

M.G.L. c. 119 § 51A makes administrators, teachers, school nurses, guidance counselors and other Collaborative staff members mandated reporters for purposes of reporting child abuse and neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Under M. G. L. c. 119, Section 51A, a Collaborative staff member who has reasonable cause to believe that a student under the age of 18 years is suffering physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, or neglect, by a parent, Collaborative staff member, or other caretaker, must immediately report the abuse or neglect either directly to the DCF or to the person designated by the Collaborative to accept those reports, who, in turn, must promptly report the abuse to the DCF. Collaborative staff must adhere to the following guidelines in the handling of suspected abuse and neglect cases.

- Each program will designate a Child Protection Team for assisting and follow-up to each case of suspected child abuse. The Child Protection Team will consist of the principal or his/her designee, a clinician (social worker or psychologist), the program nurse and the staff member(s) reporting the initial concern.
- The Child Protection Team consists of:
    - Principal(s) 40 Linnell Circle, Billerica, MA, 978-528-7800
    - Principal 135 Coburn Road, Tyngsborough, MA, 978-528-7817
- The program employee who has the initial concern will initiate with the principal or his/her designee the involvement of the Child Protection Team.
- An immediate meeting of the Child Protection Team will be convened to discuss the steps to be taken in order to determine whether and when to file a 51A Report. These steps may include:
    - Gathering additional information from the child; documenting any physical signs of abuse.
    - Gathering information from other people familiar with the child and his or her situation. Confidentiality must be maintained in these cases.
    - Consulting with the Department of Children and Families.
- The Child Protection Team will determine the process and individuals to be involved in filing a 51A Report.
- If the Child Protection Team decides that a 51A Report will be filed, the Team determines who will telephone the report to the nearest DCF Office.
- The principal or his/her designee is responsible for ensuring completion of the required written forms, which will be submitted to DCF within 48 hours of the oral report.
- Un-resolvable differences of opinion among the Child Protection Team members may inhibit filing as a Team. It is important to note, however, that if notified of the suspicion, the principal or his/her designee assumes the responsibility of reporting. If the principal or his/her designee is not immediately present or available, the designated person in charge will perform the principal or his/her designee's obligation.
- If the Child Protection Team decides to file a 51A Report, the Team will also decide who will inform the parents and when this will take place. It is recommended that the principal or his/her designee notify the parents. The timing of the notification of the parents should take into account that the essence of the M.G.L. c. 51A is that the child's welfare is the top priority. DCF has discouraged notifying the parent if the child will be placed at risk for further abuse when the facts of the interview are revealed. When this is the case, the Team should decide in consultation with DCF at what time the parents should be informed.
- The principal or his/her designee will notify and keep the Executive Director informed of the concern throughout the process. The Executive Director may be directly involved in the process at the request of either the principal or his/her designee or staff.
- The principal or his/her designee will inform the Executive Director within 24 hours of filing of the 51A Report and send a copy of the 51A Report for filing in an administrative file at the Collaborative Administrative Office, as well as a completed Incident Report form.
- If the suspected abuse/neglect is the result of an action of a staff member or another student, DESE Form 2 will be completed and forwarded to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- When DCF requests to interview the child at school, the principal or his/her designee will be available to join the interview if requested by DCF.
- Unless specifically mandated, no reference to the 51A Report will be made in the child's

Student Record.

- If the student has an on-going case with DCF, a member of the Child Protection Team will initially attempt to contact the On-Going Worker of the case at DCF. If the students' On- Going Case Worker is unavailable, the On-Going Case Worker's supervisor will be contacted. In the event that neither person is available, the Team will follow the reporting policy as outlined above.
- If the student is 18 years of age or older, follow the above procedure and contact the Massachusetts Disabled Persons Protection Commission to file a report.

IMMEDIATE NOTIFICATION

In the event of a serious or unusual incident occurs, the Collaborative's Executive Director is notified immediately. Upon notification, the Executive Director directs the gathering of all available pertinent information from involved parties. The Executive Director meets with involved parties as necessary. The Collaborative Incident Report Form is to be completed by staff and included in the student record. The incident report form documents the incident, precipitating events prior to the incident, and follow up needed. The report form also documents notification to all parties of the incident. Serious incidents are those that result in injury, safety concerns, substantial discipline code violations, or emergency personnel responses.

In the event of a serious or unusual incident occurs, immediate notification by telephone, and by letter when appropriate, will be sent to the parents, Local Educational Agency ("LEA") representatives, any state agency involved in student care or program placement, and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education using its online portal.

The protocol described below is followed for incidents that require immediate notification of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) or Department of Public Health (DPH). An Incident Report Form is submitted to DESE within 48 hours of the following types of incidents:

1. Death of a student;
2. The filing of a 51A report with DCF or a DPPC complaint alleging abuse or neglect of any student, against the school or a school staff member; and
3. Any action taken by a federal, state or local agency that might jeopardize the school's approval with the Department: Examples include change in EEC licensure status, frozen intake, investigation by another state agency, complaints or ongoing concerns from sending public school districts; and
4. Any legal proceeding brought against the school or its employee(s) arising out of circumstances related to the care or education of any of its students; and
5. The hospitalization of a student (including out-patient emergency room and urgent care visits) due to physical injury at school or previously unidentified illness, accident or disorder which occurs while the student is in the program; and
6. Whenever a student runs from the program:
7. Any other incident of a serious nature that occurs to a student: Examples include police involvement, community involvement and media coverage
8. Emergency termination of a Massachusetts student consistent with 603 CMR 28.09(12)(b) and 18.05(7)(d): (Day School AND Residential Hours)

COORDINATION WITH PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND THE IEP PROCESS

Student Referral and Admissions

Prior to student placement in a Collaborative program, the LEA will forward a comprehensive referral packet to the program in which the student's enrollment is to be considered. Upon receipt, the principal or his/her designee will work with the district to schedule a site visit and intake meeting with the parents and district, at which time the Intake Coordinator will provide detailed information about the program. Such information will include the Collaborative's purpose and services, policies regarding parent and student rights including student records, the health program including the procedures for providing emergency health care, and the procedure for termination of a student. The principal or his/her designee will also conduct a tour of the program to include the classroom in which the student would be placed. Prior to enrollment, the sending district and parents must provide: a current, signed Individualized Education Program (IEP), health and immunization records, and all required program forms.

Placement Meeting

Upon acceptance to a Collaborative program, the LEA may schedule a Team meeting to determine placement. Team participants will include: parents, LEA designee, principal or his/her designee, classroom teacher, clinical and support services staff working with the student, designee of any district/agency cost sharing the placement (if applicable), and any other persons determined appropriate by members of the Team or invited by the parent. The placement shall meet the requirements of 34 CFR 300.552 and shall be held within ten school days following the meeting at which the Team developed the IEP. At the request of the parent, the placement meeting may be held at a later date.

Written Contracts

It is the responsibility of the LEA to enter into written contracts with the Collaborative program in which a student is being placed. In each such contract, the Collaborative will provide the following assurances:

1. Assurances on the part of the Collaborative that its program(s) will comply with all elements of the IEP for the student and shall provide, in writing, to the LEA detailed documentation of such compliance through completion of required student progress reports.
2. The Collaborative will allow the placing school district to monitor and evaluate the education of the student and will make available, upon request, any records pertaining to the student to authorized school personnel from the LEA and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in accordance with the Massachusetts Student Record Regulations.
3. The Collaborative shall allow the placing school district and/or the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to conduct announced and unannounced site visits and to review all documents relating to the provision of special education services to Massachusetts' students at public expense. Access to documents for the placing school district shall include general documents available to the public, documents specifically related to the student placed by such district, and other documents only to the extent they are necessary to verify and evaluate education services provided at public expense.
4. The Collaborative shall afford publicly funded students all the substantive and procedural rights held by eligible students, to be educated in the least restrictive environment, and shall comply with all other applicable legal requirements of the regulations and applicable policy statements and directives issued by the Department of Education and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
5. The Collaborative assures the LEA that it does not deny a student access to its programs or services on the grounds of race, color, age, disability, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.

Students of all Collaborative programs are entitled to protections and standards in accordance with:

- The MA DESE's Program and Safety Standards for Approved Public or Private Day and Residential Special Education School Programs (603 CMR 18.00).
- The Massachusetts Special Education Regulations (603 CMR 28.00).
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of the U.S. Federal Regulations.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (504)

Program Oversight

The Collaborative is responsive to the LEA, in ensuring that the student's IEP is being appropriately implemented and that the service delivery is aimed at assisting the student meet the goals identified within the student's IEP, and welcomes site visits by the LEA for program monitoring. Program visits by the LEA are documented in applicable student records. The Collaborative ensures that instructional groupings do not exceed the applicable guidelines of student staff ratio and age span. Student staff ratios do not exceed 8 students to 1 certified special educator, 12 students to 1 certified special educator and 1 assistant. If a situation arises that necessitates exceeding the above ratios, the Collaborative will provide written notification, including the reason, to the DESE, parents, and involved LEAs. The age span of instructional groupings does not exceed 48 months. If justified, the Collaborative will seek approval from DESE for a wider age span prior to increasing the age range.

Team Meetings

It is the responsibility of the LEA to schedule Team meetings in conjunction with Collaborative staff. Team participants will include: parents/guardians, LEA designee, appropriate Collaborative staff, designee of any district/agency cost sharing the placement (if applicable), and any other persons determined appropriate by members of the Team or invited by the parent/guardian.

Annually, and at the 3-year eligibility re-determination, the Team will evaluate the appropriateness of the student's placement in his/her Collaborative program as it relates to the student's needs as outlined within the student's IEP. Full consideration will be placed on transitioning the student to a less restrictive environment and, if determined appropriate, a transition plan will be implemented.

The team will discuss annually the student's transition and document its discussion on a Transition Planning Form. The Team will then prepare a new IEP for continued placement at the Collaborative program or movement to a new setting.

Testing for 3-year re-evaluations is the responsibility of the sending district. Collaborative program staff will be available to complete educational assessments. The sending district must provide 30 school days prior notification is required for testing completion.

IEP Development and Implementation

The principal or his/her designee is responsible for overseeing the implementation of all components of the student's IEP.

- Where the IEP of the student in need of special education has been accepted in whole or in part by that student's parent, the Collaborative provides the mutually agreed upon services without delay.
- At the beginning of each school year, the collaborative has a current IEP for each eligible enrolled student that has been issued by the responsible public school district and consented to and dated by the student's parent(s) (or the student, when applicable).
- Each teacher and provider described in the IEP is informed of his or her specific responsibilities related to the implementation of the student's IEP and the specific accommodations, modifications, and supports that must be provided for the student under it.

- The Collaborative does not delay implementation of the IEP due to lack of classroom space or personnel, provides as many of the services on the accepted IEP as possible and immediately informs the responsible school district and parents in writing of any delayed services, reasons for delay, actions that the Collaborative is taking to address the lack of space or personnel and offers alternative methods to meet the goals on the accepted IEP. Upon agreement of the responsible school district and parents, the Collaborative implements alternative methods immediately until the lack of space or personnel issues are resolved.

Financial Obligations/Costs

When eligible disabled children are placed in a program with an IEP by their local school district, the local sending school is fiscally and programmatically responsible. All needed services are provided free of charge to the family.

Under applicable circumstances, if parents unilaterally place their child into a Collaborative program, they are responsible for tuition, transportation and all costs incurred. Parents in such cases are expected to pay monthly bills one month in advance or the child's placement may be terminated. If a child or parent injures, defaces, destroys or otherwise damages people, buildings, equipment, materials, vehicles or other aspects of the program, they are personally liable.

Student Involvement

Upon reaching 14 years of age or upon entering the ninth grade, whichever comes first, the student will be invited to participate as a member of the Team and participate in the development of his/her own IEP. The staff of the program and the parents may choose to extend these rights to students under the age of 14 or to students who have not yet entered the ninth grade.

If for any reason, the student has not participated as a member of the Team, written documentation as to the circumstances for non-participation will be included within the IEP under the Additional Information section of the IEP.

Student Participation and Consent at Age of Majority

When the student reaches the age of 18, he or she will have the right to make all decisions in relation to his or her programs and services. The LEA has the obligation to obtain consent from the student concerning the student's special education programs and services. To continue the student's special education program, the Collaborative will work together with the LEA under the following conditions:

1. The parent will continue to receive written notices and information but will no longer have decision-making authority, except as provided below.
2. If the parent has sought and received guardianship from a court of competent jurisdiction, then the parent retains full decision-making authority.
3. The parent shall not have authority to override any decision or lack of decision made by the student who has reached the age of majority unless the parent has sought or received guardianship or other legal authority from a court of competent jurisdiction.
4. The student, upon reaching the age of majority and in the absence of any court actions to the contrary, may choose to share decision-making with his or her parent (or other willing adult), including allowing the parent to co-sign the student's IEP.
5. Such choice shall be made in the presence of the Team and shall be documented in written form.
6. The student's choice shall prevail at any time that a disagreement occurs between the adult student and the parent or other adult with whom the student has shared decision-making.
7. The student, upon reaching the age of majority and in the absence of any court actions to the contrary, may choose to delegate continued decision-making to his or her parent, or other willing adult. Such

choice shall be made in the presence of at least one representative of the school district and one other witness and shall be documented in written form and maintained in the student record.

Transitioning to a Less Restrictive Environment

The programs of the Collaborative ensure flexible procedures and mechanisms that maximize opportunities for enrolled students to gain the capacity to return to a less restrictive educational program. Moving to a less restrictive setting may include, but is not limited to, a capacity for part- time attendance at a public school or other community program or a period of transition from one program option to a less restrictive program. When a student successfully reaches the performance, expectations identified during the intake/placement process, the Team will develop are- entry plan to an LEA school program.

As a component of the intake/placement process, the sending district will identify student performance expectation for the re-entry to a public school setting. The principal or his/her designee will work with the sending district to complete a student termination plan form. This form will be reviewed at the annual Team meeting through the IEP vision statement process.

At each student's annual Team meeting, program staff, the sending district, parents and students (if applicable), through the vision statement process, will identify if the student will be likely to transition back to the public school setting within that academic year. If it is determined that the student has reached the goals as outlined in the student termination plan prepared by the sending district at intake, the Team will then develop and implement the Student Termination Implementation Plan addressing the following areas:

- Background information – statement of the student's academic/behavioral/social-emotional needs and progress with specifics regarding what has been crucial to the student's success
- School history – recommendation for school placement
- Current educational needs – academic levels, accommodations, and materials needed in all subject areas
- Access to regular education classes
- Technology needs
- Behavioral needs recommendations – plan, preferred activities, motivators, frequency
- Learning style accommodations
- Additional therapies – short statement of current functioning, accommodations, specific materials, service delivery
- Therapeutic needs – individual/group therapy, daily/weekly check-ins/progress reports, outside therapist/community agency/physician(s) name and telephone numbers
- Goals – transition into school, preparation for class

Planned Termination

In circumstances where a student's needs can no longer be met in a Collaborative program, the Collaborative will notify the LEA of the need for IEP and Placement meetings and will provide notice of this meeting to all appropriate parties at least ten (10) days in advance of the intended date of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to share information and data with the goal of developing a clear and specific termination plan so that the student can transition from the Collaborative program in a planned and organized manner.

In instances where the termination is initiated by the parents or the LEA, the LEA must give the Collaborative 30 days prior notice of the student's termination. The district will be billed for a minimum of 30 days from the date of termination notice.

Emergency Termination of Enrollment

Consideration of termination of enrollment is part of the Team process in determining appropriate placement for a student. Every effort is made to continue enrollment for students that may be in crisis. However, if a student presents with severe behavioral incidents requiring more support and intervention than is routinely part of the Collaborative's therapeutic procedures, the following processes occur:

1. An emergency Team Meeting is convened to discuss alternative strategies to address the student's presenting issues.

2. The Team develops an interim action plan which can include, but is not exclusive to:
    a. 1:1 staff supervision and support
    b. Change in length of school day
    c. Change in daily academic and behavioral expectations
    d. Change in environment within the school program
    e. Addition of therapeutic/clinical intervention
    f. Or any other option as determined by the Team

3. A follow-up Team meeting is scheduled four (4) to six (6) weeks following the interim action plan to assess the student's status.

In the event of an emergency situation, it is the conclusion of the Team that the enrollment of a student should be terminated, the following assurances are given:

- The enrolling public school district shall receive immediate notification (see Immediate Notification - Policies and Procedures).
- In accordance with 603 CMR 28.09(12), at the request of the district, the student's termination can be delayed for two (2) calendar weeks to allow the district to convene an emergency Team meeting or to conduct other appropriate planning discussions.
- By mutual agreement, the student's termination can be delayed for longer than two (2) weeks.

- Staff will be available at the request of the enrolling district to attend the emergency Team meeting with the parents, the public-school representatives, and any other agencies responsible to the student.

An emergency situation will be defined as: a student presents a clear and present threat to the health and safety of him/herself or others.

If a student has been hospitalized due to an emergency situation, a re-entry after hospitalization meeting will be scheduled. The Team may determine an emergency termination is required.

Written Notification and Communication

The principal or his/her designee has the responsibility of notification and communication with school districts. The principal or his/her designee may delegate other program staff in fulfilling the Collaborative's to collaborate with the school districts. Such persons include the school administrative assistants, educational coordinators, clinicians, and nurses. The following is a guideline for delegation of collaboration and communication with sending districts.

School Secretary: Distribution of reports; scheduling meetings; distribution of attendance records; and medical emergency, injury or hospitalization

Clinicians: Student and family related issues; medical emergency, injury or hospitalization; and behavior implementation plans/functional behavioral assessments

Educational Coordinators/Teachers: Alignment with district curriculum, education and graduation requirements (if applicable); IEP implementation/revision, development/implementation of move to less restrictive environment or planned termination, and Team meetings; written progress reports to be written by service providers and sent to parents and LEA in a timely manner; ensure participation in state assessment programs in accordance with the student's IEP; progress reports; and student and family related issues

Principals/Executive Director: Student and family related issues; alignment with district curriculum, education and graduation requirements (if applicable); instances requiring disciplinary action; IEP implementation/revision, development/implementation of move to less restrictive environment or planned termination, and Team meetings; behavior implementation plans/functional behavioral assessments; manifestation determinations; medical emergency, injury or hospitalization; runaway student; filing of a 51A Report against a staff person (applicable sending district); and death of a student

PROGRESS REPORTS

All Collaborative programs will complete progress reports four times each year (quarterly progress reports). In all cases the quarterly progress reports will be provided to the LEA and to the parent(s) and will be kept on file at the Collaborative.

Quarterly progress reports will report to parents the progress of each IEP goal individually. Service providers must comment on whether they anticipate the student being able to meet the goal by the end of the IEP period. If they believe that the student will be unable to meet the goal, that must be indicated on the progress report and a Team Meeting must be held to amend the IEP. Progress Reports must answer two questions for each goal: (1) What is the student's progress toward the annual goal and (2) is the progress sufficient to enable the student to achieve the goal by the end of the IEP period? Information included on the quarterly progress reports will be derived from data collected throughout the reporting period.

Where a student's eligibility terminates because the student has graduated from secondary school or exceeded the age of eligibility, the Collaborative will provide the student with a summary of his or her academic achievement and functional performance, including recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his or her postsecondary goals.

Copies of progress reports will be maintained in student records.

CURRICULUM AND COUNSELING MATERIALS REVIEW

The collaborative ensures that individual teachers in the collaborative continuously review all educational materials for simplistic and demeaning generalizations, lacking intellectual merit, on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. Appropriate activities, discussions and/or supplementary materials are used to provide balance and context for any such stereotypes depicted in such materials.

In addition, to ensure that counseling and counseling materials are free from bias and stereotypes on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, and homelessness, all counselors:

1. encourage students to consider programs of study, courses, extracurricular activities, and occupational

opportunities on the basis of individual interests, abilities, and skills;
2. examine testing materials for bias and counteract any found bias when administering tests and interpreting test results;
3. communicate effectively with ELs and disabled students and facilitate their access to all programs and services offered by the district;
4. ensure that ELs have the opportunity to receive guidance and counseling in a language the student understands;
5. support students in educational and occupational pursuits that are nontraditional for their gender.

STATE/DISTRICT WIDE ASSESSMENT

Both the Massachusetts Education Reform Law of 1993 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires the full participation of students with disabilities in state and district wide testing programs. The Massachusetts Education Reform Law requires all students in publicly supported programs, including students with disabilities, to participate in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), including students in educational collaboratives. The IDEA requires that all children with disabilities participate in state and district- wide assessment programs, either:

- Routinely, as do non-disabled students; or
- With appropriate accommodations and modifications in administration where necessary; or
- Through alternate assessments for students who cannot participate in state and district wide assessments as determined by their IEP Team.

The IDEA also requires that students with disabilities be given the opportunity to participate in and make progress in the general education curriculum, with emphasis on being provided the supports and services necessary to ensure their success in this regard. This means that all students, even those with significant disabilities, must receive instruction that addresses, at minimum, the skills, concepts, and information supported by the learning standards in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks that are taught to all students.

It is the responsibility of the principal or his/her designee to:

- Ensure that all enrolled students have access to the general curriculum and participate in MCAS per state regulations.
- Ensure that all students with disabilities in the tested grades participate in MCAS in the manner prescribed by their IEP Team, and in accordance with student participation requirements described in the MCAS Alternate Assessment Educators Manual, and other MCAS publications.
- Allocate and coordinate Collaborative resources, including personnel to assist the student's primary teacher, in order to ensure timely and appropriate participation by designated students with disabilities in MCAS.
- Provide assurances that complete and accurate information on each student participating in MCAS is indicated on the student identification form, student answer booklets, and other forms as appropriate, including proper identification and labeling of student testing materials or portfolio.
- For students participating in MCAS Alternate Assessments, ensure that student portfolios are completed and submitted no later than the due date as assigned by DESE.
- For students participating in MCAS Alternate Assessments, monitor the alternate assessment process to ensure that student work is neither altered nor fabricated in a way that provides information that is

false or portrays the student inaccurately.

The student's IEP Team is responsible for determining how each student will participate in MCAS, what accommodations, if any, will be necessary and the format of the Alternate Assessment portfolio *(if Alternate Assessment is the assessment of choice).*

GRANTING OF DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES

In accordance with M.G.L. c. § 691D and M.G.L. c. 71B § 1, the requirements of the competency determination are a condition for high school graduation or receipt of a high school diploma. Students and Parents should visit the DESE website to learn about the competency determination graduation requirements and should feel free to discuss such requirements with Collaborative staff. The following procedures will be used in awarding diplomas to Collaborative students:

- All students of the Collaborative will participate in the MCAS testing program (or alternate assessment) according to the federal special education law and MCAS administration guidelines published by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- At least one year in advance of a probable graduation date, the sending public school district has the responsibility to convene a Team meeting for annual review of the IEP. At this meeting, the public school district must indicate whether the student is expected to meet high school graduation standards and communicate the likelihood of graduation to the parent at the meeting and in the IEP that is proposed for the student. It is recommended that this dialogue begins upon the student's entrance into a Collaborative high school program.
- The standards for the award of a high school diploma include requirements set by the district and state standards including the competency determination standard. However, by choosing to send a student to a Collaborative program, the public school district is accepting the program as sufficient to meet local requirements that are necessary for graduation in addition to the competency determination.
- Students funded by their public school who have satisfied the Collaborative curriculum and attendance requirements, and who have achieved a passing or higher grade on the MCAS requirements are eligible for a high school diploma from their own sending public school.
- A sending public school district may issue a "certificate" to a Collaborative student. The certificate may recognize achievement, attendance, course completion, or participation.
- A Collaborative student who receives a certificate, but who has not received a high school diploma or its equivalent will continue receiving publicly funded special education services as long as the student continues to meet the eligibility criteria for such services. The right to continued services will end when the student turns 22 or receives a high school diploma or its equivalent, whichever comes first.
- A certificate issued to a Collaborative student will only be called a "diploma" and indicate "high school graduation" if the student has met the state MCAS competency determination standard.
    - In these circumstances, the sending public school district may award a high school diploma to the student.
    - If the high school diploma is awarded, then the diploma will indicate that the student has met state standards for high school graduation, and that the sending public school district awards the diploma.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP) STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

The Collaborative takes responsibility for helping to identify resources and services for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and English Language Learners (ELL) and will work with referring districts to ensure the language needs as well as the behavioral and social needs of these students are met. (Please refer to Appendix J)

All LEP and ELL students are afforded the same opportunities to access and participate in the Collaborative programs and services as other students. The Collaborative, in conjunction with the sending school district, implements necessary program modifications and support services to identify and effectively serve students who need special language assistance. Such program and support services are based on sound education theory, provide for English language development, provide for meaningful participation of limited English proficient students, and are evaluated and appropriately revised in an ongoing manner. These programs and support services are demonstrably useful in assisting students receiving such program modifications and services to gain English language proficiency. Frequent assessments are completed to ensure student progress and to determine when modifications and support services are no longer required

In addition, the Collaborative arranges for a person or community organization to provide translation services and oral interpretation services for any notices to parents/guardians and/or students and program information or material regarding the Collaborative to ensure the civil rights of any student and his/her family with limited English proficiency. The Collaborative also ensures that any recruitment and promotional materials disseminated to residents in the area served by the collaborative are translated into the major languages spoken by residents with limited English skills. The Collaborative also ensures that any information provided to students and families about extracurricular activities and school events is provided to English Learners and to their parents/guardians in a language they understand. All notices, such as activities, responsibilities, and academic standards, provided to all students is provided to English Learners in a language and mode of communication that they understand.

Communications with parents are in clear and commonly understood words and are in both English and the primary language of the home if such primary language is other than English. Any interpreter used in fulfilling these requirements is fluent in the primary language of the home and familiar with special education procedures, programs, and services. If the parents or the student are unable to read in any language or are blind or deaf, communications are made orally in English with the use of a foreign language interpreter, in Braille, in sign language, via TTY, or in writing, whichever is appropriate, and all such communications are documented.

If the collaborative provides notices orally or in some other mode of communication that is not written language, the collaborative keeps written documentation (a) that it has provided such notice in an alternate manner, (b) of the content of the notice, and (c) of the steps taken to ensure that the parent understands the content of the notice.

If a district's IEP Team determines that an LEP student will be placed in a Collaborative program, the Collaborative will work with the sending school district and the family to determine how to meet that student's needs relative to accessing content through sheltered content instruction and/or developing English proficiency through additional instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL). When an LEP student enrolls, staff will consult with an ELL/ESL specialist (who delivers professional development in the category trainings) and with the sending district's ELL coordinator to ensure that the student's needs, special education and ELL, are being addressed.

HOME AND SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

The Collaborative staff welcomes and encourages communication between school and home. The staff communicates with parents on a regular basis, through telephone calls, daily communication books and progress reports. Home contact

keeps parents informed of student progress and fosters continuity of behavior support programs at home, in the community and at school.

Collaborative staff hold parent conferences and open houses as appropriate to discuss programs, goals, progress, issues and concerns. A Parents' Advisory Group (PAG) is annually organized for the purpose of advising the school on matters that pertain to the education, health, and safety of the students. The PAG also holds parent workshops on a variety of current pertinent topics.

All communications with parents will be in clear and commonly understood words and are in both English and the primary language of the home if such primary language is other than English. If the Collaborative provides notices orally or in some other mode of communication that is not written language, the Collaborative keeps written documentation (a) that it has provided such notice in an alternate manner, (b) of the content of the notice and (c) of the steps taken to ensure that the parent understands the content of the notice.

OBSERVATION POLICY

In compliance with Massachusetts General Law chapter 71B, section 3, the Collaborative shall, upon request by a parent, provide timely access to parents and parent-designated independent evaluators and educational consultants for observations of a child's current program and of any program proposed for the child, including both academic and non-academic components of any such program.

Please understand that an evaluator hired by the parent is observing on behalf of the parent and, therefore, the parent may not simultaneously observe the student or program. The number of observers at any one time may be limited to avoid disruption of the classroom to be observed and to ensure the integrity of the educational program for the students within the classes to be observed.

Additionally, it is anticipated that an evaluator will have the appropriate credentials or expertise to perform the observation, and will be attempting to provide objective data as part of an evaluation about the student or program upon which educational decisions can be based.

Any potential observer must complete and submit an Observation Request Form (located in Appendix A) at least five (5) days in advance of any requested date for observation, except in exigent circumstances. This form asks observers to be as specific as possible about their requests, noting the purpose of their observation and whom or what they wish to observe. As a general practice, observations should be completed within not more than two (2) hours in order to minimize disruption of the classrooms/programs in which the specific student is to be observed. Where appropriate, additional observation time shall be provided on a case-by-case basis. Parents and their designees shall be afforded access of sufficient duration and extent to enable them to evaluate a child's performance in a current program and the ability of a proposed program to enable such child to make effective progress.

The principal or his/her designee shall have the sole discretion to approve observations and to determine the number, times, lengths, and dates of observations. Every effort will be made to accommodate the preferences of the observer as indicated on the "Observation Request Form" when possible. Under ordinary circumstances, observations are strongly discouraged during the first two weeks of school in September and January and during the month of June. After the form is submitted to the Collaborative, a designee of the principal will call the observer to schedule the visit and will send the observer written confirmation. The Collaborative may set conditions or restrict program observations in circumstances where it seeks to protect (a) the safety of the children in the program during the observation; (b) the integrity of the program during the observation; (c) children in the program from disclosure by an observer of confidential or personally

identifiable information he or she may obtain while observing the program.

Observers are asked to be punctual on the date of the scheduled observation. Observers should arrive at the Collaborative fifteen (15) minutes prior to the scheduled observation to sign in and otherwise comply with visitor procedures as set forth in the "School Visitor Procedures" contained in this Handbook. Late arrivals may have to reschedule their visit or wait until the following period to enter a classroom. Visitors are asked to limit the materials they bring with them. Food, drinks, books, catalogues, test reports, laptops, and other materials are discouraged, but a notepad is expected. Observers should not speak to staff or students during the observation or otherwise disrupt the class or therapy in anyway. In advance of an observation, an observer may request a conference with appropriate staff members. Such conferences may be limited by the availability of the particular staff member and shall be arranged at the discretion of the principal. A designated Collaborative staff member will be assigned to accompany visitors throughout their observations and during such staff conferences.

SCHOOL VISITOR PROCEDURES

While the Collaborative encourages the involvement of parents and community members in the education of the Collaborative's students, the Collaborative has a duty to protect the safety and confidentiality of its students, as well as to ensure that the educational process is not unnecessarily disrupted. As a result, certain rules and procedures must be followed to ensure that visits are beneficial to the visitors and not harmful to the students or the educational process.

Visitors will only be permitted to enter school buildings for purposes of pre-arranged meetings, visits, or observations. The only exception shall be for "quick visits" by parents for the purpose of dismissing a student, bringing in medications, dropping off forgotten lunches, gym clothes, etc. Such "quick visits" need not be pre-arranged; however, such visitors may not be permitted beyond the main office depending on the circumstances.

All visitors to the Collaborative must report to the main office immediately upon entrance into a school building. All visitors whose destinations are other than the main office must sign in, noting the time of their arrival and identifying the location and purpose of their visit. These visitors must wear a visitor badge at all times while in the school building. The principal or his/her designee will designate a staff member to escort visitors to their appropriate destination.

Upon completion of their pre-arranged meetings, visits, or observations, all visitors shall proceed directly to the main office. They must sign out, noting the time of their departures, and return their visitor's badges. Visitors may not proceed to any areas of the building other than the designated locations of their meetings, visits, or observations, without first returning to the main office and obtaining express administrative approval to access other areas of the building.

Please see the attached Observation Policy Form for more detailed procedures regarding arranging and attending an observation or visit of a program or classroom.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parent's Advisory Group

The rights of parents to be involved in the education and decision making regarding their child's program and services is welcomed by the Collaborative. The Collaborative community, which includes school personnel, parents, and students, recognizes parent involvement in the educational process as a critical factor whose importance cannot be over-emphasized. As a result, and in conjunction with Massachusetts State regulations, an Advisory Group consisting of parents of Collaborative students has been formed. Rather than replacing the individual LEA Special Education Parent

Advisory Group, the Collaborative Parents' Advisory Group (PAG) focuses on programs and emerging issues within the Collaborative. The PAG exists to give a formal channel for parent participation in the review of Collaborative policies, programs, and philosophy, as well as informing parents of their rights and assisting them with issues related to addressing the more intensive needs of students placed in the Collaborative's programs. The PAG aims to create a family-centered atmosphere to help families develop a sense of community and provide parents with support.

The Collaborative encourages feedback from the PAG regarding the education, health, and safety of students. The Collaborative PAG maintains its own officers and meeting schedule. The Executive Director is not directly involved with the PAG to allow the group a forum to address issues or concerns. As necessary, the Executive Director is available to meet with the PAG or confer with PAG officers. The Collaborative does not charge a fee for membership and welcomes all parents of the Collaborative.

Parents and guardians are valued members of the Team and essential to ensuring the school experience is positive for students. The Collaborative staff communicates regularly with parents/guardians to plan, evaluate, and share information. These interactions may take place in a variety of formal and informal ways including meetings, weekly reports, and phone calls.

Outreach to parents is organized on an annual basis for the sole purpose of establishing a Parents' Advisory Group. This outreach begins in September of each school year. The PAG elects a parent representative on an annual basis. The school provides a co-chair on an annual basis. Current volunteers and telephone contact numbers are provided for all parents.

The PAG annually determines the frequency, duration, and schedule of meetings. The parent co- chair is responsible for developing an agenda for each meeting.

PAG may raise funds or participate in fund raising events. Any monies raised by the PAG will be kept in an account with the Collaborative Business Office. The parent chair or co-chairs must submit a Release of Funds form accompanied by the signature of two active parent participants
from the PAG to access funds from this account.

PARENT CONSENT ANDNOTIFICATION

The Collaborative collects consents for a variety of activities and protocols, including emergency medical treatment, medication administration, field trips, photographs and publicity.

Once a newly referred student is accepted for participation in a Collaborative program, the start date is not finalized until all consents and medical forms are returned by the parents or guardians.

Since the Collaborative is providing the program to the student at the request of the LEA, Collaborative staff work with each LEA to ensure that the annual consents are obtained prior to the end of the school year for the coming year as follows:

- Each year, a packet of consent forms and medical update forms are sent to each parent or guardian of an enrolled student with a self-addressed envelope.
- Any consents not received by the end of the school year triggers a call from the Collaborative to the family, reminding them of the need to return the forms. If there are questions or concerns expressed, a

follow-up call is made by the principal to the family.

- If the consents have not been received by the end of June, the LEA Liaison is notified that without the signed consents and updated medical information, the student will not be able to enter the program on the scheduled start date.
- As necessary, the Collaborative will resend form packets, hand-deliver form packets and continue to monitor the status of the forms.

When applicable, the Collaborative will request parental consent for the following:

- Research
- Experimentation
- Fundraising
- Publicity
- Observation

The Collaborative's policy and procedures include, when applicable, notification pursuant to Parental Notification Law M.G.L. c. 71, § 32A concerning curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues. Please refer to Appendix N of this manual.

CHANGE OF LEGAL\CUSTODIAL STATUS

If staff is notified of a change of legal status, the Collaborative Executive Director or principal will:

- Request a copy of official court documents.
- Enter official court documents into the Student Record, including restraining orders or other legal judgments.
- Notify the appropriate staff involved in the care and education of the student.
- In the event that a non-custodial individual attempt to violate a court order and attempts access to a student, the Collaborative is to be notified immediately.
- In the event that a non-custodial individual refuses to leave school property, local law enforcement authorities are to be notified immediately.
- Following any such event, an Incident Report form will be completed and forwarded to the Collaborative.

BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

Student Behavior

The goal of behavior support shall be to maximize the growth and development of the student and to protect the group and the individuals in it. The Collaborative directly relates consequences to the specific misbehavior and shall apply such consequences without prolonged delay. The Collaborative serves students who may, at times, display extremely unsafe behaviors. Collaborative staff uses de- escalation techniques and behavior support strategies to help students remain safe without the use of physical intervention. However, due to the nature of student behavior, it is sometimes necessary to physically intervene in order to keep students and staff safe.

Behavioral Programming

Behavior support is an important aspect of Collaborative programs with the goal of maximizing the growth and development of each student. The variety and complexity of students' behavioral and response issues require a range of

techniques. The long-term goal is to increase the internalization of control by the student. An important component of developing strategies for behavior intervention is an understanding of the function the behavior serves. Arrangement of the physical environment and classroom structure is an important management strategy. The placement of desks, availability of materials, length of work times, difficulty of tasks, establishment of predictable routines, and preparation of the child for changes in routine are all essential elements to managing student behavior successfully. The development and presentation of interesting and stimulating curriculum motivates students and is often the most successful management strategy.

Positive Reinforcement

The Collaborative emphasizes praise and positive feedback for all students as well as formal reinforcement schedules as appropriate. Staff takes the student's level of functioning into consideration when developing reinforcement schedules and using a variety of behavioral techniques, target and define specific behavior(s). The goal of most programs is to continue the process until the student can display the identified behavior without external reinforcement.

Mild Restrictive Behavior Support Procedures

When a student disrupts the learning of others, behavior support techniques may be utilized to assist the student in regaining control. Yelling, hitting, kicking, biting of self or others, or situations where a student's safety is in jeopardy are examples of instances when immediate intervention must occur. Recognizing cues and providing appropriate interventions to prevent further escalation are critical elements in successful behavior support.

Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy and Procedures

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) establishes regulations governing the use of physical restraints on students. The Collaborative is required to follow the provisions of 603 CMR 46.00 which regulates the use of physical restraint on students in Massachusetts public school districts, charter schools, virtual schools and collaborative education programs. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Collaborative students are free from the unreasonable use of physical restraint and that such an intervention is used only in emergency situations after other less intrusive alternatives have failed or have been deemed inappropriate.

Physical restraint should be administered only when needed to protect a student or another from assault or imminent, serious physical harm. Physical restraint should be administered in a way that prevents or minimizes any harm to a student as a result of the use of restraint. This policy shall be annually reviewed and provided to program staff and made available to parents of enrolled students.

Valley Collaborative complies with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (hereinafter "DESE") regulations governing the use of physical restraint, which can be found at 603 CMR 46.00 et seq. (hereinafter "Regulations"). According to their terms, the Regulations apply not only at school but also at school-sponsored events and activities, whether or not on school property. Additional information, including a copy of the regulations can be obtained at https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr46.html?section=all.

Only lawful physical restraint will be used at Valley Collaborative. Physical restraint shall be used only in emergency situations of last resort, after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. School personnel shall use physical restraint with two goals in mind:

a. To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or a member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm; and

b. To prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint.

* Nothing in this policy shall preclude a teacher, employee, or agent of Valley Collaborative from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. Nothing in this Policy or the Regulations prohibits law enforcement or school security personnel from exercising their responsibilities, including physical detainment of an individual alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk.

DEFINITIONS (603 CMR 46.02):

Mechanical Restraint: the use of any physical device or equipment to restrict a student's freedom of movement.

- ➔ Mechanical restraint does not include devices implemented by trained school personnel, or utilized by a student, that have been prescribed by an appropriate medical or related services professional, and are used for the specific and approved positioning or protective purposes for which such devices were designed. Examples of such devices include: adaptive devices or mechanical supports used to achieve proper body position, balance, or alignment to allow greater freedom of mobility than would be possible without the use of such devices or mechanical supports; vehicle safety restraints when used as intended during the transport of a student in a moving vehicle; restraints for medical immobilization; or orthopedically prescribed devices that permit a student to participate in activities without risk of harm.

Medication Restraint: the administration of medication for the purpose of temporarily controlling behavior.

- ➔ Medication prescribed by a licensed physician and authorized by the parent for administration in the school setting is not medication restraint.

Physical Escort: a temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location.

Physical Restraint: direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement.

The following are not physical restraints:

- ➔ Brief physical contact to promote student safety (such as guiding a student or re-directing a student);
- ➔ Providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill;
- ➔ Redirecting attention or providing comfort by touch (such as to a shoulder, face or torso);
- ➔ Physical escort (as defined above)

Prone Restraint: a physical restraint in which a student is placed face down on the floor or another surface, and physical pressure is applied to the student's body to keep the student in the face-down position.

Seclusion: involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area, with or without adult supervision, from which the student is not permitted to leave.

The following are not seclusion:

- ➔ A classroom or school environment where, as a general rule, all students need permission to leave the room or area, such as to use the restroom;
- ➔ Placing a student in a separate location within a classroom with others or with an instructor, so long as the student has the same opportunity to receive and engage in instruction;
- ➔ Time-out (as defined below)

Time-Out: a behavioral support strategy in which a student temporarily separates from the learning activity or the classroom, either by choice or by direction from staff, for the purpose of calming. During time-out, a student must be continuously observed by a staff member in an unlocked setting from which the student is permitted to leave. Staff shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times. Time-out shall cease as soon as the student has calmed.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT (603 CMR 46.03):

Physical restraint is an emergency procedure of last resort. It may be used only when the student's behavior poses a threat of

assault or imminent, serious, physical harm to self and/or others, and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances.

Physical restraint shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or another member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. The staff member administering physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation, subject to the safety requirements set forth in 603 CMR 46.05.

PROHIBITIONS

Mechanical restraint, medication restraint, prone restraint (unless permitted under the conditions described below), seclusion (unless permitted under the conditions described below) and the use of physical restraint in a manner inconsistent with 603 CMR 46.00 are strictly prohibited at Valley Collaborative.

Physical restraint, of any kind, shall not be used:

a. As a means of discipline or punishment;
b. When the student cannot be safely restrained because it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not limited to, asthma, seizures, a cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, communication-related disabilities, or risk of vomiting;
c. As a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a policy or directive, or verbal threats when those actions do not constitute a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm; or
d. As a standard response for any individual student. No written individual behavior plan or individualized education program (IEP) may include use of physical restraint as a standard response to any behavior. Physical restraint is an emergency procedure of last resort.

Prone restraints are prohibited, except on an individual basis and when all of the following conditions, which require specific, advance documentation, are met:

1. The student has a documented history of repeatedly causing serious self-injuries and/or injuries to other students or staff;
2. All other forms of physical restraint have failed to ensure the safety of the student and/or others;
3. There are no medical contraindications, as documented by a licensed physician;
4. There is psychological or behavioral justification for the use of prone restraint and no psychological or behavioral contraindications, as documented by a licensed mental health professional;
5. The program has obtained consent to use prone restraint in an emergency and the use of prone restraint is approved in writing by the Principal; and
6. The program has documented all of the above before using prone restraint and maintains the documentation.

The only staff authorized to administer a prone restraint are staff who have received in-depth restraint training in accordance with the regulations at 603 C.M.R. 46.00.

Seclusion is prohibited, except on an individual basis and when all of the following conditions, which require specific, advance documentation, are met:

1. The student has a documented history of repeatedly causing serious self-injuries and/or injuries to other students or staff;
2. The student is not responsive to directives or other less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances;
3. Other forms of intervention have failed to ensure the safety of the student and/or others;
4. There are no medical contraindications, as documented by a licensed physician;
5. There is psychological or behavioral justification for the use of seclusion and no psychological or behavioral contraindications, as documented by a licensed mental health professional;
6. The program has obtained consent from the student's parent and, if appropriate, the student, to use seclusion in an emergency and the use has been approved in writing by the Principal;
7. Any individual using seclusion has received training about alternative behavior interventions and management techniques; and
8. The program has documented all of the above before using seclusion and maintains the documentation.

No written individual behavior plan or individualized education program (IEP) may include use of seclusion as a standard response to any behavior. At all times during the use of seclusion, a staff member will continuously monitor and observe the student, be immediately available to the student, and continue to use calming and de-escalation strategies with the student, unless it is unsafe or counterproductive to do so. The emergency use of seclusion will cease as soon as the student's behavior no longer poses a threat of assault or imminent serious physical harm or if the student is observed to be in severe distress. The Principal's approval must be obtained if seclusion is used for a period longer than 30 minutes.

Any program of Valley Collaborative which uses seclusion, consistent with the requirements above, must examine alternatives and strategies for reducing and eliminating its use no later than 3 years from the effective date of the Regulations.

PROPER ADMINISTRTION AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS (603 CMR 46.05)
Only personnel who have received training [i.e., Safety-Care®] pursuant to the Regulations shall administer physical restraint on students. Whenever possible, the administration of a restraint shall be witnessed by at least one adult who does not participate in the restraint. When administering a physical restraint, trained staff shall comply with the requirements regarding use of force, method, duration of the restraint, and safety, as set forth in the Regulations.

a. No restraint shall be administered in such a way that the student is prevented from breathing or speaking. During the administration of a restraint, a staff member shall continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin temperature and color, and respiration.
b. Restraint shall be administered in such a way so as to prevent or minimize physical harm. If, at any time during a physical restraint, the student expresses or demonstrates significant physical distress including, but not limited to, difficulty breathing, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.
c. If a student is restrained for a period longer than 20 minutes, program staff shall obtain the approval of the Principal. The approval shall be based upon the student's continued agitation during the restraint justifying the need for continued restraint.
d. Program staff shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.
e. After the release of a student from a restraint, program staff shall implement follow-up procedures. These procedures shall include reviewing the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint; reviewing the incident with the staff person(s) who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed; and consideration of whether any follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident.

STAFF TRAINING
All school staff will receive training with respect to Valley Collaborative's restraint prevention and behavior support policy and requirements when restraint is used. Staff training will occur at the beginning of each school year, and, for new hires, within one month of being hired. Training shall include:

- Information on the role of various individuals in preventing restraint;
- The Physical Restraint and Time-Out Policy and procedures;
- Interventions that may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation techniques;
- Types of permitted physical restraints and related safety considerations;
- Administering physical restraint in accordance with medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student; and
- Identification of program staff who have received in-depth training in the use of physical restraint, who may serve as school-wide resources to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint.

In addition, the Principal will identify program staff who will participate in additional, in-depth training on the use of physical restraint, consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 46.04(3),(4).

REPORTING
Any and all physical restraints (including emergency seclusion, if used), regardless of duration, will be reported to the Principal, the Parents, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) as indicated below.

Reporting to Principal: The staff member who administered the restraint/seclusion shall notify the Principal or designee verbally as soon as possible and in writing no later than the next school working day. If the Principal administered the restraint, the Principal shall prepare the report and submit it to the Superintendent.

- The Principal or designee shall maintain an on-going record of all reported instances of physical restraint and emergency seclusion, if any (the "Physical Restraint Log" and "Seclusion Log").
- The Principal shall conduct **a weekly review** of the Physical Restraint Log and Seclusion Log to identify student(s) who have been restrained/secluded multiple times during the week and convene teams to review the student's needs, as appropriate. The review team will review the written physical restraint reports; analyze the circumstances leading up to each restraint, including factors such as time of day, day of the week, antecedent events, and individuals involved; consider factors that may have contributed to escalation of behaviors and alternatives to restraint, with the goal of reducing or eliminating the use of restraint in the future; and create a written plan of action, if appropriate. The Principal shall ensure that a record of any such individual student review team is maintained and made available to DESE or the Parents upon request.
- The Principal shall also conduct **a monthly review** of the Physical Restraint Log and Seclusion Log in order to consider patterns in the time of day, day of week, or individuals involved; the number and duration of restraints/seclusions school-wide and for individual students; the number and type of injuries, if any, resulting from use of restraint; and the need for additional staff training, policy modifications, or other action to reduce or eliminate restraints.
- The Physical Restraint Log and Seclusion Log, if any, shall be made available for review by a parent (in accordance with student records regulations) or the DESE upon request.

Reporting to Parents: The Principal or designee shall make reasonable efforts to inform the student's Parent(s) of the restraint within 24 hours of the event and shall notify the student's Parent(s) by written report within three school working days of the restraint. The information in the report shall comply with 603 CMR 46.06(4). The written restraint report must be provided to the student's parent(s) in the language in which report cards and other necessary school-related information are customarily provided. The Principal shall provide the student and the parent(s) an opportunity to comment orally and in writing on the use of the restraint and on information in the written report.

Reporting to DESE: If a physical restraint or emergency seclusion results in injury to either a student or a staff member, Valley Collaborative will send a copy of the written report of that restraint to the DESE within three (3) school working days, along with a copy of Physical Restraint Log and Seclusion Log, if any, for the 30-day period prior to that restraint. Additionally, Valley Collaborative will annually report physical restraint data to DESE in a manner and form directed by DESE.

SAFEGUARDS (603 CMR 46.07)
Any room or area used for Time-Out will be clean, safe, and sanitary. It will be appropriate for the purpose of calming students, including being of appropriate size for the students served. It will be appropriately lighted, ventilated, and heated and cooled, consistent with the remainder of the building. The space will be free of objects or fixtures that an inherently dangerous and in compliance with local fire and building code requirements.

Any room used for seclusion, if permitted under the conditions enumerated in 603 CMR 46.07(2), will meet the same physical requirements as a Time-Out space, described above. Any room used for seclusion will be inspected by the program for compliance with such requirements at least weekly.

PREVENTING STUDENT VIOLENCE AND SELF-INJURIOUS BEHAVIOR
As set forth in the Regulations, Valley Collaborative shall develop methods for preventing student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide, including individual crisis planning, behavior intervention plans, and de-escalation of potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of students or with an individual student.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

In accordance with the Regulations, Valley Collaborative shall engage parent(s) in discussions about restraint prevention and the use of restraint solely in an emergency situation of last resort. This Physical Restraint and Time-Out Policy will be posted on Valley Collaborative's website and within school handbooks. Parents are also welcome to request a meeting with the Principal to discuss any individual restraint or to discuss restraint and time-out procedures in general use.

GREIVANCE PROCEDURE

Valley Collaborative will consider and investigate any complaints that it receives regarding the use of physical restraint or time-out in school. Any individual who believes that a physical restraint of a student may have been unwarranted or conducted inappropriately may submit a written complaint to the Principal. The written complaint should include the time, date, and location of the incident; the names of all students and staff involved; and references to which aspects of this policy or the Regulations that the complainant believes have not been followed. The Principal or designee will conduct a thorough investigation which may include interviewing the complainant, witnesses, staff, and/or the student; reviewing all written documentation leading up to and pertaining to the incident; and reviewing available data on physical restraint and/or time-outs within the building. The Principal or designee will provide a written response to the complainant summarizing the investigation, conclusions, and corrective action, if any.

PREVENTION AND ALTERNATIVES TO PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Students, families, and school staff each play a role in preventing restraint and ensuring the safety of the school community.

- Students: Students are responsible for knowing and following the school rules and code of conduct, as outlined in the Student/Family Handbooks. Students are also encouraged to report to staff whenever another student evinces violent or dangerous behavior towards themselves or others.
- Families: Families should be aware of and encourage adherence to the school rules and code of conduct, as outlined in the Student/Family Handbooks. Regular communication between Parent(s) and school is important to facilitate support for any student experiencing difficulty.
- School Staff: Staff are responsible for reviewing, attending training, and implementing the school policies and procedures, including those related to physical restraint and time-out. Staff are also responsible for discussing and explaining these policies and procedures to families and students to prevent misunderstanding.
- Administration: Valley Collaborative will annually review its Physical Restraint and Time-Out Policy and related procedures, provide it to school staff, provide annual training to school staff, and make the policy and procedures available to families of enrolled students.

DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES AND ALTERNATIVES TO PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

There are a variety of less intrusive intervention alternatives to physical restraint that may be appropriate under the circumstances. These alternative methods should be used prior to physical restraint. Physical restraints should only be used in emergency situations where these less intrusive alternatives have failed or have been deemed inappropriate under the circumstances.

Valley Collaborative uses a variety of methods for engaging parents and students in discussions about restraint prevention and use. Beginning during the referral process, parents and administration discuss school wide PBIS programs, behavioral and academic interventions, restraint procedures, notification policies and school wide supports prior to enrollment. After enrollment, engagement continues with ongoing team contact with families on student concerns, behavior plans and crisis intervention plans (see appendix H). IEP meetings, progress meetings, open house and teacher/parent conferences are held throughout the year to support ongoing discussions regarding prevention and the implementation of behavior support methods.

Examples of less intrusive alternatives to physical restraint include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Offering choices of activities
- Positive behavioral interventions
- Verbal redirection
- Verbal directive to cease behavior
- Opportunity for a movement break
- Opportunity for a sensory break
- Breathing exercises
- Access to a preferred, tangible item
- Reducing the demands/amount of work expected
- Reminding student of reinforcers available for engaging in appropriate behaviors (e.g. first work, then you can read)
- Prompting the student to use functional language to communicate their feelings or needs (e.g. if you are frustrated you can tell me "I need a break")
- Offering opportunities to speak with professionals (e.g. teacher, administrator, nurse, or guidance counselor)
- Working in small groups outside classroom on academic related work
- Whenever there is a behavior support plan in place for a student, staff should defer to the specific interventions outlined in the behavior plan.
- **Brief Physical Contact.** Physical restraint does not include: brief physical contact to promote student safety, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, and providing comfort. Such brief physical contact is an alternative to physical restraint.
- **Removals.** Removals are used only when it is necessary to move a child a few feet in order to hold them to safer position. Removal includes removal of a student from a classroom for in situations where behavior can escalate other students, creating a less safe situation. Removals are only for a short distance, i.e. out of the classroom to the hallway.
- **Physical Escort**. Physical escort is a temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location.
- **Time-Out.** Time-out is a behavioral support strategy in which a student temporarily separates from the learning activity or the classroom, either by choice or by direction from staff, for the purpose of calming. During time-out, a student must be continuously observed by a staff member in an unlocked setting from which the student is permitted to leave. Staff shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times. Time-out shall cease as soon as the student has calmed.

PROCEDURE FOR USE OF TIME-OUT

Time-out is a behavioral support strategy in which a student temporarily separates from the learning activity or the classroom, either by choice or direction from staff, for the purpose of calming. During a time-out, the student will be continuously observed by staff in an unlocked setting from which the student is permitted to leave.

It is the expectation of Valley Collaborative that a staff member will be physically present with the student during time-out; however, if it is not safe for the staff member to remain in the room with the student, staff will remain immediately available to the student and will continuously observe the student during time-out. The time-out will cease as soon as the student has calmed, based on staff observation of the student's physical cues, tone of voice, and demeanor. The student shall not be required to complete any specific

task or checklist to demonstrate that he/she has calmed.

If a time-out may last longer than 30 minutes, staff will obtain approval from the Principal or designee to continue the time-out. Any such approval will be based on careful consideration of the individual student's presentation and level of agitation. If, in the opinion of the Principal or designee, the student has calmed, then the time-out will cease. For any time-out approaching or exceeding 30 minutes duration, staff will also consider the need to follow-up and debrief the incident with the student at a later time and/or whether the student's behavior warrants convening a Team meeting; modifying an existing behavior plan; or creating a new behavior plan. Staff will attempt to contact the student's parent(s) within 24 hours and offer an opportunity to discuss the circumstances of the extended time-out.

Time-out does not include time spent meeting with administrators; visits to nurse; performing an errand in another part of the school building; or working in small groups outside the classroom. Students may also take space for calming while remaining fully aware of the learning activities in the classroom. For example, "planned ignoring;" asking students to put their heads down; or placing a student in a different location within the classroom are alternatives to time-out.

Anti-Hazing

Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Anti-Hazing Law Chapter 269: Section 17. Hazing; organizing or participating; hazing defined

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

Chapter 269: Section 18. Failure to report hazing

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. A fine of not more than one thousand dollars shall punish whoever fails to report a crime.

Section 19 of the Massachusetts General Laws, chapter 19 requires this anti-hazing law be distributed to all students and to all members of student groups, student Teams, and student organizations. Those who participate in and/or organize hazing shall be disciplined.

Chapter 269: Section 19.; issuance to students and student groups, Teams and organizations; report

Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post-secondary education shall issue to every student group, student Team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student Team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution's compliance with this section's requirements that an institution issue

copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, Teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution's recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, Teams or organizations.

Each such group, Team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, Team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, Team or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, Team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full-time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, Teams or organizations and to notify each full-time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen

and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of higher education and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution that fails to make such report.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Priority Statement

Valley Collaborative's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber bullying, and each program in the Collaborative is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. The following is a Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber bullying, and retaliation. Each Collaborative program is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan.

We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic, status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory, disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The Collaborative will identify specific steps it will take to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

Prohibition Against Bullying and Retaliation

The Collaborative will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyber bullying, or retaliation, in its school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses and at school bus stops or in school-related activities. The Collaborative will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyber bullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. The Collaborative will support this commitment in all aspects of the school community, including curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities, and parent involvement. Acts of bullying, which include cyber bullying, are

prohibited:

- on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school- sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district, and
- at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited. As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Definitions

Several of the following definitions are copied directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, as noted below.

A **Perpetrator** is defined as a student or member of a school staff including but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extra-curricular activity or paraprofessional who engages in bullying behavior.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students, or by a member of school staff including, but not limited to an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or para professional of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyber bullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyber bullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Staff includes, but is not limited to Collaborative educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyber bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Training and Professional Development

The Collaborative will provide ongoing professional development that will build the skills of all staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying.

Annual staff training on the Plan

Annual training for all school staff on the Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will include staff responsibilities under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or his/her designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school building. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

Ongoing professional development

The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school-wide and professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- information on the incidence and nature of cyber bullying; and
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyber bullying.

All students attending the Collaborative have an IEP. Therefore, professional development will emphasize ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' IEP; this will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

Additional areas identified by the programs for professional development includes:

- Promoting and modeling the use of respectful language;
- Fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference;
- Building relationships and communicating with families;
- Constructively managing classroom behaviors;
- Using positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- Applying constructive disciplinary practices;
- Teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others;
- Engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making; and
- Maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students.

Written notice to staff

Each school will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff responsibilities in the Personnel Policy and Employee Handbook.

Access to Resources and Services

A key aspect of promoting positive school climates is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of all students are addressed. These students include targets, aggressors or bystanders of bullying or cyber bullying. Schools will also address the emotional needs of these students' families. The Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan include strategies for providing supports and services necessary to meet these needs. In order to enhance the Collaborative's capacity to prevent, intervene early, and respond effectively to bullying, available services reflect an understanding of the dynamics of bullying and provide approaches to address the needs of targets, aggressors and bystanders. The Collaborative

programs provide counseling or referral to appropriate services for students who are aggressors, targets, and family members of those students.

Identifying resources: Counselors, together with building administrators, will work to identify the school's capacity to provide counseling, case management and other services for these students (targets, aggressors, bystanders) and their families. Schools will conduct an annual review of staffing and programs that support the creation of positive school environments, focusing on early interventions and intensive services, and develop recommendations and action steps to fill resource and service gaps. The Collaborative works in collaboration with local and state agencies to adopt evidenced based curricula and to provide additional preventative services to students, parents, and faculty and staff.

Counseling and other services

The Collaborative administrators, counselors, nurses, and special educators provide a variety of skill-based services to students within the educational setting that include on-going emotional support, risk assessment, crisis intervention, and help with community-based counseling referrals when appropriate. The student's Team meets with parents and staff as needed to help address student's academic, emotional and behavioral concerns as collaboratively as possible. School counselors work with administrators to provide linguistically appropriate resources to identified families. School counselors maintain up-to-date information on community based mental health referrals as well as Community Service Agencies (CSAs) within the local vicinity, providing services to Medicaid eligible students. School counselors, Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA), and special needs educators work collaboratively to develop behavior plans and social thinking groups for students with social skill weaknesses. In addition, school counselors, school psychologists and special education professionals will work together to educate and support parents, conduct parent workshops and apprise parents of outside resources to enhance parenting skills and provide for the needs of children.

Below is a list highlighting activities offered at various programs:

- One-on-one and small group counseling
- Crisis intervention
- Facilitating classroom meetings to resolve problems
- School curriculum on issues of respect, sexual harassment and student success skills
- Peer Mediation
- Lunch/friendship groups
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Parent workshops
- Transition planning
- Parent guidance
- Behavior plan development
- Classroom observations
- Teacher consultation
- Promoting and modeling the use of respectful language
- Fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference
- Building relationships and communicating with families
- Managing classroom behaviors constructively
- Using positive behavioral intervention strategies
- Applying constructive disciplinary practices
- Teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy

for others

- Engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making
- Maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students

Students with disabilities

As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

Referral to outside services

The Collaborative will evaluate its current protocol for referring students and families to outside services to ensure relevance to the Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, and revise as needed. School counselors and other specialists will use this protocol to help students and families access appropriate and timely services. Referrals must comply with relevant laws and policies.

Assessing needs and resources

At least every four years beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, the Collaborative will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education-developed survey to assess school climate and prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in its programs. Additionally, the Collaborative will annually report bullying incident data to the Department.

Academic and Non-Academic Activities

The Collaborative will provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the Collaborative programs' evidence -based curricula. Effective instruction includes classroom approaches, whole-program initiatives, and focused strategies for bullying prevention and social skills development.

Specific bullying prevention approaches

Bullying prevention curricula is informed by current research, which among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- using scripts and role plays to develop skills;
- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyber bullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- emphasizing cyber safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications;
- engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference; and
- providing parents with information regarding the school's bullying prevention curricula

General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts

The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment, and they underscore the importance of the Collaborative's bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
- communicating with parents regarding the schools' goals and expectations for students and students' safety
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- using positive behavioral supports;
- encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem- solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- using the Internet safely; and
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

Policies and Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation

To support efforts to respond promptly and effectively to bullying and retaliation, the Collaborative programs have policies and procedures in place for receiving and responding to reports of bullying or retaliation. These policies and procedures ensure that members of the school community – students, parents, and staff – know what will happen when incidents of bullying occur.

In school systems, harassment may take many forms and cross many lines. The situation may be an instance of staff member to staff member, staff member to student, student to staff member, or student to student.

Reporting

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member must be recorded in writing. All employees are required to report immediately to the principal or his/her designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents, or other non-employees may be made anonymously, however, no disciplinary action can be taken against the perpetrator solely on the basis of an anonymous report. The schools will make reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, the Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form.

Use of the Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form Report is not required as a condition of making a report. Programs will:

1. Include a copy of the Bullying Report Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents (See Appendix B);
2. Make it available in each Collaborative program's main office, the counseling office, and other locations determined by the principal or his/her designee;
3. At the beginning of each school year, the Collaborative will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name

and contact information of the principal or his/her designee, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks.

Reporting by Staff: A staff member will report immediately to the principal or his/her designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the principal or his/her designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with each school's policies and procedures for behavior support and discipline.

Reporting by Students, Parents, and Others: The school system expects students, parents, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or his/her designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or his/her designee.

Responding

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or his/her designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. There may be circumstances in which the principal or his/her designee contacts parents prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; predetermining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the target; and altering the aggressor's schedule and access to the target. The principal or his/her designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The principal or his/her designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation. The confidentiality of students and witnesses reporting alleged acts of bullying will be maintained to the extent possible given the school's obligation to investigate the matter.

Obligations to Notify Others

Notice to parents or guardians: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or his/her designee will promptly notify the parents of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. Notice will be provided in the primary language of the homeland in compliance with confidentiality requirements of the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations, 603 CMR 23.00, and the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations, 34 CFR Part 99, as set forth in 603 CMR 49.07.

The principal or designee shall inform the parent or guardian of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination. Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the Collaborative may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700.

Notice to another school district: If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, nonpublic school, approved private special education day or residential school, or Collaborative school,

the principal or his/her designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or his/her designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR.

Notice to law enforcement: At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or his/her designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal or his/her designee will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.06 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or his/her designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor. In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and this policy, consult with local law enforcement and other individuals the principal or his/her designee deems appropriate.

Investigation

The principal or his/her designee will investigate promptly (within 24 hours) all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved. During the investigation the principal or his/her designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents, and others as necessary. The principal or his/her designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action. Interviews will be conducted by the principal or his/her designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or his/her designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or his/her designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or his/her designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with Collaborative policies and procedures for investigations and for possible disciplinary action. If necessary, the principal or his/her designee will consult with the Executive Director regarding consultation with legal counsel pertaining to the investigation of the alleged report.

Determinations

The principal or his/her designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal/Director or his/her designee will take reasonable steps to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The principal or his/her designee will determine what remedial action is required, if any, and what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or his/her designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The principal or his/her designee will promptly notify the parents of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal/Director or his/her designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order

or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

Responses to Bullying

The Collaborative has incorporated a range of individualized strategies and interventions that may be used in response to remediate a student's skills or to prevent further incidences of bullying and/or retaliation.

Teaching Appropriate Behavior through Skills-Building

Upon the principal or his/her designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school or district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O (d) (v). Skill building approaches that the principal or his/her designee may consider include:

- Offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/district's anti- bullying curricula;
- Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with school counselors and other appropriate school personnel;
- Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- Meeting with parents to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home;
- Adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills; and making a referral for evaluation.

Taking Disciplinary Action

If the principal or his/her designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or his/her designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with this Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline. If the principal or his/her designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action consistent with this Handbook.

Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

The principal or his/her designee(s) will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or his/her designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or his/her designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

Collaboration with Families

The Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan includes strategies to engage and collaborate with students' families in order to increase the capacity of each Collaborative program to prevent and respond to bullying. Resources for families and communication with them are essential aspects of effective collaboration. Provisions for informing parents

about the bullying prevention and intervention curricula used by the schools include:

1) How parents can reinforce the curricula at home and support the school or district plan;
2) The dynamics of bullying, online safety and cyber bullying.
3) Parents will also be notified in writing each year about the student-related sections of the Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

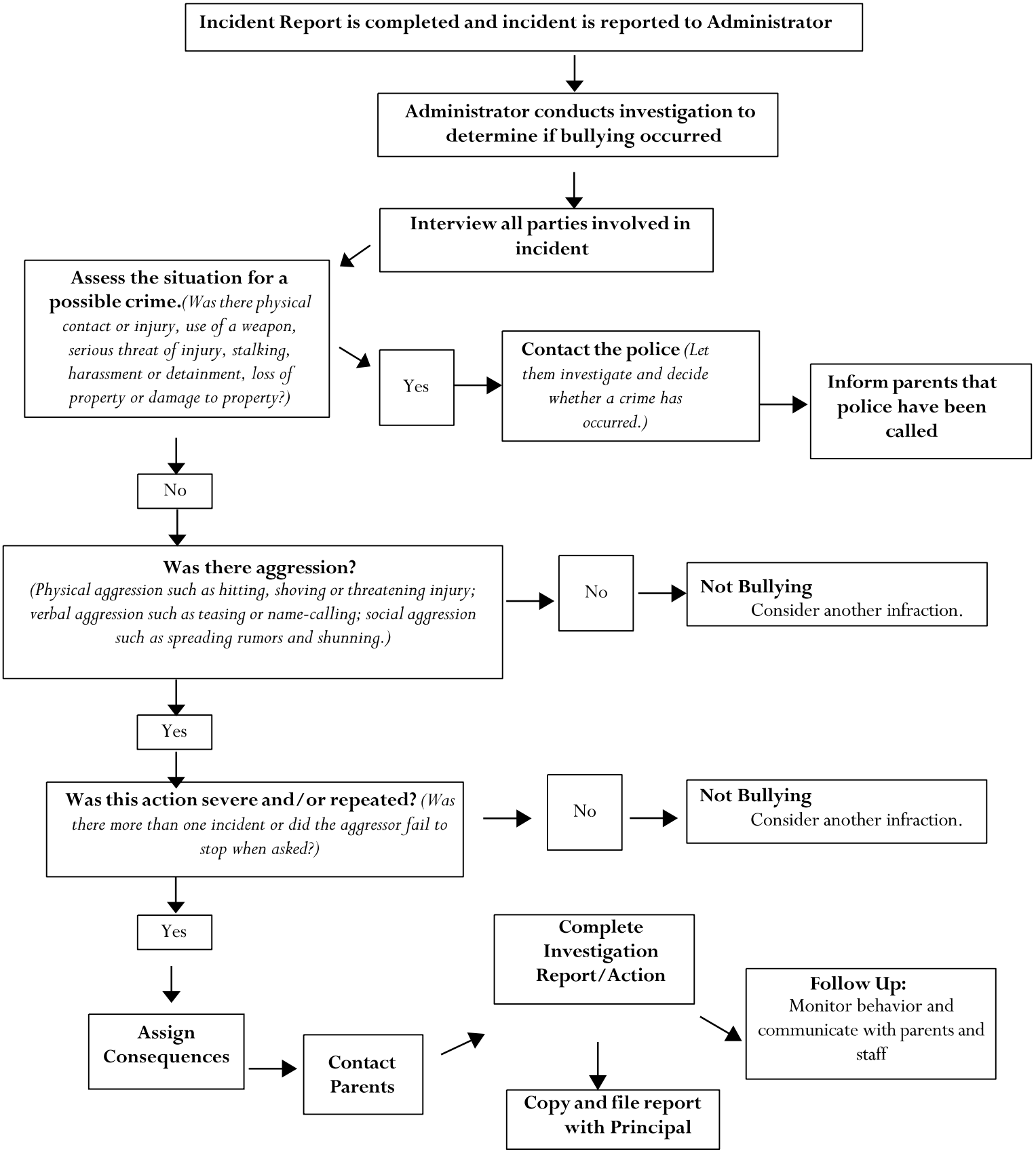
Programs will collaborate with the PAG and/or parent volunteers to create parent resource and information networks. Programs will join with these parent groups to offer education programs for parents that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the program(s).

Programs will annually inform parents of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyber bullying and online safety. The schools will send parents written notice each year about the student related sections of the Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan and the Collaborative Internet Acceptable Use Policy. All notices and information made available to parents will be in hard copy and/or electronic formats.

Relationship to Other Laws

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, age, disability, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Valley Collaborative is committed to maintaining a work and learning environment free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, pregnancy, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital/civil union status, ancestry, place of birth, age, citizenship status, veteran status, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, limited English speaking ability, or homelessness, as defined by state and federal laws. Nothing in the Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan prevents the Collaborative from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies. In addition, nothing in the Collaborative Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, or 37H ¾ or other applicable laws, or local program or Collaborative policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether this Plan covers the behavior.

Collaborative Bullying Response Flow Chart



COMPLAINTS

Students and parents are encouraged to communicate any concerns or questions they may have about their education, care, or possible violations of student rights (including discrimination or violation of a student's civil rights). They are welcome to communicate their concerns through the use of communication books, telephone calls, site visits and meetings. They are free to express their concerns at any time to many different staff such as classroom teachers, principals, or the Executive Director. In the event that they do not feel their concerns are being addressed adequately, they are encouraged to initiate a formal grievance process as follows:

- Request, in writing, a conference with relevant principal to make their concerns known.
- Within one week following the conference, principal will follow-up with a response to the student or parent concerns in writing, including any reasons for the decision made. If the decision supports the student or parent concerns, the principal will promptly put the decision into effect.
- The principal will notify and keep the Executive Director informed of the complaint throughout the process. The Executive Director may be directly involved in the complaint resolution process at the request of the principal.
- In the event that of a disagreement with any part of the decision made by the principal, they may in writing appeal the decision to and request a meeting with the Executive Director. The Executive Director will follow-up with a response addressing the concerns in writing, including any reasons for the decision made. If the decision supports the concerns, the Executive Director will promptly put the decision into effect.
- If the grievant is still unsatisfied with the decision, they should contact the Director of Special Education of their sending district and express their concerns in writing.
- In the event of an unsatisfactory resolution, the Executive Director will contact the Director of Special Education of the LEA and inform him/her of the impasse with the student or parent. The Executive Director with work with the Director of Special Education to address the concerns satisfactorily and in the best interest of the student.
- Nothing in this policy is to prevent a parent from exercising his/her right under the Options for Dispute Resolution (Section 28.08) of Massachusetts Special Education regulations

MEDICAL POLICY

The Collaborative maintains a nursing staff to promote the health and safety of its students, intervene with actual and potential health and behavioral issues, manage complex medical issues and provide case management services. A school nurse makes the decision if a student is to be sent home for medical reasons. All students must have a current physical and up-to-date immunization records and parent consents on file. Every school year, parents will be provided with a Student Health Packet containing relevant forms to be completed to ensure that the Collaborative has updated medical emergency contact information, medication information, and all other information relevant to the student's health, including parental authorizations for treatment and/or the administration of medication. The Collaborative maintains a separate Health Services Manual with more detailed medical policies. Copies of the Health Services Manual are kept in the Collaborative nurse's office and are available for parents upon request.

Health Care Policies Overview

Communicable Disease

POLICY: In order to prevent the spread of communicable, disease students with a diagnosed communicable disease will be advised to stay home for the following period of time as listed in the table below.

Dismissal from School due to Illness

POLICY: The school nurse may exclude a student from school for health reasons if the student:

- Has returned from a hospital admission within the past 24 hours. This does not include routine tests or minor injuries. The student will remain at home for observation for the first 24 hours.
- Has a temperature of 100.5 degrees tympanic (by ear). Temperature must be 98.6 for a full 24 hours prior to returning to school. The exception is a child with a hypothalamic problem (temperature regulation problem) and is symptom free. Each case will be discussed individually.
- Has an infectious disease (Strep Throat/Pneumonia, etc.) and has not been on antibiotic therapy for 24 hours or as designated by MD.
- Eye drainage yellow/green in color with pink or red eyes, eyelids, etc.
- Any undiagnosed rash.
- Has a culture(s) pending (exceptions can be made at the discretion of the nurse).
- Is on respiratory precautions, cough/cold or has a significant change in respiratory secretions (green/yellow nasal drainage).
- Has Chicken Pox/Shingles, with active, draining rash (rash must be dry, non-weeping, and shingles must be covered). Students may attend school with poison ivy as it is not contagious. It should be washed thoroughly and covered.
- Is experiencing significant increase in seizures or seizure like activity (requires note from M.D. stating seizures stable).
- Has had persistent vomiting and diarrhea; must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Has a condition requiring immediate medical intervention, i.e., emergency dental care, sutures, bone setting, or pending a medical diagnosis for any condition.
- Has a condition that requires on-going supervision, which cannot be supervised in the school setting.
- Is very sleepy or is experiencing excessive bleeding after a dental visit.
- Has untreated Pediculosis, Scabies or body lice.
- Poses a significant health risk to others in the normal course of school activities.

Significant health risk is defined by:

- Any student is in the infectious stage of a serious airborne transmitted disease (T.B., Viral Pneumonia, Influenza, etc.).
- Students who are unable to hygienically manage their bowel and bladder functions and/or are in the infectious stage of an oral/fecal transmitted disease. Such diseases are, but are not limited to, Hepatitis A, Clostridium Difficile (c-diff), gastro-intestinal viruses (Salmonella, Shigella, Rotavirus) and parasites (Pinworms, Giardiasis.) and has not completed treatment.

- Students who have a disease which may be transmitted by body fluids, and have open lesions and whose developmental level makes it difficult for them to refrain from touching lesions and others, therefore, spreading the underlying infection to others. Such diseases are, but not limited to, Herpes, Impetigo, Hepatitis B virus, Staph Aureus, Beta Hemolytic Strep, and Conjunctivitis.

Hospital Re-Entry Policy

POLICY: To ensure the health and safety of every student re-entering one of Valley Collaborative programs following a psychiatric or medical hospitalization, the Collaborative has adopted the following policy. Any student who has required a psychiatric evaluation, an emergency room visit, or has been placed in inpatient hospitalization will be re-admitted to their respective program upon collaboration with their treatment planning team.

I. Discharge Instructions
   a. The student can return to school with the receipt of a signed discharge summary and medical clearance from the hospital/clinician providing treatment.
   b. This summary will ensure that the most recent and credible information regarding treatment goals and restrictions are relayed back to the Collaborative treatment team and allow for a smooth transition back to school.
   c. The plan should include, in writing, any changes in medications, any safety plans, medical procedures, and any follow-up plans with clinicians, therapists, and any other treatment providers.
   d. When this policy is followed, the Collaborative can also ensure that the student will be safe upon their return and provisions are in place should they decompensate once back in the school setting.

Medications in School

POLICY: It is the policy of Valley Collaborative to have procedures in place for the safe and proper administration of prescription medications to students attending the Collaborative and for addressing the issues relating to the management of life-threatening food allergies in the school settings. The school nurse, who is an employee of the Collaborative, is designated as the supervisor of the medication administration program.

I. Medication Orders/Parental Consent
   a. The school nurse shall ensure that there is a proper medication order from a licensed prescriber, which is renewed yearly. Whenever possible, the medication order shall be obtained before the student enters or reenters the school.
   b. Parents/Guardians must provide the following:
      i. Written order from the prescriber, including diagnosis, medication name, dosage, side effects, and frequency of administration.
      ii. Parental signature authorizing the nurse to administer the medication
      iii. Medication should be delivered to the school nurse by parent/guardian, or responsible adult or alternative arrangements can be made by contacting the program nurse.
      iv. No more than a thirty (30) school day supply of the medication for a student shall be stored at the school.
      v. Please call your school nurse for proper forms.

Preventative Health Care

POLICY: Students must be healthy to learn. The collaborative is committed to the health and well-being of its students. The plan for preventative health care of students includes, but is not limited to the following:

I. Physical Exams
   a. Documentation, from a licensed physician, of a complete physical examination not more than 6 months prior to admission for is required for every new student.
   b. In the event of emergency placement, provisions for a complete examination of the student must be made within 30 days of admission.
   c. Current students are required to have a physical exam every 3-4 years.
   d. Each student is eligible to receive an annual comprehensive medical and dental examination through his/her own sending school district or local board of health.
   e. A copy of the results should be provided to the school by the parent or sending school district.

II. Immunizations
   a. In accordance with state regulations (105 CMR 220.700), requires students entering an educational facility, as new student, to meet the minimum requirements for immunization.
   b. Students will be denied entry in to programs until a completed Immunization Record is on file in the nursing office, upon presentation of written documentation that the student meets the standards for medical or religious exemption set forth in M.G.L. c. 76, § 15, or upon presentation of laboratory evidence of immunity.

III. Mandated Screenings
   a. Screenings are conducted per Department of Public Health guidelines for vision, postural, and body mass index.
   b. Elementary Age students must have proof of lead screening.
   c. Parents/sending school should provide the school with a copy of such screening results if screenings have been performed outside of school. Parents will be notified prior to administration of screenings.

Vaccination

POLICY: In accordance with state regulations (105 CMR 220.700), requires students entering an educational facility, as new student, meet the minimum requirements for immunization. Students will be denied entry in to Valley Collaborative programs until a completed Vaccination form is on file in the nursing office, upon presentation of written documentation that the student meets the standards for medical or religious exemption set forth in M.G.L. c. 76, § 15, or upon presentation of laboratory evidence of immunity.

Policy on Drug and Alcohol Abuse

Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Substance Use Prevention and Abuse Education Law Chapter 71, Sections 96 and 97.

Massachusetts law requires each public school to have a policy regarding substance use prevention and the education of its students about the dangers of substance abuse. Valley Collaborative's Substance Use and Abuse Prevention and Education Plan seeks to promote and maintain a safe and drug-free learning environment for all students and staff. The use of alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, or other illegal or controlled substances interferes with the learning, growth and well-

being of students, families and the entire Collaborative community. The possession, use, manufacture, distribution, sale, possession, intent to sell, or dispensation of alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, or other illegal or controlled substances of any kind is strictly prohibited. Such substances do not have a place in an educational environment and will not be tolerated on Collaborative property or at any Collaborative-sponsored event.

Illicit drugs include, but are not limited to:

- Controlled substances as defined in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 94C (e.g. cocaine, heroin, marijuana, LSD, steroids)
- The misuse of prescription or over-the-counter drugs
- Products misused for the purpose of mind-altering effects (e.g. aerosols, solvents).

Students are strictly prohibited from having alcohol, marijuana, illicit drugs and/or controlled substances in their system during school hours, on Collaborative property or at any Collaborative-sponsored event.
Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to:

- Using or being under the influence
- Possession
- Attempting to purchase
- Intending or attempting to sell/distribute
- Selling or distributing
- Possession of drug paraphernalia.

Additionally, students who know they are in the company of any individual using or selling illicit drugs or alcohol and who do not remove themselves from that situation also may be subject to discipline. As explained further within this Handbook, students and individuals who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

The Collaborative recognizes that close cooperation between school authorities, parents and law enforcement officials is essential if the problem of drug and alcohol abuse is to be addressed adequately. Education and prevention must remain the first priority and the Collaborative will maintain its efforts to provide meaningful programs of drug and alcohol education in whatever way the Collaborative deems appropriate. But where prevention fails, the Collaborative will fully cooperate with local law enforcement officials to address violations of the law and this policy, including without limitation a situation whereby a student or individual is found under the influence, in possession of or selling a controlled substance.

In addition to, or as part of, the disciplinary response to such abuses, prevention and intervention services will be offered to Collaborative students and families to support the Collaborative's goal of a safe and drug free environment.

In a case where a student self-discloses or seeks help regarding an alcohol or other drug use problem, which is not in current violation of Collaborative policy, no disciplinary action will be taken. However, because the use of alcohol and/or drugs by students at any time creates potential problems, a range of supportive services will be offered based on the best interest of the student and Collaborative community. The student support program is designed to provide a wide range of services for students dealing with alcohol and other drug-related problems. A multi-disciplinary student support team -- made up of the student's Team, including his/her principal, parent, classroom teacher, clinical and support services staff, or any other persons determined appropriate by the Collaborative or invited by the parent (or any

combination thereof) -- may carry out the appropriate activities of the program at each school.

Verbal Screening Tools
In keeping with the expressed goal of the Collaborative to have all school activities remain free and safe from alcohol and drug use, and in compliance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Sections 96 and 97, the Collaborative shall utilize a verbal screening tool to screen students for substance abuse disorders. Screenings shall occur annually at two different grade levels. The Collaborative shall use the CRAFFT Screening Tool, which consists of a series of questions developed to screen adolescent students for high risk alcohol and other drug use disorders simultaneously. Any statement, response or disclosure made by a student during the screening shall be considered confidential information and shall not be disclosed by a person receiving the statement, response or disclosure to any other person without the prior written consent of the student or parent, except in cases of immediate medical emergency or where disclosure is otherwise required by law. Screening results shall be reported to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, but no record, statement, response or disclosure shall be made in any form, (written, electronic or otherwise), that includes information identifying an individual student. A student or parent may opt out of the screening by written notification to the Collaborative at any time prior to or during the screening.

STUDENT POLICIES

STUDENT RECORDS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H provide rights relative to student educational records. This Student Record Policy includes the rights of parents/guardians (or students) to:

1) Inspect and review his/her child's educational records.
2) Make copies of these records.
3) Receive a list of the individuals having access to those records.
4) Ask for an explanation of any item in the records.
5) Ask for an amendment to any report on the grounds it is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child's rights.
6) Request a hearing on the issue if the program refuses to make the amendment.

Notification
The Collaborative Student Record Policy is distributed to students and their parents through this Handbook. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts regulation (603 CMR 23.00) regarding student records is available for review at all Collaborative programs.

Privacy and Security of Student Records
In accordance with federal and state requirements, the Collaborative protects the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information that it collects, uses or maintains. The Collaborative maintains and provides access to student records in accordance with federal and state requirements.

The Collaborative has designated a trained keeper of the records, who is responsible for the privacy and security of all student records. The keeper of records ensures that student records are kept physically secure, that authorized school personnel are informed of the provision of federal and state law pertaining to student records and the Student Records Policies of the Collaborative, and are educated as to the importance of information privacy and confidentiality; and that

any computerized systems are electronically secure.

Application of Rights
603 CMR 23.00 ensures parents' and students' rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records. These rights, set forth in 603 CMR 23.00, apply to the student under the following circumstances:

1. Upon reaching 14 years of age or upon entering the ninth grade, whichever comes first. If a student is under the age of 14 and has not yet entered the ninth grade, these rights shall belong to the student's parent.

2. If a student is from 14 through 17 years of age or has entered the ninth grade, both the student and his/her parents, or either acting alone, shall exercise these rights.

3. If a student is 18 years of age or older, he/she shall exercise these rights, subject to the following:
    - The parent may continue to exercise the rights until expressly limited by such student.
    - The student may limit the rights which extend to his/her parent (except the right to inspect the student record) by making a request in writing to the principal or his/her designee or the Executive Director who will honor the request and retain a copy of it in the student record.
    - The parent of a student may inspect the student record regardless of the student's age.

4. The staff of the program and the parents may extend these rights to students under the age of 14 or to students who have not yet entered the ninth grade.

Student Record
The student record will consist of and be defined by the following:

1. The transcript, which contains administrative records that constitute the minimum data necessary to reflect the student's educational progress and to operate the educational system. This data shall be limited to:
    - Student name, address, and phone number
    - Date of birth
    - Parent name, address, and phone number
    - Course titles
    - Grades (or equivalent when grades are not applicable)
    - Course credit
    - Grade level completed
    - Year completed

2. The temporary record, which consists of all the information in the student record which is not contained in the transcript and which is clearly of importance to the educational process. Such information may include: standardized test results, class rank (when applicable), extracurricular activities, IEPs, and evaluations of teachers, counselors, and other school staff.

3. The student record, which consists of both the transcript and the temporary record, including all information recorded and computer tapes, microfilm, microfiche, or any other materials and is to be

labeled with the student's name, at a minimum.

Personal Files of Collaborative Employees
Student records do not include notes, memory aids and other similar information that is maintained in the personal files of a program employee. This information is not accessible or revealed to authorized school personnel or any third party, but may be shared with the student, parent or a temporary substitute of the maker of the record. If the personal files of an employee are released to authorized school personnel, it will then become part of the student record.

Collection of Data
Collection of student record data will be handled by the following procedures:

1. All information and data contained in or added to the student record shall only pertain to the educational needs of the student.

2. Information and data that is added to the temporary record will include:
    - Name, signature, and position of the person who is the source of the information.
    - The date of entry into the record.

3. Standardized group test results that are added to the temporary record only need to include:
    - Name of the test and/or publisher
    - Date of testing.

Access to Student Records
1. Access of Authorized School Personnel - The following school personnel are authorized to access student records:
    - School administrators
    - Teachers
    - Counselors
    - Direct service personnel
    - Administrative office staff
    - Clerical personnel
    - Evaluation team which evaluates a student

2. Authorized school personnel are permitted access to the student records of the students to whom they are providing services in order to perform their official duties. The consent of the eligible student or the parent is not necessary.

3. The Log of Access – A log of access is to be kept as part of each student's record. If parts of the student record are separately located, a separate log will be kept with each part. The log is to indicate all persons who have obtained access to the student record stating:
    - The name, position and signature of the person releasing the information
    - The name, position and, if a third party, the affiliation if any, of the person who is to receive the information
    - The date of access
    - The parts of the record to which the access was obtained

- Purpose of access

4. Unless student record information is to be deleted or released, this log requirement shall not apply to: Authorized school personnel who inspect the student record
    - Administrative office staff and clerical personnel who add information to or need to obtain access to the student record
    - School nurses who inspect the student health record

5. Access of Eligible Students and Parents – The eligible student or parent shall have access to the student record. Access is to be granted within two (2) consecutive days of the initial request, unless the requesting party agrees to a delay. Upon the request for access, the entire student record regardless of location of its parts will be made available.
    - Upon request, copies of any information contained in the student r eco r d will be provided to the eligible student or the parent.
    - Any student, regardless of age, may request and will receive a copy of his/her transcript.
    - The eligible student or the parent may request to meet with qualified school personnel to have any of the contents of the student record interpreted.
    - The eligible student or the parent may grant a third party access to the student record with written authorization.

6. Access of Third Parties – No third party shall have access to information in or from a student record without the specific, informed written consent of the eligible student or the parent. When granting consent, the eligible student and parent must designate which parts of the student record shall be released to the third party. The eligible student or parent will retain a copy of the consent, and the original will be placed in the temporary record. Access to the student record is only to be granted to a third party if they consent not to share the information with any other third party without the written consent of the eligible student or parent. The following exceptions apply:
    - Upon receipt of a court order or lawfully issued subpoena the program shall comply, but will make every effort to notify the eligible student or parent of the order or subpoena in advance of compliance.
    - Upon receipt of request from the Department of Children and Families, a probation officer, a justice of any court, or the Department of Children and Families
    - Federal, state and location education officials, and their authorized agents shall be permitted access to student records in connection with the audit, evaluation or enforcement of federal and state education laws, or programs. When the collection of personal y identifiable information is specifically authorized by law, the data collected is to be protected so that parties other than these officials cannot identify the students and their parents. Personally identifiable data obtained must be destroyed when no longer needed for this purpose.
    - The Collaborative staff may disclose information regarding a student to appropriate parties in connection with a health or safety emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals, which may include the local police department and the Department of Children and Families.
    - Upon notification by law enforcement authorities of a missing child, either current or former,

a mark shall be placed in the student record. The school shall report any request concerning the student records of the missing child to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

- Authorized school personnel of a school that a student seeks or intends to attend may have access.
- School health and local and state health department personnel may have access to student health records when access is required for the performance of their official duties.

7. Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents - a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions. (A non-custodial parent is defined as any parent who by court order does not have physical custody of the student.)
    - A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless:
        i. The parent has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the student or to the custodial parent, or
        ii. The parent has been denied visitation or has been ordered to supervised visitation, or
        iii. The parent's access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record.
    - In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the principal or his/her designee annually. The initial request must include the following:
        i. A certified copy of the court order or judgment relative to the custody of the student that either indicates that the requesting parent is eligible to receive access or a certified copy of a court order specifically ordering that the student records be made available to the non-custodial parent, and
        ii. An affidavit from the non-custodial parent that said court order or judgment remains in effect and that there is no temporary or permanent order restricting access to the custodial parent or any child in the custodial parent's custody.
    - The non-custodial parent must submit a written request for access each year stating that said parent continues to be entitled to unsupervised visitation with the student and is eligible to obtain access.
    - Upon receipt of the request (initial and annual) the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first-class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal or his/her designee or the Executive Director with documentation that non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access.
    - The school must delete the address and telephone number of the student and custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.
    - Upon receipt of a court order, which prohibits the distribution of information (M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H), the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

Amending Student Records

1. The eligible student or parent has the right to add information, comments, data or any other relevant

written material to the student record.

2. The eligible student or parent shall have right to request in writing deletion or amendment of any information contained in the student record, except for information inserted into the student record by the Evaluation Team. This request may be accepted after the acceptance of an IEP. If the IEP is rejected, the request may be accepted following the completion of the special education appeal process.

3. Any deletion or amendment of the student record will be done in accordance with the following:
    - If in the opinion of the eligible student or parent, adding information to the student record is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material, they have the right to present their objection in writing and to request in writing to have a conference with the principal or his/her designee to make their objections known.
    - Within one week of receipt of the objection or following the conference, the principal or his/her designee will render his/her decision in writing, stating the reasons for the decision. If the decision is in favor of the eligible student or parent, the principal or his/her designee will promptly put the decision into effect.

5. In the event that the eligible student or parent should disagree with any part of the decision made by the principal or his/her designee, they may appeal the decision and/or request a meeting in writing with the Executive Director. The Executive Director must respond in writing within two weeks of receipt of the appeal and will promptly see that his decision is put into effect.

6. If the eligible student or parent is still unsatisfied with the decision, it is recommended that they then contact the Director of Special Education of their sending district and express their concerns in writing.

Destruction of Student Records
Destruction of student records will be handled as follows:

During the time a student is enrolled in a program of the Collaborative, the principal or his/her designee of that program shall periodically review and destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information contained in the temporary record provided that the eligible student, his/her parent, and sending district are notified in writing and are given opportunity to receive the information or a copy of it prior to its' destruction. A copyof the notice shall be placed in the temporary record.

Student Records for Students No Longer Enrolled
The principal or his/her designee will forward the Student Records of all students upon graduation or termination of enrollment to the appropriate LEA.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Rights of Students
It is impossible to list all students' rights. The following is a non-exhaustive list of student rights which shall not be construed to deny or limit other rights retained by students, in their capacity as members of a school, or as citizens.

Students have the right to:

- Participate fully in classroom instruction and extracurricular activities regardless of race, color,

age, disability, gender, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.

- A meaningful education that will be of value to them for the rest of their lives.
- Maintenance of high educational standards and the development of maximum potential.
- A meaningful curriculum and the right to voice their opinions in the development of such a curriculum.
- Physical safety and protection of personal property.
- Safe buildings, sanitary facilities, and available drinkable water. Students have the right to use school supplies and facilities and work in a clean, organized environment.
- Receive respect from teachers and administrators, which would exclude their being subjected to cruel and unusual punishments, especially those which are demeaning or derogatory, or which diminish their self-esteem.
- Consult with teachers, counselors, and administrators, and anyone else connected with their program if they so desire at appropriate times.
- Express their opinions and feelings.
- Freedom of expression provided that they do not cause any disruption or disorder within the school. Freedom of expression shall include without limitation, the rights and responsibilities of students, collectively and individually (a) to express their views through speech and symbols; (b) to write, publish and disseminate their views; and (c) to assemble peaceably on school property for the purpose of expressing their opinions. Any assembly planned by students during regularly scheduled school hours shall be held only at a time and place approved in advance by the Program Manager/Director or his/her designee. No expression made by the students in the exercise of these rights shall be an expression of school policy and no school officials shall be held responsible for any civil or criminal action for any expression made or published by the students.
- Personal dress and appearance as long as they do not violate reasonable standards of health, safety and cleanliness or disrupt the learning environment of others.
- The protections provided by state and federal special education concerning disciplinary actions resulting from manifestations of disabilities.
- Present petitions, complaints, or grievances to appropriate school authorities regarding disciplinary and other school-related issues except where this Handbook provides for formal right of appeal.
- Personal privacy, including the right to determine their own appearance and select their own style of hair and clothing, subject to reasonable rules necessary for health and safety.
- Not to be suspended, expelled, or otherwise disciplined or discriminated against on account of marriage, pregnancy, and parenthood or for conduct, which is not connected with any school- sponsored activities.
- Pregnant students will be permitted to continue in school in all instances when continued attendance has the sanction of the expectant mother's physician. The physician's approval must be on file at the school. The student and the physician, in cooperation with the school staff, will develop an appropriate educational plan if it is agreed she should no longer attend school regularly.

Responsibilities of Students

Responsibilities are not a substitute for rules which are included in the Code of Conduct as described below in this Handbook. However, while it is not possible to list all student responsibilities, students who consistently behave in accordance with the following list of broad responsibilities will be in compliance with the rules of the Code of Conduct.

Students have the responsibility to:

- Respect the rights of all persons involved in the educational process.
- Respect the authority of school staff.
- Respect the diversity of staff and students in the Collaborative with regard to race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, marriage, pregnancy, parenthood, sexual orientation, primary language, handicap, special needs, age, and economic class.
- Contribute to the maintenance of a safe and positive educational environment.
- Apply their abilities and interests to the improvement of their education.
- Exercise the highest degree of self-discipline in observing and adhering to rules and regulations.
- Recognize that responsibility is inherent in the exercise of every right.

Responsibilities of Parents

Parents have the responsibility to:

- Share the responsibility for the behavior of their child in school, at school-sponsored activities, and on the way to and from school.
- Prepare the child to assume responsibility for attending school, and for his or her own behavior.
- Foster in the child positive attitudes toward himself or herself, others, school, and the community.
- Communicate with school personnel about the child.
- Attend individual or group conferences.
- Recognize that the school staff has the right to enforce the policies, rules, and regulations of the Collaborative.
- Behave in a civil and non-disruptive manner when visiting the school.
- Assure that their child brings to school only those things that are appropriate in a school setting.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Nondiscrimination, Civil Rights, and How to File a Grievance

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 76, s. 5, the Collaborative is committed to maintaining an educational environment where bigotry and intolerance, including discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, pregnancy, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital/civil union status, ancestry, place of birth, age, citizenship status, veteran status, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, limited English speaking ability, or homelessness, as defined by state and federal laws have no place; and where any form of coercion or harassment that insults the dignity of others and creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment is unacceptable. The Collaborative will not tolerate discrimination or the infringement of another's civil rights. This policy shall apply to conduct that occurs on Collaborative or school grounds, at school or Collaborative related activities, or traveling to or from school Collaborative related activities.

Prohibited Conduct

Conduct prohibited under this policy includes, but is not limited to:

1) Bias Motivated Conduct: Any act, including conduct or speech, directed at or which occurs to a

person or propertybecause of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender identify, sexual orientation, disability, or age.

2) Discrimination: The unequal treatment of others based on race, color, religion, national origin, pregnancy, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital/civil union status, ancestry, place of birth, age, citizenship status, veteran status, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, limited English speaking ability, or homelessness, as defined by state and federal laws.

3) Harassment: Unwelcome, verbal, written or physical conduct targeting specific person(s), which is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to create an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or offensive school environment, or substantially interfere with the progress of a student's education.

4) Sexual Harassment:
   - A school employee conditioning an educational benefit or service upon a person's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (often called "quid pro quo" harassment);
   - Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the school's education program or activity; or
   - Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking (as those offenses are defined in the Clery Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f), and the Violence Against Women Act, 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)).

5) Hate Crimes: Criminal acts to which recognized types of bias motives are an evident contributing factor. Criminal bias-motivated conduct entails, at a minimum, threats. Criminal conduct includes acts putting someone in fear of immediate physical harm (assaults), and actual physical violence (assault and battery), and grows most serious if a victim suffers any bodily injury. Repeated threatening or menacing actions like following someone can amount to the crime of stalking.

6) Hostile Environment: Subjecting another student to threats, intimidation, or coercion that is/are sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive so as to interfere with or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the Collaborative's programs or activities or place the student in reasonable fear for his or her safety. Whether a school environment has become hostile must be evaluated based on the totality of the circumstances. A hostile environment does not necessarily entail that a student exhibits quantifiable harm, such as a drop in grades.

7) Stalking: Intentional conduct involving two or more acts directed at a specific person, which would cause an average person substantial distress, where the perpetrator has made threats causing the targeted person fear of death or injury.

8) Retaliation: Retaliating in any way against another student for complaining of conduct prohibited under this policy.

9) Bullying: See Collaborative Bullying Prevention Plan contained in this Handbook.

10) Hazing: Conduct or any method of initiation into any student organization (official or unofficial), whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or person. Hazing is a crime in Massachusetts. See the anti-hazing section of this Handbook for more information.

Commitment to Prevention and Investigation

The Collaborative is committed to the prevention and accurate reporting of all incidents of civil rights violations such that all students and staff can enjoy a safe, non-threatening educational and working environment. Program administrators will thoroughly investigate all instances of violation and take disciplinary appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with this Handbook, as well as report such instances to law enforcement agencies where appropriate.

Collaborative staff must intervene in all civil rights violations and instances of harassment whenever witnessed, reported or suspected. The Executive Director and the applicable principal will be notified immediately whenever civil rights violations are in question, and Collaborative staff will move quickly in preventing a recurrence of any civil rights violation or incidence of harassment.

Procedures for Responding to and Investigating Incidents of Discrimination (See Title IX Procedures for Responding to and Investigating Allegations of Sexual Harassment)

I. WHERE TO FILE A COMPLAINT

Any Valley Collaborative student, employee, or third party who believes that a Valley Collaborative student, employee, or third party has discriminated against or harassed them because of their race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs, or activities may file a complaint with the Kari Morrin, Director of Human Resources, Title IX and 504 Coordinator, 11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica, MA 01862, 978-528-7863, kmorrin@valleycollaborative.org who will serve as the grievance officer in such matters.

II. CONTENTS OF COMPLAINTS AND TIMELINES FOR FILING

Complaints under this procedure should generally be filed within twenty (20) days of the alleged discrimination or harassment. Complaints may be submitted orally or in writing. The complainant may select another person to help with the filing of the complaint. Any responsible employee who receives an oral complaint will memorialize the allegations in writing and forward the written allegations to the Kari Morrin, Director of Human Resources, Title IX and 504 Coordinator, 11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica, MA 01862, 978-528-7863, kmorrin@valleycollaborative.org or designee by the following school day. The written complaint should include the following information:

1. The name and grade level (or address and telephone number if not a student or employee) of the complainant;
2. The name (and address and telephone number if not a student or employee) of the complainant's representative, if any;
3. The name(s) of the person(s) alleged to have committed or caused the discriminatory or harassing action, or event (respondent);
4. A description, in as much detail as possible, of the alleged discrimination or harassment;
5. The date(s), time(s), and location(s) of the alleged discrimination or harassment;
6. The names of all persons who have knowledge about the alleged discrimination or harassment (witnesses) as can be reasonably determined; and
7. A description, in as much detail as possible, of how the complainant wishes to see the matter resolved.

III. INVESTIGATIONS AND RESOLUTION OF THE COMPLAINT

Complaints will be investigated promptly and resolved as quickly as possible. (Any person who alleges discrimination on the basis of a disability relative to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a person, who because of a disability is believed to need special instruction or related services, pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Massachusetts General Law chapter 71B, and/or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, may use the procedure outlined in the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Parents' Rights Brochure, rather than this procedure. Information on this alternative process may be obtained from Kari Morrin, Director of Human Resources, Title IX and 504 Coordinator, 11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica, MA 01862, 978-528-7863, kmorrin@valleycollaborative.org. Respondents will be informed of the charges as soon as the grievance officer deems appropriate based upon the nature of the allegations, the investigation required, and the action contemplated, and in no case later than fifteen (15) school days following receipt of the complaint. The grievance officer will interview witnesses who are deemed to be necessary and appropriate to determine the facts relevant to the complaint, and will gather other pertinent information. Interviews of students will be conducted in such a way as to reflect the age and emotional condition of the student. The complainant(s) and respondent(s) shall have an equal opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence. Such interviews and gathering of information will be completed within fifteen (15) school days of the receipt of the complaint.

Within twenty (20) school days of receiving the complaint, the grievance officer will meet with the complainant and/or his/her representative and the respondent to review information gathered and, if appropriate, to propose a resolution designed to stop the discrimination or harassment, prevent its recurrence and to correct its effect.

Within ten (10) school days of meeting with the complainant and/or his/her representative and the respondent, the grievance officer will provide written disposition of the complaint to the complainant and/or his/her representative and to the respondent(s), including a statement regarding whether the complaint was found to be credible and whether discrimination was found to have occurred. Where the grievance officer finds that discrimination has occurred, Valley Collaborative will take steps that are reasonably calculated to end discrimination that has been found; prevent recurrence of any discrimination, and correct its discriminatory effects on the complainant and others, if appropriate. The grievance officer will contact the complainant within thirty (30) school days following conclusion of the investigation to assess whether there has been on-going discrimination or retaliation, and to determine whether additional supportive measures are needed. If the grievance officer determines that additional supportive measures are needed, he or she shall offer such measures to the complainant within thirty (30) school days following conclusion of the investigation.

Notwithstanding the above, it is understood that in the event a resolution contemplated by the grievance officer involves disciplinary action against an individual, the complainant will not be informed of such disciplinary action, unless it directly involves the complainant (e.g., a directive to "stay away" from the complainant, as might occur as a result of a complaint of harassment). Any disciplinary action imposed upon an individual will be subject to applicable procedural requirements. All the timelines indicated above will be implemented as specified, unless the nature of the investigation or exigent circumstances prevent such implementation in which case the matter will be completed as quickly as practicable. If the timelines specified above are not met, the reason(s) for not meeting them must be clearly documented.

Confidentiality of complainants/respondents and witnesses will be maintained, to the extent consistent with the obligations of the Valley Collaborative relating to the investigation of complaints and the due process rights of individuals affected.

IV. RETALIATION PROHIBITED

Retaliation against someone because he/she has filed a complaint under this procedure is strictly forbidden. Retaliation against someone who has participated in an investigation is strictly prohibited. Valley Collaborative will take appropriate steps as necessary to prevent retaliation. Acts of retaliation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or expulsion/discharge.

Upon request, the grievance officer will provide the complainant with the names and addresses of those state and federal agencies which handle discrimination and harassment matters.

Consequences for Civil Rights Violations

1. Non-disciplinary corrective actions: Some violations can be addressed with steps that do not necessitate disciplinary action. These steps usually lay within the discretion of the principal or his/her designee. Such instances may warrant counseling, diversity awareness training, separating offender and victim, parent conferences, and/or special school assignments.
2. Disciplinary Action: Disciplinary actions will be taken toward the goal of eliminating the offending conduct, preventing recurrence, and reestablishing a school environment conducive for the victim to learn. Violations of civil rights of students or staff may result in sanctions including suspension, emergency termination of enrollment, and expulsion for students and suspension, depending on the severity of the infraction.
3. Failure to Act by Administrators or Staff – All staff have a duty to act to stop witnessed civil rights violations, as safely as can be done, and report such instances to program administrators. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Commitment to Non-Retaliation

The Collaborative will deal seriously with any and all threats or acts of retaliation for the good faith filing of a complaint. Such action will result in disciplinary proceedings. Staff will monitor situations to ensure that no threats or acts of reprisal are made. Program administrators may use non-disciplinary procedures to prevent retaliation from occurring.

Referral to Law Enforcement Authorities

The Executive Director or designee has the responsibility of notifying the local police when they have reason to believe that a hate crime has been or is to be committed. This is mandatory for all hate crimes violations.

Documentation Requirements

- Record keeping –Records of all civil rights violations and hate crimes reported are maintained. Records will be compiled by school year. Record keeping will include particulars of the incident, response actions taken, results of the investigation and intervention.
- Monitoring and tracking to identify patterns – Records should be maintained and monitored to detect patterns in violations, repeat offenders, and locations for problems. Actions will be taken once patterns have been revealed.

Dissemination of Information and Training

- This policy will be available to staff, students and parents.
- Staff will receive training relevant to this policy annually during staff orientation.
- Students and parents will receive this policy annually and at time of admission to a Collaborative program.
- This policy will be reviewed annually for compliance with state and federal law.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving federal financial assistance, which includes the programs of the Collaborative. Complaints or concerns relating to discrimination or harassment on the basis of disability may be directed to the 504 Coordinator. The Collaborative's 504 Coordinator is:

Kari Morrin
Director of Human Resources, Title IX and 504 Coordinator
11 Executive Park Drive
N. Billerica, MA 01862
978-528-7863
kmorrin@valleycollaborative.org

Title IX Notice and Procedures

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 states:
No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. 20 USC §1681.

Sexual harassment, including sexual violence, is unlawful sex discrimination. As required by Title IX and in compliance with Title IX, the Valley Collaborative does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities including in its admission or employment practices. Inquiries regarding the application of Title IX to the Valley Collaborative education program and activities are directed to the Title IX Coordinator.
The following conduct constitutes sexual harassment:

- A school employee conditioning an educational benefit or service upon a person's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (often called "quid pro quo" harassment);
- Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the school's education program or activity; or
- Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking (as those offenses are defined in the Clery Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f), and the Violence Against Women Act, 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)).

How to Report Sex Discrimination, including Sexual Harassment

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail, to the Title IX Coordinator, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. Reports may be made at any time by using the telephone number or electronic mail address, or

by mail to the office address, listed for the Title IX Coordinator.

Kari Morrin
Director of Human Resources, Title IX and 504 Coordinator
11 Executive Park Drive
N. Billerica, MA 01862
978-528-7863
kmorrin@valleycollaborative.org

How to File a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment
A complainant may file a formal complaint with the Title IX Coordinator by mail, email, telephone or in person. The Title IX Coordinator may also initiate a formal complaint.

Complainant means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.
Respondent means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.
Formal complaint means a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that Valley Collaborative investigate the allegation.

How Valley Collaborative will respond.
The Title IX Coordinator will promptly contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures**.**
Supportive measures means non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent. Supportive measures are offered whether or not the complainant files a formal complaint and are designed to restore or preserve equal access to the education program or activity without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the effective implementation of supportive measures.
The Title IX Coordinator will consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures, inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint, and explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint. The Title IX Coordinator must treat complainants and respondents equitably and offer supportive measures to the complainant and respondent.
The Valley Collaborative may remove a respondent from school or an activity on an emergency basis, provided that the individualized safety and risk analysis determines that there is an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual. Respondents removed on an emergency basis will receive notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal. This provision may not modify any rights for students with disabilities.

Grievance Process
In response to a formal complaint, the Valley Collaborative will adhere to the following grievance process.
Written Notice**:**

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will provide written notice to the parties who are known. The written notice shall include:

- Notice of the grievance process, including notice of informal resolution process;

- Notice of the allegations that includes sufficient details known at the time and with sufficient time to prepare a response before any initial interview.
- Notice that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.
- Notice that the parties may have an advisor of their choice and may inspect and review evidence; and
- Notice that the Valley Collaborative code of conduct prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.

If any new allegations arise during the grievance process, the Title IX Coordinator will provide written notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

Investigation:

The Valley Collaborative will investigate the allegations in the formal complaint. Valley Collaborative will use trained personnel to objectively evaluate all relevant evidence without prejudgment of the facts at issue and free from conflicts of interest or bias for or against either party.

The Valley Collaborative may dismiss the formal complaint if:

- The conduct alleged would not constitute sexual harassment even if proved, did not occur in a Valley Collaborative's education program or activity, or did not occur in the United States.
- The complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint of any of the allegations in the formal complaint, or if the respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the Valley Collaborative; or specific circumstances prevent the recipient from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint.

Upon a dismissal, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly send written notice for the dismissal and reason(s) therefor simultaneously to the parties.

When investigating a formal complaint and throughout the grievance process, the Valley Collaborative will:

- Apply a presumption of innocence, and ensure that the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence rests on the Valley Collaborative and not on the parties;
- Provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence;
- Not restrict the ability of either party to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence;
- Protect parties' privacy by requiring a party's written consent before using the party's medical, psychological or similar treatment records during the grievance process;
- Provide the parties with the same opportunities to have others present during any grievance proceeding, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related meeting or proceeding by the advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney;
- Provide, to a party whose participation is invited or expected, written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all hearings, investigative interviews, or other meetings, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate;
- Provide both parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint;

- Prior to the completion of an investigative report, send to each party and the party's advisor, the evidence subject to inspection and review and provide the parties at least 10 days to submit a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completion of the investigative report.
- Create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence for their review and written response.

Determination regarding responsibility:

- The decision-maker, who shall not be the investigator or the Title IX Coordinator, will provide each party the opportunity to submit written, relevant questions that a party wants asked of any party or witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party. Complainants may not be asked inappropriate questions about prior sexual history. The decision-maker(s) must explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as not relevant.
- The decision-maker must issue a written determination regarding responsibility. To reach this determination, the decision maker shall apply a preponderance of the evidence standard. Preponderance of the evidence means that it is more likely than not that the alleged conduct occurred.
- The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for effective implementation of any remedies.

Appeals:

Either party may appeal the determination regarding responsibility (or from a dismissal) on the following ground:

- Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
- New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; and
- The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against the complainant or respondents generally or the individually that affected the outcome of the matter.

In the event of an appeal, the Title IX Coordinator will notify the other party in writing when an appeal is filed and implement appeal procedures equally for both parties.

Informal resolution:

An informal resolution process is available when a formal complaint is filed. Informal resolution process is available without a full investigation and nothing in the informal process shall preclude the parties from resuming a formal complaint process. Participation is voluntary and written consent is required. An informal resolution process is not permitted to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student.

Record Keeping

The Valley Collaborative will maintain records regarding sexual harassment reports and complaints for a period of seven years.

Retaliation Prohibited

Retaliation is prohibited against any individual, including complainants, respondents, and witnesses for reporting sexual harassment, participating (or refusing to participate) in any investigation/grievance process. Individuals may report retaliation to the Title IX Coordinator who will investigate and take measures to protect individuals from retaliation.

Complaints of Discrimination and/or Harassment on the basis of sex may also be reported to:

The Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education

5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor
Boston, MA 02109-3921
Telephone: 617-289-0111, FAX: 617-289-0150
Electronic Mail: OCR.Boston@ed.gov

Student Conduct

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with school rules and regulations to the end that a positive learning atmosphere be established. Among other things, student conduct shall reflect care and respect for all other members of the Valley Collaborative school community.

Certain breaches of conduct are so serious that the Principal may long term suspend or expel a student under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and 37H ½. These include:

- Possession of a dangerous weapon while on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event
- Possession of a controlled substance while on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event
- An assault on a School Administrator, teacher, teacher's aide, or other staff person.
- A felony charge or conviction

Violations of the code of conduct will subject a student to disciplinary action up to and including mediation, detention, suspension, or expulsion.

STUDENT RULES

1) Attendance and Tardiness: Collaborative students are expected to attend school on all days and on time. The student or their parent(s) are expected to let staff know prior to 8:00 A.M. if a student is ill, will not be attending school that day, or will be tardy. If a student is absent or tardy and no phone call is made, a call will be made to the student's home. Unexcused absences and excessive tardiness are unacceptable.

2) Appropriate Language: Collaborative students are prohibited from swearing, making rude comments or inappropriate noises, or using inappropriate voice levels.

3) Appropriate Dress: Students are expected to wear appropriate clothes for school or work. If they are working in an office or an outdoor maintenance setting, clothes should be chosen accordingly.

4) Borrowing of Money: Students are not permitted to borrow money from other students, purchase items for other students or sell items to other students.

5) Transportation: Individual sending districts are responsible for transportation of students to/from school/home each day. Students are not permitted to drive to school. If a student has a specific reason why he/she should be able to drive to school they may petition the Collaborative program. The Collaborative would then make a decision and notify the principal as well as the Special Education Director of the student's sending district to obtain their permission. Students cannot be driven to school or picked up from school without staff and parental permission. Parents need to complete a transportation permission slip for students to be driven to or picked up from Collaborative

programming. Students will only be permitted to be transported by those people the parent has indicated are appropriate (See Release of Students to Adults Other than Parents). If any of these people become disruptive to the school environment the Collaborative has the authority to not allow that person on school grounds. Students are not permitted to ride home on any bus or van except the one to which they have been assigned. Students are not permitted to drive to school or be picked up from school without permission from the Collaborative.

6) Appropriate Conduct: Students are expected to behave in an appropriate manner exhibiting respect for themselves and others at all times while in school or participating in Collaborative programs or activities, including off-site and Collaborative related activities such as field trips.

7) Leaving the School Building: Students are not permitted to leave the school building, work site, or vehicle without permission from the staff. The staff is responsible for each student's welfare, and expects students to treat the staff with respect and let them know where each student is at all times.

8) Portable Music Players/Electronics Games: Students are not permitted to use any of these devices during the school day. If they are brought in for use on the bus, they need to remain in the locker area at all times.

9) Cellular Telephone & Electronics: Students are not permitted to use their phones or other personal electronic devices during school hours without explicit staff permission. This includes making phone calls, texting, using social media, FaceTime or other video calling apps, taking or sharing photos or videos, streaming content, or using the device for gaming or other non-academic purposes. Phones and personal electronics may be used only when approved by staff, and in some cases, staff may choose to supervise use to ensure it aligns with school expectations. Misuse of devices may result in a warning, loss of phone privileges, or the daily collection of the student's phone or electronics by staff. This policy is in place to support a focused, respectful, and safe learning environment for all students.

10) Personal Property: The Collaborative strongly encourages that students do not bring valuable items to school. If the personal property of a student causes disruption while at school, the Collaborative may take the property away from the student. The Collaborative will make every effort to return all personal property to the student or parent. However, the Collaborative is not responsible for lost or stolen property, or compensating students or parents for value of such property.

11) Drugs or Alcohol: No drugs or alcohol are permitted in school or on school grounds, and students are not permitted to come to school under the influence of substances. The possession, use, manufacture, distribution, sale, or possession with intent to sell, or dispensation of alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, or other illegal or controlled substances of any kind is strictly prohibited.

12) Smoking and Tobacco: In accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 2A, it is unlawful for any student enrolled in a public primary or secondary school in the Commonwealth to use tobacco products of any kind, including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipes, smokeless tobacco, and vaping. The use of any tobacco products is prohibited within the Collaborative school buildings, the school facilities, on the school grounds, or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel.

13) Theft and Vandalism: Students are prohibited from stealing, vandalizing, or destroying the property of others, including property belonging to the Collaborative or its staff, faculty, students, parents, volunteers, and visitors. School pride is enhanced by a well maintained and clean building. The Collaborative hopes that all students will share in this belief. Students involved in theft, vandalism, graffiti, destruction of property, or arson will be required to reimburse the school for the materials and labor necessary to fix any damage they cause, and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, emergency termination of enrollment, or expulsion

14) Weapons: The Collaborative strictly prohibits the possession of all weapons in school, on school grounds, school buses, or at any school functions. All knives, handguns, rifles, shotguns, other fire arms, explosives, incendiary devices, and other weapons are forbidden. If a student is found to be in possession of such an object for which there is clearly no known educational use, the weapon will be confiscated it and the student's parents will be notified, and if necessary, the police will also be contacted. The Federal Gun-Free School Act of 1994 (GFSA) is Section 14601 of the Improving America's Schools Act, and deals with disciplining special education students in compliance with the IDEA in cases where the student is found in possession of a firearm. The GFSA permits the Collaborative to place a special education student found in possession of a firearm in an interim alternative educational setting as determined by the evaluation team for up to 45 days. The student shall remain in the interim alternative setting pending any special education manifestation determination or special education hearing initiated by the parent, unless the parent and the Collaborative agrees otherwise.

15) Violence and Threats of Violence: All violence and threats of violence (including physical fighting, assault, battery, kidnapping, threat of robbery, robbery using force, homicide, other drug-related or crime-related violence, and all acts that endanger or cause bodily harm to others) are strictly prohibited at school, the Collaborative, or Collaborative related activities. All threats of violence or physical attack will be taken seriously by the Collaborative.

16) Destruction of Property: Students are prohibited from the destruction of Collaborative property or the property of others.

17) Student Lockers: Some Collaborative students will be provided with lockers to store school supplies and personal belongings. It is important for students and parents to understand that lockers remain the property of the Collaborative or school in which they are located. Collaborative and school staff have the right to search lockers and any personal items inside lockers where reasonable cause to do so exists.

18) Care of Books and Other Materials: The Collaborative supplies students with the textbooks and other educational materials they need for school, free of charge. Textbooks and library books are owned by the Collaborative. If a student damages or loses a book or other school property, the student or parent may have to pay for a replacement. Families should be aware that many textbooks are very expensive.

19) Rules of Public Schools with Co-located Collaborative Programs: Students in Collaborative programs co-located within public schools are also subject to the rules of those public schools.

20) Students are prohibited from knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during a grievance process, including by not limited to harassment/bullying reports and investigation.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

All students have the responsibility to comply with the rules and policies set forth in this Handbook and to refrain from engaging in negative or disruptive behavior, or violating the rights of others. Any failure to comply with the rules or policies contained in this Handbook may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, emergency termination, and/or expulsion. Disciplinary proceedings will be conducted in accordance with Massachusetts law. Disciplinary action will depend on and be commensurate with the circumstances, nature, and severity of a student's infraction. Where possible and appropriate, the Collaborative will include all parties involved or affected by the negative or disruptive behavior in the disciplinary decision making process. In preparing students for the adult world, it is important that they learn and understand the effect that their behavior has on others and the consequences of their actions, to the extent that they are able.

In the event that a student repeatedly disrupts others, it will be necessary for the parents and school system to be notified. A meeting will be called, if determined necessary. If a student leaves the school premises, the parents and school system will be notified. The local police will also be notified.

The Collaborative Program's Principal or designee conducts semiannual reviews of all discipline data by selected populations. These semiannual reviews allows for the disaggregation of data by race and ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, English learner status, and students with a disability status. The Principal's accesses the extent of in-school suspensions, short- and long-term suspensions, expulsions and emergency removals and the impact of such disciplinary action on selected student populations. The Principal determines whether it is necessary or appropriate to modify disciplinary practices due to an over-reliance on suspensions, expulsions or removals on selected student populations compared with other students.

No student shall be subjected to abuse or neglect, cruel, unusual, severe or corporal punishment, including the following practices:

- Any type of physical hitting or pain inflicted in any manner upon the body;
- Requiring or forcing the student to take an uncomfortable position such as squatting or bending or requiring or forcing the student to repeat physical movements when used as punishment;
- Punishments which subject the student to verbal abuse, ridicule or humiliation;
- Denial of visitation or communication privileges with family;
- Denial of sufficient sleep;
- Denial of shelter, bedding, food or bathroom facilities.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

The Principal has the authority to exercise discretion in deciding the consequences for a student who has violated disciplinary rules. The Principal shall first consider ways to re-engage the student offender in the learning process, and

shall avoid using expulsion until other remedies and consequences have been employed.

Suspension

A suspension is a short term or long term removal from regular classroom activities.

Short term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for 10 consecutive days or less.

Long term suspension means the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than 10 consecutive days, or for more than 10 days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year.

A suspended student is restricted from entering the school buildings, or coming onto school grounds; and a suspended student may not participate in any school sponsored activities or functions during the suspension period. It is also recommended that parents restrict the activities of a student during the suspension period to reinforce the importance of the disciplinary consequence and to demonstrate cooperation between the school and family.

The Principal or his/her designee has the sole responsibility for determining who is suspended. The suspended student may not be permitted to return to school until a parental conference has been held.

In school suspension
At the discretion of the Principal, in-school suspension may also be imposed where a student is determined to have committed a suspendable offense. In-school suspension means the student is removed from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than 10 consecutive school days. Students will be subject to limitations on their movements and activities as determined by the Principal. In-school suspension for less than 10 days shall not be considered a short-term suspension. An in-school suspension of more than 10 days shall be deemed a long-term suspension.

For an in-school suspension, the principal shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which shall not exceed 10 days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The principal shall also invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the principal is unable to reach the parent after making and documenting at least (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension.

The principal shall send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the principal, if such meeting has not

already occurred. The principal shall deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent.

Removal from Extracurricular Activities and Attendance at school sponsored events
The principal may remove a student from privileges, such as extracurricular activities and attendance at school-sponsored events, based on the student's misconduct. Such a removal is not subject to the procedures in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H¾ or 603 CMR 53.00.

Opportunity for Academic Progress During Suspension/Expulsion
Any student receiving in-school suspension, short-term suspension, or long-term suspension shall have the opportunity to make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal from the classroom or school.

Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than 10 consecutive days shall have an opportunity to receive educational services that will enable the student to make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements through the school-wide educational services plan.

Student due process rights
In administering discipline, school officials will be careful to observe the right to due process under the law for each student. The nature of the violation determines the due process that school officials follow.

1. DUE PROCESS RIGHTS FOR STUDENTS CHARGED WITH POSSESSION OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON, POSSESSION OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE, ASSAULT ON SCHOOL STAFF AND/OR STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN CHARGED WITH OR CONVICTED OF A FELONY (M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and M.G.L. c. 71, §37H ½).

   Short Term Disciplinary Sanctions: Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that might result in a student's suspension from school for ten (10) consecutive school days or less, the student will be given oral notice of the offense with which he/she is charged and an opportunity to respond. In the event that the Principal or designee determines that the student will be suspended from school, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by telephone and in writing.

   Long Term Disciplinary Sanctions: Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that might result in the student's suspension from school for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or expulsion, the parents/guardians will be given written notice of a hearing at which they may be represented by an attorney at their expense and may examine and present witnesses and documentary evidence. Following this hearing, a written decision will be issued. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will have the right to appeal any decision imposing a long term suspension or expulsion from school to the Executive Director. Where the student is excluded in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §37H, the student shall have ten (10) days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Executive Director of Schools. For exclusions imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, §37H ½ , the student shall have five (5) days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Executive Director. For exclusions imposed by the School Committee in accordance with M.G.L. c. 76, §17, the student shall have the right to file a written request for reconsideration by the committee within ten (10) days of the effective date of the exclusion. Pending the outcome of any such appeal, the disciplinary sanction imposed shall remain in effect. M.G.L. c. 76, §17,

M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and M.G.L. c. 71, §37H ½.

2. DUE PROCESS RIGHTS FOR STUDENTS CHARGED WITH OTHER VIOLATIONS (M.G.L. c. 71, §37H ¾)

Notice and principal's meeting:
For any suspension under this section, the principal or a designee shall provide notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension or expulsion to the parent(s)/guardian(s) in English and the primary language spoken in the student's home. The student shall receive written notice of the charges and the opportunity to meet with the principal or designee to discuss charges and reasons for the suspension and/or exclusion prior to suspension/exclusion taking effect.

The principal or designee shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. The meeting may take place without the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) so long as if the principal has sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.

The purpose of the principal's hearing is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction.

The principal shall determine the extent of the rights to be afforded the student at a disciplinary hearing based on the anticipated consequences for the disciplinary offense.

a. Short-term Suspension

The principal shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate. The principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed.

The principal shall notify the student and parent of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal. The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.

b. Long Term Suspension

In addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student shall also have the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not; the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense; the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the collaborative; the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request. If the student or parent requests an audio recording, the principal shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.

If present, the Parent shall have an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

Based on the evidence, the principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The principal shall send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent.

If the student is suspended for more than 10 days for a single infraction or for more than 10 days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year, the notice will include written notification of the right to appeal to the Executive Director and the process for appealing in English and the primary language spoken in the student's home. No student will be suspended for greater than 90 days, beginning on the first day the student is removed from the building.

Emergency Removal:

The principal may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The principal shall immediately notify the Executive Director in writing of the removal and the reason for it, and describe the danger presented by the student. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal.

In the event of an emergency removal, the principal shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal. The principal shall provide written notice to the student and parent as provided above, and provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the principal as provided above, and the parent an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and parent.

The principal shall render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following

school day, which meets the requirements as described above.

In the event of an emergency removal from school, the principal will not release the student until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

Executive Director's hearing:
The parent(s)/guardian(s) shall have 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension or expulsion to submit a written request for an appeal to the Executive Director but may be granted an extension of time of up to 7 calendar days. If the appeal is not timely filed, the Executive Director may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.

The Executive Director will hold a hearing with the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) within 3 school days or the student's request for an appeal. The time may be extended up to 7 calendar days if requested by the parent(s)/guardian(s). The Executive Director's hearing may proceed without the parent(s)/guardian(s) if a good faith effort was made to include parent(s)/guardian(s). The Executive Director shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent and Executive Director to participate. The Executive Director shall send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing.

At the hearing, the Executive Director shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be. Students shall have all of the rights afforded to students at the principal's hearing for long-terms suspension. The Executive Director will issue a written decision within 5 calendar days of the hearing. If the Executive Director determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the Executive Director may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the principal's decision. The Executive Director's decision is the final decision of the Collaborative.

3 to 5 Day Suspension
If a student has been suspended for three (3) consecutive school days or five (5) non-consecutive school days in a school year, the program convenes a meeting with the Team to explore possible program modifications within the program in an attempt to prevent total suspension of the student. Student suspensions are recorded; the number and duration are tracked, including suspensions from any part of the student's IEP. Suspension from transportation is included in the tracking.

Suspensions exceeding 10 days (consecutive or cumulative in one year)
The Collaborative provides the following safeguards for students with disabilities prior to any suspension beyond 10 consecutive days or more than 10 cumulative days (if there is a pattern of suspension) in any school year.

1. A suspension of longer than 10 consecutive days or a series of suspensions that are shorter than 10 consecutive days but constitute a pattern are considered to represent a change in placement.
2. When a suspension constitutes a change in placement of a student with disabilities, the Collaborative, sending district personnel, the parent(s), and other relevant members of the Team, as determined by the Collaborative, parent(s) and the sending district, convene within 10 days of the decision to suspend to review all relevant information in the student's file, including the IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information from the parents, to determine whether the behavior was caused by or had a

direct and substantial relationship to the disability or was the direct result of the failure to implement the IEP— "a manifestation determination."

3. If the Collaborative, the sending district, the parent(s), and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior is not a manifestation of the disability, then the suspension or expulsion may go forward consistent with Collaborative policies and procedures. The sending district, however must offer the student:
    a. services to enable the student, although in another setting, to continue to participate in general education curriculum and to progress toward IEP goals; and
    b. as appropriate, a functional behavior assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications, to address the behavior so that it does not recur.
4. If the Collaborative, the sending district, the parent(s), and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, then the Team completes a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention plan if it has not already done so. If a behavioral intervention plan is already in place, the Team reviews it and modifies it, as necessary, to address the behavior. Except when he or she has been placed in an interim alternative educational setting, the student returns to the original placement unless the Collaborative, parent(s) and sending district agree otherwise or the hearing officer orders a new placement.
5. No later than the date of the decision to take disciplinary action, the parent(s) is notified of that decision and provided with written notice of procedural safeguards. Any party may request a hearing because it believes that maintaining the student's current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others, the student remains in the disciplinary placement, if any, until the decision of the hearing officer or the end of the time period for the disciplinary action, whichever comes first, unless the parent and the school district agree otherwise.

School Wide Educational Services Plan

To ensure that students who are suspended or expelled for more than 10 consecutive days have the opportunity to make academic progress during the period of suspension or expulsion, professional tutoring is provided by LearnWell or Valley Collaborative Staff. These tutoring services are based on and provided in a manner consistent with the academic standards for all students. It is the responsibility of the Program's Principal to notify the student and their parent or guardian of the opportunity to receive education services and to arrange such services at the time that the student is expelled or placed in long-term suspension.

INTERNET USE POLICY

Students should read this policy and complete the Student Internet Use Agreement and Parental Permission Form (Appendix F). The permission form is required for internet use.

Introduction

Valley Collaborative's aims to provide students with accessible, up-to-date and reliable information to support them in their studies and educational experience. This goal requires the Collaborative to provide access to the vast information resources on the Internet to help students in their studies and to be well informed. The Internet is an educational tool for the Collaborative. Users must understand that this access is for educational purposes and not for non- educational activities. Students will be utilizing the Internet, but WILL NOT have access to email or instant messaging.

Internet Use
The Collaborative provides students with Internet access in most classrooms and some locations have computer labs. All students may have access to the Internet. Students who wish this access must read and sign the "Student Internet/Email Usage Policy" form.

Authorized Use
The Collaborative's Internet connection is intended primarily for educational use. That means we expect students to use Internet access primarily for education-related purposes, i.e. to research relevant topics and to obtain useful information. The following are specific provisions regarding authorized use of the Collaborative's Internet connection:

- Users may use the Collaborative's Internet services for personal improvement provided that such use is consistent with staff and educational conduct.
- Internet use should be restricted to sites and materials such as news or information that might be considered reasonable if read as a text publication in a classroom or library environment.

Unauthorized Use
Users shall not use the Collaborative's Internet services to view, download, save, receive, or send material related to the following:

- Offensive content of any kind, including pornographic material.
- Propagating a virus, worm, Trojan horse, or trap-door program code.
- Disabling or overload any computer system or network.
- Circumventing any system intended to protect the privacy or security of another user.
- Promoting discrimination on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation race, age, or marital status.
- Visiting web sites that promote threatening or violent behavior.
- Using the Internet for illegal activities including the illegal downloading of music, movies, or other copyrighted materials.
- Distributing commercial messages.
- Gambling web sites.
- Hosting of 'game servers' for online or network gaming.

The above list of prohibited actions is by way of an example only and is not intended to be exhaustive.

Privacy and Monitoring
The Collaborative has software and systems in place to monitor and record all Internet usage. The Collaborative's security systems are capable of recording each Web site, email, and instant message into and out of its internal networks. The Collaborative reserves the right to do so at any time. No student should have any expectation of privacy as to his or her Internet usage. The Collaborative's technicians will periodically review Internet activity and contact staff of improper use to ensure that the Collaborative Internet resources are devoted to maintaining the highest levels of access and integrity. The Collaborative reserve the right to inspect any and all files stored in private areas of its network in order to assure compliance with this policy.

Accidental/Unintended Violations

The Collaborative does utilize software designed to identify inappropriate or sexually explicit Internet sites. The Collaborative blocks access from within its networks to all such sites. If a student accidentally connects to a site that contains sexually explicit or offensive material, they must disconnect from that site immediately, regardless of whether that site had been previously deemed acceptable by any screening or rating program. A user who accidentally accesses a prohibited site is encouraged to report the incident to staff without the threat of consequences.

Consequences
Students who are not responsible and who do not follow the Collaborative's policies on the use of the Internet and email may face one or all of the following penalties. Remember, the use of the Internet and various technologies offered by the Collaborative is a privilege, not a right.

Students grades K-5

- Parent Notification
- District Notification
- Possible Parent Conference or Team Meeting
- Loss of Internet access

Students grades 6-12+

- Parent Notification
- District Notification
- Possible Parent Conference or Team Meeting
- Loss of Internet access
- Possible Suspension from school
- Civil and Criminal Penalties when appropriate

POLICIES RELATIVE TO CONDUCT OF TEACHERS OR STUDENTS

The superintendent of every school district shall publish the district's policies pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students. Said policies shall prohibit the use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel. Said policies shall further restrict operators of school buses and personal motor vehicles, including students, faculty, staff and visitors, from idling such vehicles on school grounds, consistent with section 16B of chapter 90 and regulations adopted pursuant thereto and by the department. Copies of these policies shall be provided to any person upon request and without cost by the principal of every school within the district.

Each school district's policies pertaining to the conduct of students shall include the following: disciplinary proceedings, including procedures assuring due process; standards and procedures for
suspension and expulsion of students; procedures pertaining to discipline of students with special needs; standards and procedures to assure school building security and safety of students and school personnel; and the disciplinary measures to be taken in cases involving the possession or use of illegal substances or weapons, the use of force, vandalism, or violation of a student's civil rights. Codes of discipline, as well as procedures used to develop such codes shall be filed with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for informational purposes only.

In each school building containing the grades nine (9) to twelve (12), inclusive, the principal, in consultation with the school council, shall prepare and distribute to each student a copy of this Handbook setting forth the rules pertaining to

the conduct of students. The Board of Directors shall review this Handbook each year to consider changes in disciplinary policy to take effect in September of the following school year, but may consider policy changes at any time. The annual review shall cover all areas of student conduct, including but not limited to those outlined in this section.

Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, all student handbooks shall contain the following provisions:

a.) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in M.G.L. c. 94C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
b.) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events,including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
c.) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation at private expense, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.
d.) After said hearing, a principal may, in his/her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).
e.) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the Executive Director. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notifythe Executive Director of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the Executive Director. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.
f.) When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section, no school or school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If said student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the Executive Director of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the Executive Director of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.

PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTARY ATHLETIC, EXTRA CURRICULAR, OR CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITES

The Students participating in voluntary co-curricular activities, including but not limited to intra-mural or interscholastic athletics, are required to return a signed release of liability to the director of the event/activity prior to engaging in the activity, event, or the commencement of the athletic season. As these activities are voluntary, the student's participation in an event, activity, or athletic season is conditioned upon receipt of the signed and returned release of liability form. Massachusetts law permits use of such releases for school-related voluntary co-curricular activities, including but not limited to athletics. Release forms will be distributed by the Program Principal and/or by the administrator overseeing activities.

The student's participation in any co-curricular activity, including but not limited to intra-mural or interscholastic athletics of any nature, is conditioned on compliance with all applicable laws, district policies (including but not limited to policies relative to student conduct and discipline, bullying, hazing, harassment, and discrimination), all MIAA policies, and district values and behavioral expectations. In the interest of student safety and compliance with these laws,

policies, values, and expectations, coaches and/or other school staff will routinely monitor locker room activities. Such monitoring may include physical presence by coaches or other staff in locker rooms. While monitoring students in locker rooms, all coaches and staff will give appropriate consideration to student privacy. Students seeking increased privacy when changing clothes/uniforms may utilize individual stalls and/or privacy curtains or screens where available, and are encouraged to address any privacy related concerns with the coach or building principal.

STAFF POLICIES

STAFF ORIENTATION; ANNUAL TRAINING; AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Orientation
Staff orientation is the responsibility of Collaborative principals. Staff orientation is mandatory for all full and part-time staff, for interns and for volunteers.

Annual Training
All staff, including new employees, interns and volunteers, must participate in annual in-service training on average at least two hours per month. The following topics are required in-service training topics and must be provided annually to all staff:

- Reporting abuse and neglect of students to the Department of Children and Families and/or the Disabled Persons Protection Commission;
- Disciplinary and behavior support Procedures used by the program, such as positive reinforcement, point/level systems, token economies, time-out procedures and suspensions and terminations; as well as Restraint Procedures including de-escalation methods used by the program;
- Runaway policy;
- Emergency procedures including Evacuation Drills and Emergency Drills; and
- Civil rights responsibilities (discrimination and harassment).

The following additional topics are required in-service training topics and must be provided annually to all teaching staff:

- How the learning standards of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks are incorporated into the program's instruction;
- Procedures for inclusion of all students in MCAS testing and/or alternate assessments; and
- Student record policies and confidentiality issues.

The following additional topics are required in-service training topics and must be provided annually to appropriate staff based on their job responsibilities:

- CPR training and certification;
- Medication administration (including, but not limited to, administration of antipsychotic medications and discussions of medications students are currently taking and their possible side effects);
- Transportation safety (for staff with transportation-related job responsibilities); and Student record

policies and confidentiality issues (for staff who oversee, maintain or access student records).

Professional Development

The Collaborative considers the needs of all staff in developing training opportunities for professional and paraprofessional staff and provides a variety of offerings. To this end, the Collaborative ensures that all staff, including both special education and general education staff, are trained on state and federal special education requirements and related local special education policies and procedures.

The Collaborative provides in-service training for all locally hired and contracted transportation providers, before they begin transporting any special education student receiving special transportation, on his or her needs and appropriate methods of meeting those needs; for any such student it also provides written information on the nature of any needs or problems that may cause difficulties, along with information on appropriate emergency measures. Transportation providers include drivers of general and special education vehicles and any attendants or aides identified by a Team for either type of vehicle.

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

The Collaborative considers professionalism to be of utmost importance. We expect our staff's conduct to be professional and ethical at all times. The following behaviors are expected of all staff.

- Behave in a professional manner at all times while on school premises or at a function at which the staff is a representative of the Collaborative.
- Follow all policies and procedures, manuals, and handbooks as outlined.
- Conduct day-to-day activities in a safe, responsible manner, and avoid situations that may endanger the safety of others.
- Maintain the security of confidential information. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information is forbidden.
- No vaping, smoking or other use of tobacco products and no illegal or unauthorized drugs or alcohol at any Collaborative program, field trip or function.
- Provide accurate and non-judgmental information on all school records and reports.
- Regularly report to work on time, and give notification of any absences in a prompt and responsible manner in accordance with Collaborative policies and procedures.
- Complete assignments accurately and in a timely manner.
- Utilize only Collaborative-sanctioned modes of communication with students and follow all applicable laws, regulations, and Collaborative policies. This includes complying with the social media policy in the Employee Handbook.

[End of Handbook]

Appendix A

Valley Collaborative
Observation Request Form

With this form you should have received a copy of the Collaborative's "School Visitor Procedures" and "Observation Policy". Please review those documents carefully before completing this form and again before arriving for your pre-arranged visit. Please thoroughly and carefully complete this form in order to help the Collaborative best arrange for a visit that will meet your needs as well as cause minimum disruption to the students and staff. This form must be completed and returned to the main office of the building you wish to visit at least five (5) days prior to the date of any requested visit.

Name of student or program to be observed: _____

Please briefly describe the purpose of your observation: _____

_____

_____

_____

Please identify which setting(s) you would like to observe:

____Integrated Classes (please specify if you wish to see a specific class or subject area):

_____

____Therapy Sessions (please specify if you wish to see a specific type of therapy):

_____

____Special Education Classes (please specify if you wish to see a specific class or subject area):

_____

As stated in the Collaborative's "Observation Policy," due to the distraction inherent in the presence of any outside observer, observations may be limited to two (2) consecutive classes/periods/therapy sessions or for a maximum of two (2) hours, at the discretion of the principal of his/her designee depending on the nature of the individual program being visited. Given that limitation, please rank, in order of importance, the components of the program you wish to observe:

_____

_____

_____

Observation Request Form Continued

If you have particular questions about the program or there is general information that you would find helpful, please describe such information below so that we can have it prepared for you in advance of your visit. For example, you might be seeking information such as student/teacher ratios, a student's schedule, class size, text used, etc.

_____

_____

_____

Please list, in order of preference, several available dates on which you would like to observe. If your availability is limited to certain hours on any of these days, please note that as well:

_____

_____

_____

If you are an individual authorized by the parent or legal guardian (i.e., an evaluator), please attach written documentation signed by the Parent/Guardian showing your status as an evaluator.

After this form has been submitted to the main office of the building in which the observation is sought, a designee of the principal will call you to schedule the visit and will send you written confirmation.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation with the attached policies and procedures.

Name of observer: _____

Organization or affiliation:

Signature:_____ Date: _____

Approved: **Disapproved:**

Signature:_____ Signature:_____

Appendix B

Bullying Report Form

A. Reporter info:

1. **Name of Reporter/Person making complaint**: _____

2. **Reporter info**:

☐ Target of behavior ☐Staff Member ☐Parent ☐Other(specify): _____

B. Information about incident:

1. Name of the Target: _____

2. Name of the Aggressor: _____

3. Date of the incident: _____

4. Witnesses:

   1) _____Student☐ Staff ☐Other☐_____

   2) _____Student☐ Staff ☐Other☐_____

5. **Location of incident**:_____**Time of incident**: _____

Type of incident: _____

Racial or Ethnic Harassment: comments, jokes, name calling of this nature

Sexual Harassment: A school employee conditioning an educational benefit or service upon a person's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (often called "quid pro quo" harassment); Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the school's education program or activity; or Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking (as those offenses are defined in the Clery Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f), and the Violence Against Women Act, 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)).

Verbal/Written Aggression: name calling, teasing, threats, note writing, written threats, etc.

Physical Aggression: hitting, tripping, kicking, pulling a chair out from someone, purposely destroying someone's property, taking someone else's belongings

Social Aggression: spreading rumors, excluding from the group, embarrassing someone on purpose, ganging up on someone

Cyber Bullying: includes bullying through the use of technology, all social networking sites, any electronic communication, images, data, the creation of a web page or blog knowingly impersonating an individual

Intimidation: threatening or intimidating someone into a particular action, gesture directed toward an individual, actions that create a hostile environment for the victim

Appendix B

Bullying Report Form Continued

Description of incident:

For Administrative Use Only

A. Investigation:

Interviewed:

Aggressor Name:_____ Date:_____

Target Name:_____ Date:_____

Witness Name:_____ Date:_____

Witness Name:_____ Date:_____

Witness Name:_____ Date:_____

Any prior documented incidents by the aggressor Yes/No If yes, have incidents involved same target Yes/No

Summary of Investigation:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

B. Conclusions from Investigation

1. Finding of bullying or retaliation: Yes

N

o

2. Does the conduct constitute discrimination or harassment in violation of other applicable state and/or federal laws? (Is the target a member of a protected class?)

Yes No

3. Contacts:

Parent/Legal Guardian of target notified? Yes/No Name:_____Date:_____

Parent/Legal Guardian of aggressor notified? Yes/No Name:_____Date: _____

Other agencies notified (specify):

_____Date: _____

_____Date: _____

_____Date: _____

4. Disciplinary Action Taken

_____

_____

_____

5. Further Action Required

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C

Authorization for Student Participation in the Experiential Physical Education Program

I understand that, in connection with my/my child's participation in the Valley Collaborative (the "Collaborative") Experiential Physical Education Program (the "EPE Program") during the school year, I/my child will engage in physical activities at school and on field trips locally, out-of-town, and out-of- state. I understand that such activities include, but are not limited to, archery, canoeing, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, fishing, geocaching, hiking, physical fitness training, rappelling, rock climbing, ropes courses, whitewater rafting, and other similar activities. I understand that my/my child's participation in the EPE Program also will include travel and transportation in connection with such activities and field trips. I authorize myself/my child to voluntarily participate in the EPE Program and in consideration for being permitted to do so agree as set forth herein.

I understand that my/m y child's voluntary participation in the EPE Program includes the risk of injury that may range in severity from minor to disabling to even death. I assume full responsibility for any risk of personal injuries or death to myself/my child or others or property damages arising from my/m y child's participation in the EPE Program. I agree to forever RELEASE, HOLD HARMLESS, AND INDEMNIFY the Collaborative, its member school districts, and its current and former directors, members, employees, volunteers, and agents (the "Releasees") from all claims, liabilities, losses, damages, causes of action, and/or expenses, including attorney's fees that have arisen or may arise in the future in connection with my/m y child's participation in the EPE Program, including for personal injuries or death to myself/my child, personal injuries or death to others, and property damage arising from my/m y child's participation in the EPE Program. I further understand that my/my child's participation in the EPE Program will involve activities off of Collaborative property, and agree that the Releasees shall not have any responsibility for the condition and use of non-Collaborative property.

I/my child agree(s) to abide by Collaborative Student and Family Handbook and Policies & Procedures Manual, codes of conduct, and disciplinary procedures, and to abide by all instructions and decisions made by teachers, staff, and those in authority while participating in the EPE Program. I agree that my/my child's participation in the EPE Program may at any time be terminated for failure to follow these rules.

If the student is 18 years of age or older and is his/her own legal guardian, the following statement must be read and signed by the student:

I certify that I am at least 18 years of age, that I have read and that I understand the above Agreement, and that I accept and will be bound by its terms and conditions This remains in effect unless Valley Collaborative receives written notice that I revoke agreement to participate in the EPE program

_____ _____

Student Signature Date

If the student is less than 18 years of age, or otherwise is not his/her own legal guardian, the following statement must be read and signed by the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s).

I certify that I am the parent and/or legal guardian of the student, that I have read and that I understand the above Agreement, and that I accept and will be bound by its terms and conditions on my own behalf and on behalf of the student. This remains in effect unless Valley Collaborative receives written notice that I revoke consent for the student to participate in the EPE program for the duration of his/her enrollment at Valley Collaborative.

_____ _____

Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s) Signature Date

Appendix D

PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTARY ATHLETIC, EXTRA CURRICULAR, OR CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITES

PARENTAL CONSENT, RELEASE FROM LIABILITY AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT

We, the undersigned parent/guardian of _____[student's name] ("Student") and Student, do hereby consent to Student's participation in voluntary athletic, extra-curricular, or co-curricular programs of the Valley Collaborative and do forever RELEASE, acquit, discharge, and covenant to hold harmless the Valley Collaborative, a public school entity in the State of Massachusetts, and its successors, departments, officers, employees, servants, agents, and volunteers ("Releasees"), of and from any and all actions, causes of action, claims, demands, damages, costs, loss of services, expenses and compensation, inclusive of attorney fees, on account of, or in any way growing out of, directly or indirectly, Student's participation in the voluntary athletic, extra-curricular, or co-curricular programs, including but not limited to all known and unknown personal injuries or property damage which we/I may now or hereafter have as the parent(s) or guardian(s) of said Student, and also all claims or right of action for damages which said Student has or hereafter may acquire, either before or after Student has reached majority, resulting or to result from Student's participation in the Valley Collaborative athletic, extra-curricular, or co-curricular programs.

This release includes, but is not limited to, any claim based on allegations of negligence or negligent supervision, or any related claims arising out of the action or non-action of the District's agents, employees, servants, volunteers, or representatives regarding monitoring or supervising the activity of other students, or transfer of them to, on, or in any District facility including, but not limited to, play or practice fields and facilities, locker rooms, and vehicles used to transport participants. This release expressly excludes claims based on gross negligence or intentional acts, as defined by M.G.L. c. 258.

Furthermore, we hereby agree to protect the Releasees against any claim for damages, compensation or otherwise on the part of Student growing out of or resulting from injury to said Student in connection with Student's voluntary participation in the Valley Collaborative's athletic, extra-curricular, or co-curricular programs, and to INDEMNIFY, reimburse or make good to the Releasees any loss or damage or costs, including attorney's fees, the Releasees or their representatives may have to pay if any litigation arises from Student's intentional, grossly negligent or reckless acts or omissions while participating in said athletic, extra-curricular, or co-curricular programs.

Appendix D

PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTARY ATHLETIC, EXTRA CURRICULAR, OR CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITES
(cont.)

By signing below, I further certify that Student has had a physical examination and that Student is physically able to participate in said athletic, extra-curricular, or co-curricular programs.

School: _____

Sport/Activity and Season: _____

_____

Parent/Guardian Name (Print) Relationship

_____

Signature of Parent/Guardian, Date
On behalf of myself and, if Student is a minor/under my guardianship, on behalf of Student

_____

Signature of Student Date

Audiotape, Photograph, Videotape & Website Agreement Form

Appendix E

Student Name:_____Date:_____

We have found it to be very beneficial to use photos, audiotape, and videotape in order to:

- Help student express themselves
- Improve communication by using pictures to describe situations and sequence events
- Facilitate understanding of routines, schedules, and roles
- Improve communication with parents by allowing them to view their child's performance at school
- Enhance student's self-image and self esteem
- Heighten student understanding of group processes, sequencing of events, visual processing, and memory
- Appear in a printed publication such as a class picture, newspaper, magazine, or yearbook
- Submitted as sample to programs (examples: sports programs or play programs) or as contest entries to sponsors
- Utilized as a demonstration or sample in educational workshops, classrooms, and/or conferences
- Appear on video/electronic image made during a student presentation of a project, or in broadcasts or video/electronic image, which may or may not be used by a local television station or school/county project
- Facilitate other educational activities as Valley Collaborative deems necessary

Permission to Publish Photos on Valley Collaborative website

Photos of classroom activities, field trips, and school events enrich the school's website (www.valleycollaborative.org). Parent/Guardian consent is required to allow the faculty to publish photos containing students on the school website. To protect students' identities, last names or other personal information of students will not be published on the website. Only faculty will be allowed to add photographs to the school website. For further information please refer to the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (www.ftc.gov/ogc/coppal.htm).

Parent/Guardian Consent

Your permission grants Valley Collaborative approval to publicize without prior notification and remains in effect until Valley Collaborative receives written notice that you would like this revoked. I am the parent or legal guardian of the above-named student and give consent as indicated below for the duration of my student's enrollment at Valley Collaborative**:**

Permission for Audiotape, Photographs, Videotape	Yes	No
Permission to publish photos on the Valley Collaborative website	Yes	No

Parent/Guardian/Representative Signature _____ Date _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix F

Valley Collaborative Student Internet Use Agreement
Permission Form for the Duration of Enrollment

As a user of the Internet and other technologies offered by Valley Collaborative, I have read, fully understand, and will comply with the Collaborative's Acceptable Internet Use Policy.

Student Signature:_____

Date:_____

As the parent or legal guardian of the above student, I give permission for him or her to use the Internet and other network technologies offered by the Collaborative for the duration of his/ her enrollment at Valley Collaborative. This permission remains in effect until Valley Collaborative receives written notification that you would like it revoked. I understand the rules of the Acceptable Use Policy and also understand the consequences if said rules are not followed. I hereby release the Collaborative and its employees from any and all liability arising from my child's use, or inability to use, the Collaborative's Internet and/or other networking systems for the duration of his/her enrollment at Valley Collaborative.

Parent/Guardian Signature:_____Date: _____

Name of Student:_____Date: _____

Appendix G

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Parent/Guardian/Student Acknowledgement of Receipt of Student and Family Handbook & Policies and Procedures Manual

Student's Name:_____Age:_____

Parent/Guardian Name(s): _____

Parent/Guardian Email(s): _____

School/Program:_____Grade:_____

By signing below, the parent and student acknowledge and agree as follows:

1) We have received a copy of the Valley Collaborative Student and Family Handbook & Policies and Procedures Manual (the "Handbook").

2) We understand that the Handbook contains important information about the home-school partnership and rules and policies of the Collaborative with respect to the student's education and participation in Collaborative programs.

3) We have read and discussed the contents of the Handbook, and agree that the student's participation in Collaborative programs is subject to the rules and policies contained in the Handbook.

4) We agree that we will work together with each other and with Collaborative staff to make sure that the student follows the rules and policies contained in the Handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature(s):_____Date:_____

_____Date:_____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix H

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment of Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy and Procedures

Student's Name:_____Age:_____

Parent/Guardian Name(s): _____

Parent/Guardian Email(s): _____

School/Program:_____Grade:_____

1) We/I have received a copy of Valley Collaborative's Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy and Procedures (the Restraint Policy).

2) We/I understand that the Restraint Policy has been developed and implemented as required by 603 CMR 46.00, the Massachusetts regulation that regulates the use of physical restraint on students in Massachusetts public school districts, charter schools, virtual schools and collaborative education programs.

3) We/I understand that the Restraint Policy contains important information about the Collaborative's policies and practices with respect to physical restraints.

4) We/I have read and understand that contents of the Restraint Policy and acknowledge that all student restraints are subject to the policy for the duration of his/her enrollment at Valley Collaborative.

Parent/Guardian Signature(s): _____

Date:_____

Appendix I

Valley Collaborative

REPORTING FORM FOR INCIDENTS OF
RESTRAINT *CONFIDENTIAL*

Student Restrained: _____

Restraint by: _____

Witnessed by: _____

Reported by: _____

Place of Restraint: _____

Date & Time Restraint Began: _____

Date & Time Restraint Ended: _____

Name of School Principal Who Received Report: _____

Date & Time of Report: _____

Description of activity in which restrained student and other students and staff were engaged immediately preceding the restraint

_____

_____

_____

_____

Description of the behavior that prompted the restraint

_____

_____

_____

_____

Description of the efforts made to de-escalate, including less intrusive restraint alternatives that were attempted.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Justification for initiating the restraint

_____

_____

_____

_____

Description of the administration of the restraint including the holds used and reasons such holds were necessary

_____
_____
_____
_____

Description of the student's behavior and reactions during the restraint and how the restraint ended

_____
_____
_____
_____

Were there any injuries to student(s) and/or staff during restraint?_____YES_____NO

If so, identify who was injured and describe the injury and any medical care provided

_____
_____
_____
_____

Nurse / Social Worker Assessment (if applicable)

_____
_____
_____
_____

Reporter's Signature: _____

TITLE: _____

Teacher's Signature: _____

Principal's Signature: _____

PARENT COMMENTS

Parent(s) Name(s):

_____

If you have comments regarding this restraint, please provide them below and return a copy of this comment form to your child's principal._____

_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX J

Albanian

Informacioni i bashkëngjitur është i rëndësishëm. Lutemi kërkojini ndonjë anëtari të familjes, miku ose komshiu që t'jua përkthejë. Nëse nuk njihni asnjë njeri që t'jua përkthejë, lutemi plotësoni informacionin e mëposhtëm dhe kthejeni tek drejtoresha e shkollës së fëmijës suaj, së bashku me njoftimin e bashkëngjitur. Dikush që flet gjuhën tuaj do t'ju telefonojë për ta diskutuar informacionin me ju në telefon.

Ju lutem më telefononi rreth këtij njoftimi. Unë flas _____. Numri i telefonit tim gjatë ditës është_____. Emri im është _____.

Arabic

رجاء ملأت داخل المعلومة أدناه, إن أنت لا تعرف أيّ شخص الذي يستطيع ترجمت هو .ترجم هو ل أنترجاء سألت أسرة عضوة, صديقة, أو جار أن ي .ال يربط معلومة مهمّة.
سيدعو أحد ما الذي يتكلّم لغتك أنت أن يراجع المعلومة مع أنت على الهاتف .ورجعت هو إلى المسؤولة من طفلتك مدرسة مع ال يربط إشعار.
ي نهار هاتف _____. أنا أتكلّم .رجاء دعاتني حول هذا إشعار
اسمي ._____ رقم_____.

French

L'information jointe est importante. Veuillez demander à un membre, à un ami, ou à un voisin de famille de le traduire pour toi. Si vous ne savez pas n'importe qui qui peut le traduire , pour compléter svp l'information ci-dessous et pour la renvoyer au principal de l'école de votre enfant avec la notification jointe. Quelqu'un qui parle votre langue vous appellera pour passer en revue l'information avec toi au-dessus du téléphone.
Veuillez m'appeler au sujet de cette notification. Je parle le _____. Mon téléphone de journée le nombre est _____. Mon nom est _____.

Armenian

Կցվող տեղեկությունը կարևոր է: Խնդրեք մի հարազատից, ընկերից կամ հարևանից որ թարգմանի ձեզ համար: Եթե չեք ճանաչում որևէ մեկին որ կարող է թարգմանել, խնդրում ենք լրացնել ներքեի տեղեկաքը եւ ձեր երեխայի դպրոցի տնօրենին վերադարձնել կցված ազդին հետ: Ձեր լեզուն խոսող մեկը կզանգահարի ձեզ՝ հեռախոսով քննարկելու տեղեկությունը:

Խնդրում եմ ինձ զանգեք այս տեղեկության մասին: Խոսում եմ ----------:
Իմ օրվա հեռախոսահամարն է _----------: Իմ անունն է
----------:

Chinese

以下的消息是非常重要的。请你让家人，朋友，或邻居帮你翻译。如果你找不到帮你翻译的人，请填好下面的表格。然后交给孩子学校的校长。翻译人员会打电话给你，通过电话为你解释消息.
请打电话给我。我的语言是_____。 我的名字是_____。

Dutch

De informatie in bijlage is belangrijk. Gelieve te vragen een een een familielid, vriend, of buur om het voor u te vertalen. Als u iedereen niet kent wie het kan vertalen, alstublieft de informatie hieronder invullen en het teruggeven aan het hoofd van de school van uw kind samen met het bericht in bijlage. Iemand wie uw taal spreekt zal u roepen om de informatie te herzien met u over de telefoon.
Gelieve te roepen me over dit bericht. Ik spreek _____. Mijn dagtelefoon het aantal is _____. Mijn naam is _____.

Farsi

اطلاعات ضمیمه شده بسیار مهم هستند. لطفاً از وابستگان، افراد فامیل، دوستان و یا همسایگان خود تقاضا کنید که این متن را برای شما ترجمه کنند. اگر کسی را نمیشناسید که بتواند این ترجمه را برایتان انجام دهد خواهشمندیم فرم زیر را پر کرده و بهمراه مدرک اصلی (اطلاعیه یا اعلامیه) برای مدیر مدرسه فرزندتان ارسال فرمایید. شخصی که بزبان شما آشنایی کامل دارد برای توضیح و مرور اطلاعات مربوطه، از طریق تلفن با شما تماس خواهدگرفت.

لطفاً در مورد این مدرک (اطلاعیه یا اعلامیه) با من تماس بگیرید. من بزبان ..... صحبت میکنم.
شماره تلفن من در طی روز .....
نام و نام فامیل من .....

Finnish-Suomi

Oheiset tiedot ovat tärkeitä. Pyydä perheenjäsentä, ystävää tai naapuria kääntämään ne sinulle. Jos et tunne ketään, kuka voisi kääntää ne, täytä alla olevat tiedot ja palauta ne lapsesi koulun rehtorille oheisen ilmoituksen kanssa. Kieltäsi puhuva henkilö soittaa sinulle ja käy läpi tiedot puhelimessa kanssasi.
Soita minulle tästä ilmoituksesta. Puhun_____.
Puhelinnumeroni on päivällä _____. Nimeni on_____.

French

L'information jointe est importante. Veuillez demander à un membre, à un ami, ou à un voisin de famille de le traduire pour toi. Si vous ne savez pas n'importe qui qui peut le traduire , pour compléter svp l'information ci-dessous et pour la renvoyer au principal de l'école de votre enfant avec la notification jointe. Quelqu'un qui parle votre langue vous appellera pour passer en revue l'information avec toi au-dessus du téléphone.
Veuillez m'appeler au sujet de cette notification. Je parle le _____. Mon téléphone de journée
le nombre est _____. Mon nom est _____.

German

Die angebrachten Informationen sind wichtig. Bitten Sie bitte ein Familie Mitglied, einen Freund oder einen Nachbar, es für Sie zu übersetzen. Wenn Sie nicht niemand wissen, das es übersetzen kann, die Informationen bitte unten auszufüllen und sie zur Direktion der Schule Ihres Kindes zusammen mit der angebrachten Nachricht zurückzubringen. Jemand, das Ihre Sprache spricht, ruft Sie an, um die Informationen mit Ihnen über dem Telefon zu wiederholen.
Rufen Sie mich bitte über diese Nachricht an. Ich spreche _____. Mein Tagestelefon
Zahl ist _____. Mein Name ist _____.

Greek

Οι συνημμένες πληροφορίες είναι σημαντικές. Παρακαλώ ζητήστε από ένα οικογενειακό μέλος, έναν φίλο, ή έναν γείτονα για να τον μεταφράσετε για σας. Εάν δεν ξέρετε καθενός που μπορεί να το μεταφράσει , παρακαλώ να συμπληρώσει τις πληροφορίες κατωτέρω και να το επιστρέψει στον προι4στάμενο του σχολείου του παιδιού σας μαζί με τη συνημμένη ειδοποίηση. Κάποιος που μιλά τη γλώσσα σας θα σας καλέσει για να αναθεωρήσει τις πληροφορίες με σας πέρα από το τηλέφωνο.
Παρακαλώ με καλέστε για αυτήν την ειδοποίηση. Μιλώ _____. Το πρωινό τηλέφωνό μου
ο αριθμός είναι _____. Το όνομά μου είναι_____.

Gujarati

સંલગ્ન માહિતી મહત્વપૂર્ણ છે. કૃપા કરીને આપના પરિવારજન, મિત્ર અથવા પાડોશીને તેનો અનુવાદ કરી આપવા કહો. જો આપ કોઇ અનુવાદકર્તાને ના જાણતા હો, તો કૃપા કરીને નીચે જણાવેલ માહિતી ભરો અને સંલગ્ન નોટિસ સાથે તેને આપના બાળકની સ્કૂલના પ્રિન્સિપાલને મોકલી આપો. આપની ભાષા જાણનાર કોઇક વ્યક્તિ આ માહિતીના અવલોકન માટે આપની સાથે ફોન પર વાત કરશે.
કૃપા કરીને આ માહિતી વિશે મને ફોન કરો. હું _____ બોલું છું. મારો દિવસનો ફોન નંબર _____ છે. મારું નામ _____ છે.

Haitian Creole

Ransèyman ki atache-la-a enpòtan anpil. Tanpri mande yon moun nan fanmi-ou, yon zanmi oswa yon vwazen tradwi-li pou ou. Si ou pa konnen okenn moun ki ka tradwi pou ou, tanpri founi ransèyman nan espas-yo anba-a epi retounen papye-a nan biwo direktè lekòl pitit-ou avèk nòt ki atache avèk li-a. Yon moun ki pale lang-ou va rele-ou pou ba-ou plis esplikasyon nan telefòn.
Tanpri rele-m konsènen nòt-la . M pale kreyòl ayisyen. Nimewo telefòn-mwen lajounen se: _____ Non-mwen se: _____

Hindi

संलग्न सूचना महत्वपूर्ण है। कृपया परिवार के किसी सदस्य, दोस्त, या पड़ोसी से कहें कि वे आपके लिए इसका अनुवाद कर दें। अगर आप किसी ऐसे व्यक्ति को नहीं जानते जो इसका अनुवाद कर सकता है, तो कृपया नीचे की सूचना भरें और संलग्न नोटिस के साथ अपने बच्चे के स्कूल के प्रिंसिपल को लौटा दें। आपकी भाषा बोलने वाला कोई व्यक्ति आपको फोन करके आपके साथ इस सूचना के बारे में बात करेगा।
कृपया मुझे इस नोटिस के बारे में फोन करें। मैं_____बोलता हूं। मेरा दिन का टेलीफोन नंबर है_____। मेरा नाम है_____।

Italian

Le informazioni allegate sono importanti. Chieda prego ad un membro, ad un amico, o ad un vicino della famiglia di tradurrglielo per. Se non conoscete chiunque che possa tradurlo, per riempire prego le informazioni qui sotto e per restituirle al principale della scuola del vostro bambino con l'avviso fissato. Qualcuno che parli la vostra lingua li denominerà per rivedergli le informazioni con sopra il telefono.
Denominilo prego circa questo avviso. Parlo il _____. Il mio telefono di giorno
il numero è _____. Il mio nome è _____.

Japanese

添付されている情報はとても重要です。
ご家族、お友達、またはご近所の方に翻訳してもらってください。
もし翻訳できる人がいなければ、以下に必要事項を記入して、添付された通知と一緒にお子様の学校のプリンシパル （校長） に提出してください。
あなたの言語を話す人がお電話し、記載されている内容について説明いたします。

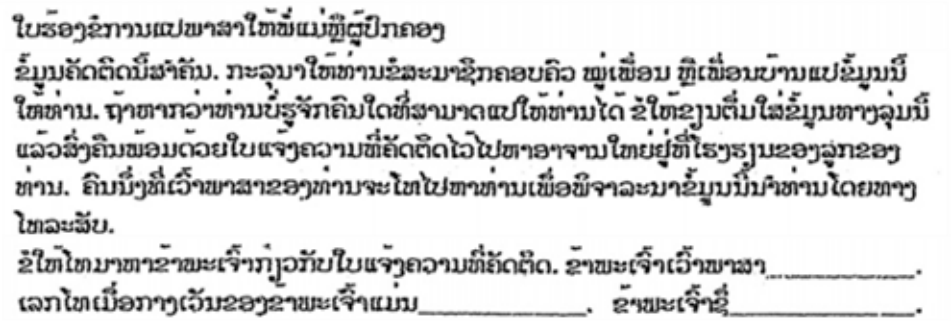
この通知について電話をください。私は _____ 語を話します。
日中の連絡先電話番号は _____です。
私の名前は _____ です。

Korean

첨부된 내용은 중요한 정보입니다. 친척, 친구, 또는 이웃에게 번역을 부탁하십시오. 번역해 줄 사람이 아무도 없다면 아래의 정보를 기입하셔서 자녀가 재학하고 있는 학교의 교장에게 첨부된 통지서와 함께 보내십시오. 귀하의 언어를 구사하는 사람이 전화를 통해 이 정보를 귀하와 함께 검토해 드릴 것입니다.

이 통지서에 관해 제게 전화해 주십시오. 제가 구사하는 언어는 _____입니다. 저와 통화가 가능한 낮시간 전화번호는 _____입니다. 제 이름은 _____입니다.

Laotian



Nepali

समाबेश गरिएको जानकारी महत्त्वपूर्ण छ। कृपया आफ्नो परिवार, साथी, अथवा आफ्नो छिमेकी सँग यो अनुवाद गर्न अनुरोध गर्नुहोस् ।यदि तपाईले अनुवाद गर्ने कोही पनि भेट्नु भएन भने, कृपया तलको जानकारीहरु भरि आफ्नो बच्चाको स्कुलको हेडमास्टरलाई सुचनाको साथै बुझाउनु होला। तपाईंको भाषा बोल्ने मनिषले तपाईसँग फोनमा तपाईको जानकारीको मुल्याङ्कनको लागि संपर्क गर्नेछ।

कृपया यो सुचनाको लागि मलाई संपर्क गर्नुहोस्। म _____ भाषा बोल्छु। मलाई दिउसो संपर्क गर्ने फोन नम्बर _____ हो। मेरो नाम _____ हो।

Portuguese

A informação unida é importante. Peça por favor que um membro, um amigo, ou um vizinho da família traduzam-no para você. Se você não souber qualquer um que pode o traduzir , para preencher por favor abaixo a informação e para a retornar ao principal da escola da sua criança junto com a observação unida. Alguém que fala sua língua chamá-lo-á para rever a informação com você sobre o telefone.
Chame-me por favor sobre esta observação. Eu falo o _____. Meu telefone do dia o número é _____. Meu nome é _____.

Pushto

د مور او پلار/خارونکی د ترجمی درخواست فورمه

نښلول شوی معلومات مهم دئ. مهربانی وکړی او د کورنۍ د یو غړی، ملګری، یا ګاونډی، نه غوښتنه وکړی چه دا ټاکل شوی معلومات تاسی ته ترجمه وکړي. که تاسي څوک نه پیژنی چه دا معلومات تاسی ته ترجمه وکړی، مهربانی وکی دا لاندي معلومات ډک کړی او د خپل د ماشوم ښوونځی مشر ته د دا ټاکل شوی خبرتیا سره یو ځای بیرته راواستوی. څوک چه د ستا په ژبه باندی پوهیږی تاسی سره تماس به ونیسی او دا معلومات د تاسی سره یو ځای په تیلفون باندی کتنه وکړی.

لطفاً زما سره د دی خبرتیا په برخه کی تیلفون وکړی. زه په _____ ژبه باندی خبری کوم. زما د ورځی له خوا تیلفون نمبر دا _____ دئ. زما نوم _____ دئ.

Romanian

Informatia anexata este importanta. Va rog sa rugati un membru de familie, prieten sau vecin sa v-o traduca. Daca nu cunoasteti pe nimeni care sa o poata traduce, va rog completati informatia de mai jos si restituiti-o directorului scolii copilului dumneavoastra impreuna cu anuntul anexat. Cineva care vorbeste limba dumneavoastra va telefona sa revizuiasca informatia cu dumneavoastra la telefon.

Va rog telefonati-mi despre acest anunt. Eu vorbesc_____. Numarul meu de telefon din timpul zilei este_____. Numele meu este_____.

Russian

Приложенная информация важна. Пожалуйста спросите, что член, друга, или сосед семьи переводит его для вас. Если вы не знаете любое, то может перевести его, пожалуйста для того чтобы заполнить внутри информацию ниже и возвратить ее к главе школы вашего ребенка вместе с прикрепленным извещением. Кто-то говорит ваш язык вызовет вас для того чтобы рассмотреть информацию с вами над телефоном.
Пожалуйста вызовите меня о этом извещении. Я говорю _____. Мой телефон дневного времени номер будет _____. Моим именем будет_____.

Spanish

La información unida es importante. Pida por favor que un miembro, un amigo, o un vecino de la familia lo traduzcan para usted. Si usted no sabe a cualquier persona que pueda traducirlo , para completar por favor la información abajo y para volverla al principal de la escuela de su niño junto con el aviso unido. Alguien que habla su lengua le llamará para repasar la información con usted sobre el teléfono.
Llámeme por favor sobre este aviso. Hablo el _____. Mi teléfono del día el número es _____. Mi nombre es _____.

Swedish

Den fäste informationen är viktig. Behaga frågar en familjemedlem, en vän eller ett grann att översätta den för dig. Om du inte vet någon som kan översätta det, att behaga fyll in den nedanföra informationen, och återgångt skolar den till rektor av ditt barn tillsammans med fäst märker. Någon, som talar ditt språk, ska appell dig för att granska informationen med dig över ringa.
Behaga appellen som jag märker härom. Jag talar _____. Min dag ringer numrera är _____. Mitt känt är _____.

Thai

เอกสารที่แนบมานี้เป็นเอกสารสำคัญ กรุณาสอบถามสมาชิกในครอบครัว ,เพื่อน ,หรือเพื่อนบ้านของท่าน เพื่อแปลให้ท่านเข้าใจ ถ้าท่านไม่รู้จักใครที่จะสามารถแปลเอกสารเหล่านี้ให้ท่านได้ กรุณากรอกข้อมูลในแบบฟร์อมข้างล่ อาจารย์ใหญ่ของโรงเรียนที่บุตรหลานของท่านกำลังศึกษาอยู่ พร้อมเอกสารที่ต้องการให้แปล จะมีบุคคลที่พูดภาษาของท่านจะโทรกลับเพื่อช่วยในการแปลและสื่อสารกับท่านผ่านทางโทรศัพท์

กรุณาโทรหาข้าพเจ้า เกี่ยวกับเอกสารนี้

ข้าพเจ้าพูดภาษา _____

หมายเลขโทรศัพท์ที่สามารถติดต่อได้ระหว่างวันคือ _____

ข้าพเจ้าชื่อ _____.

Urdu

منسلکہ معلومات اہم ہے- براہ کرم اپنے کسی اہل خانہ، دوست، یا پڑوسی سے اپنے لئے اس کا ترجمہ کرنے کو کہیں- اگر آپ کسی ایسے فرد سے واقف نہیں ہیں جو اس کا ترجمہ کرسکتا ہو تو، براہ کرم ذیل کی معلومات بھر کر منسلکہ نوٹس کے ساتھ اپنے بچے کے اسکول کے پرنسپل کو واپس کردیں-

آپ کی زبان بولنے والا کوئی شخص فون پر آپ کے ساتھ معلومات پر گفتگو کے لئے کال کرے گا-

براہ کرم اس نوٹس کے سلسلے میں مجھے کال کریں- میں_____
زبان بولتا / بولتی ہوں

میرا دن کے وقت کا فون نمبر _____ ہے میرا نام
ہے _____

Vietnamese

Thông tin đính kèm rất quan trọng. Xin vui lòng yêu cầu một người thân trong gia đình, bạn bè, hoặc hàng xóm dịch lại cho bạn. Nếu bạn không biết người nào có thể dịch được, vui lòng điền thông tin dưới đây và gửi lại cho hiệu trưởng trường học của con bạn cùng với thông báo đính kèm. Sé có người biết nói ngôn ngữ của bạn gọi điện cho bạn để xem xét lại thông tin với bạn qua điện thoại.

Xin vui lòng gọi cho tôi về thông báo này. Tôi nói tiếng _____. Số điện thoại ban ngày của tôi là _____. Tên tôi là _____.

Appendix K

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
Sexual discrimination/Harassment Reporting Form

Sexual harassment, including sexual violence, is unlawful sex discrimination. Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail, to: Kari Morrin, Director of Human Resources and Title IX Coordinator, 11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica, MA 01862, 978-528-7863, kmorrin@valleycollaborative.org **Use this form to report sex discrimination or sexual harassment. Assistance is available from the Title IX Coordinator if you need help completing this form.**

Name of Reporter/Person Filing the report:

Circle whether you are a: **Student** **Staff Member** **Parent** **Administrator** **Other**

If you are a student, your school name: Your grade:

If you are a staff member, your school name or work site: Your role:

Your address and telephone number if not a student or employee:

Name of Person you alleged discriminated/ harassed you:

Circle whether that person is a: **Student** **Staff Member** **Parent** **Administrator** **Other**

Date(s) and time(s) of alleged discrimination or harassment:

Location of alleged discrimination or harassment:
Witnesses (people who saw the incident or have information about it)
Name:
Name:
Name:

Please provide a detailed description of the conduct you allege to be discrimination or harassment: Describe include the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used).

Signature of Person Filling out Report: **Date:**

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

Form Given to/Received by: **Position:**

Circle how was report received: in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail

Signature: _____
Date Received:

Appendix L

2026 - 2027 Academic Calendar

July 2026

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	~~10~~	11
12	13	14	15	16	~~17~~	18
19	20	21	22	23	~~24~~	25
26	27	28	29	30	~~31~~	

August 2026

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	~~7~~	8
9	10	11	12	13	~~14~~	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24/31	25	26	27	28	29

September 2026

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	~~23~~	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October 2026

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	~~21~~	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 2026

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	~~25~~	26	27	28
29	30					

December 2026

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	~~23~~	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

January 2027

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	~~13~~	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

February 2027

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	~~10~~	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

March 2027

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	~~17~~	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April 2027

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	~~14~~	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2027

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	~~19~~	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June 2027

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	~~11~~	12
13	14	15	16	~~17~~	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	~~25~~	26
27	28	29	30			

- First/Last Day of Summer Program
- *Professional Development Day All Staff - No School for Students
- No School/Holiday/School Vacation
- Professional Development Day for Professional Staff - No School for Students
- Last Day of School Year (0 snow days used)
- First/Last Day of School Year (5 snow days used)
- Early Release - Professional Development for staff (specific number of PD days will vary by position)
- Board of Directors Meeting (Regular School Day for Staff and Students)
- Early Release
- Early Release - High School Graduation Day

Appendix M

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

Hiring and Employment Practices

Name of Employer: _____ Date: _____

As a hiring manager/supervisor at the above named organization, I affirm the following:

The above named employer and all hiring managers/supervisors comply with applicable federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination in hiring or employment practices. This specifically includes the following protected categories: race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, disability, religion, limited English speaking ability, sexual orientation, and homelessness.

This statement is true for hiring employees/students completing work-study programs, apprenticeship training programs, as well as those completing cooperative work experiences at Valley Collaborative.

_____ _____

Signature Date

_____ _____

Printed Name Title

Appendix N

Human Sexuality Education Notification

Valley Collaborative dedicates itself to providing your child with an educational curriculum that addresses all areas of their everyday functioning. A component of our programming involves health education, which provides instruction regarding human development and human sexuality.

This instruction may be provided by a team of educators including the classroom teacher, physical education teacher, social workers/counselors, nurses, and the life skills coordinator. Together the team will work to provide age and developmentally appropriate instruction of skills and provide your child with the information they need to navigate this time in their lives. We are sensitive to the individual needs of each student and will adjust the curriculum as we deem necessary for each student.

As we move forward, Valley Collaborative will implement evidence-based Sexuality Education curricula that were developed with an understanding of our student population and is trauma informed.

The lesson plans topics for this curriculum includes:

- Gender expression and identity
- Relationship development
- Communication styles
- Problem-solving, safety and decision making, including internet safety and consent
- Hygiene and caring for the body
- Human anatomy and physiology
- Sexual development and health, including sexual transmitted infections and pregnancy

Under Massachusetts law and Valley Collaborative's policy, you may exempt your student from participating in Sexuality Education. If you choose to exempt your student please indicate it below and provide it to your student's Valley Collaborative program. Please note: no student who is exempted from this portion of the curriculum will be penalized.

_____ I **DO NOT** allow my student to participate

_____	_____	_____
Parent/Guardian Signature	Student	Date

Appendix O

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica, MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

Medical/ Behavioral Emergency Response Plan

Valley Collaborative has developed this Medical Emergency Response Plan in consultations with the members of the school community including, principals, lead teachers, Lead Nurse, Facilities, school nurses, school physician, Billerica Police, Fire and Ambulance Service. The purpose of this plan is twofold:

1. To reduce the incidence of life threatening emergencies, and
2. To promote efficient responses to such emergencies

The complete plan has been posted in the Principal's office, lead teachers office, main office and school nurses' office. The complete plan will be modified as needed and updated whenever there are physical changes to the school campus, including new construction. The plan will be submitted to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education every three years.

Safety Assessment

To prevent injuries and accidents on school property, the school district follows Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidance. Prior to the opening of the school each year, key school administrators and the facility management director in cooperation with the Hopedale Fire Department conduct a safety assessment of all buildings using the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Safety Program Checklist for Schools. Safety guidelines are posted in all classrooms. Science, engineering, physical education, and fine arts instructors as well as athletic coaches educate students on specific safety precautions and injury prevention measures relevant to their disciplines.

Community Emergency Responders

School leaders and administrators have ongoing relationships with fire and police chiefs as required under the Multi-hazard Evacuation Plan, developed under Section 363 of Chapter 159 of the Acts of 2000. Law enforcement and fire/safety personnel have connected the district administration building and the district schools with local emergency medical services (EMS) personnel. EMS has assisted in establishing a rapid communication system linking all parts of the school campus; determining response times to all parts of campus; and providing a methodology for directing EMS personnel to an ill or injured individual(s) and to available rescue equipment when they arrive in response to an emergency call for assistance. Our school

has established relationships with the Mobile Crisis Center and our local Community Based Health Center.

911 and Access

- The school has a dedicated landline that connects directly to 911 local mobile crisis.
- Key personnel, including those involved in after-school and extracurricular activities, have access to radios that can directly access 911.
- Medical and Behavioral Health Emergency Response protocols and 911 radios are in all vehicles owned and operated by the district.

Contact Information

All staff are required to carry a walkie-talkie on their person at all times while with the students. The school maintains an updated list of key faculty and staff, with phone numbers and a call tree that indicates when each individual is to be contacted during a medical or behavioral health emergency and their respective roles, such as directing EMS, providing first aid, supporting students, and providing class coverage. This resource information is available in the school's main office and in the school nurse's office.

The school maintains an updated list of community-based providers including our local Community Based Health Center that includes names and phone numbers of behavioral health professionals who can provide long- and short- term mental health services on campus following incidents and emergencies. This resource information is available in the school's main office along with information on the state's Behavioral Health Help Line.

The school's main office will contact parents/guardians of students and emergency contact persons for faculty and staff if the student, faculty, or staff person has a medical/behavioral health emergency. The school maintains a list of names and phone numbers of parents/guardians, updated at the beginning of each school year, who should be contacted in case of a medical/behavioral health emergency concerning a student. The school maintains a list of names and phone numbers of individuals who should be contacted in case of a medical/behavioral health emergency concerning faculty and staff. Faculty and staff are directed to provide updated contact information as needed to the main office.

Medical/Behavioral Health Emergency Response Protocols

The school's Medical/Behavioral Health Emergency Response Protocols are posted in the main office, the school nurse's office, classrooms, cafeteria, and public areas on campus with instructions on how to activate the local emergency medical services (EMS).

In case of a medical incident, school staff will immediately:

- Contact the school nurse and the main office; and

- Escort an injured person who is ambulatory to the school nurse's office or notify the school nurse if the person cannot be moved.

Main office personnel/ school nurses will ensure that designated individuals are directed to remain with the injured or ill person until medical assistance arrives.

Faculty and staff who are involved in school-related activities outside of regular school hours have been trained in the medical emergency response protocols and keep a copy of the protocols with them during all school-sponsored activities and events. The protocols identify who is to be contacted during activities outside of the regular school hours.

The school's medical response will proceed as follows:

- The nurse will assess the condition of the person(s) to determine the category of injury, illness, or condition:
    i. *Life-threatening or potentially disabling*: Because these medical conditions can cause death or disability within minutes, they require immediate intervention, medical care, and, usually, hospitalization. Examples of this category include airway and breathing difficulties, cardiac arrest, chest pain, and/or cyanosis.
    ii. *Serious or potentially life-threatening or potentially disabling*: Burns, major multiple fractures, and insect bites are examples of this category. These occurrences may result in a life-threatening situation or may produce permanent damage, so they must be treated as soon as possible.
    iii. *Non-life-threatening*: These are defined as any injury or illness that may affect the general health of a person (e.g., mild or moderate fever, stomachache, headache, seizures, fractures, cuts). The school nurse will evaluate the incident and make decisions regarding further treatment. The school nurse may notify the parent/guardian and recommend follow-up medical evaluation or treatment.

- When an injury, illness, or condition is determined to be potentially life-threatening or disabling, the school nurse will inform main office personnel to:
    - call EMS (911) using the dedicated emergency phone line and provide the location of the injured or ill person and available rescue equipment.
    - activate the medical emergency contact list to use designated school staff in their respective roles.
    - direct designated school personnel to remain stationed at the specific location on campus where the medical incident occurred and greet emergency responders upon arrival, providing updates on the situation. EMS response time to the Valley Middle/ High School is estimated at 3-4 minutes, Valley Elementary is estimated 4-5 minutes.

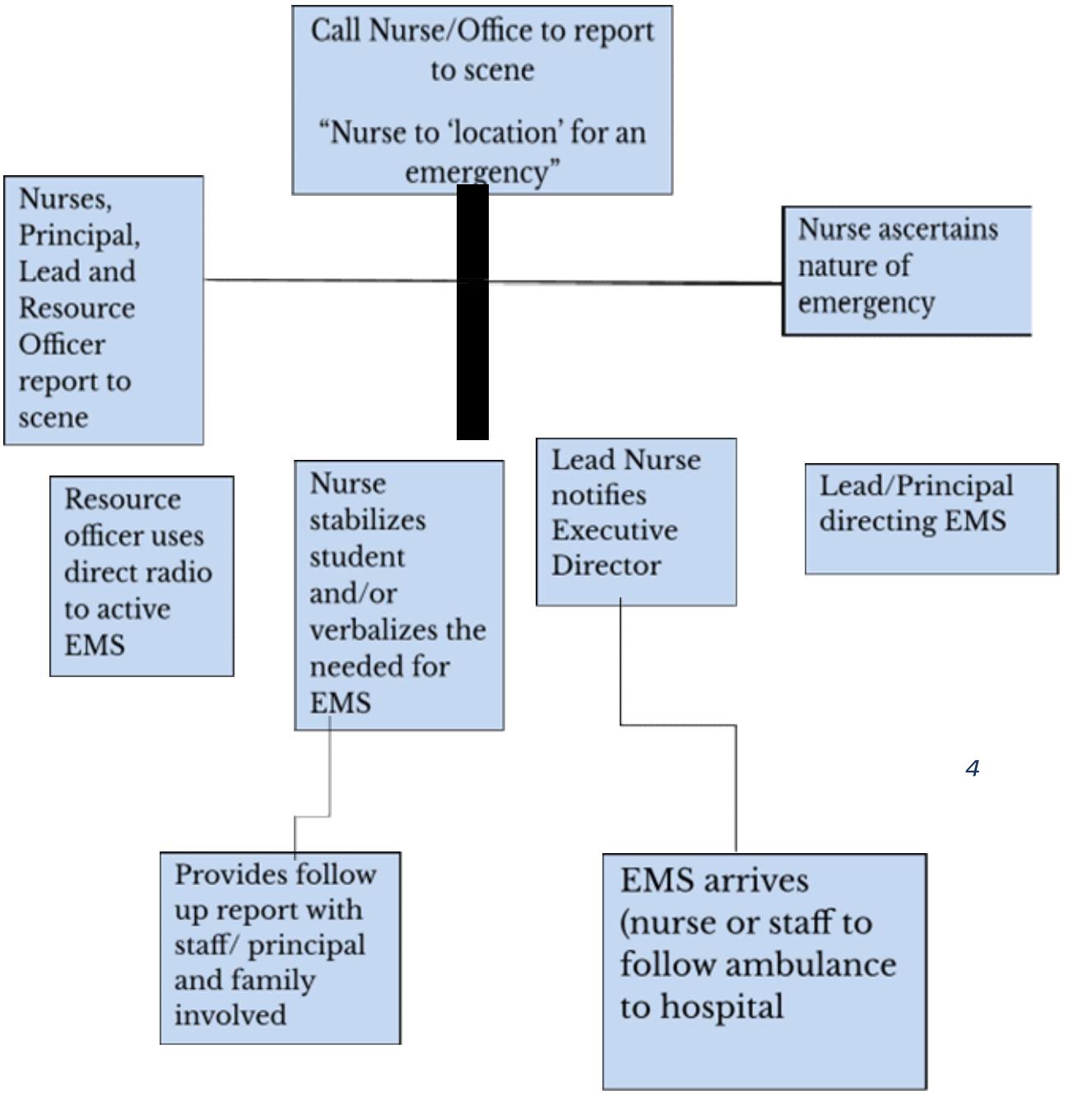
- Principal or Social Worker will notify the parent/ legal guardian of the student or the emergency contact for faculty/ staff and inform them that the person is ill or has been injured and is being transported to a medical facility if the information is known at the time of the call.

If the school nurse is not in the building at the time of the medical incident, main office personnel will notify the administrator and the lead nurse. They will assess the situation and direct main office personnel to place the 911 call in the event of a potentially life-threatening or potentially disabling injury, illness, or condition. Other steps will be taken as described above.

If the school nurse or other medically trained individual determines that the injury, illness, or condition is non-life-threatening, first aid and or medical services will be provided onsite, as appropriate. Main office personnel will notify the involved student's parent/guardian.

All faculty and staff must adhere to the following during all medical incidents:

- Standard Precautions must be followed at all times (see Definitions).
- Avoid moving the ill or injured person unless there is more danger if left there.
- Remain with the person until assistance arrives and remain calm.
- Direct other staff to manage bystanders.



USE STANDARD PERCAUTIONS

DO NOT TOUCH BODILY FLUIDS

In case of a behavioral incident, school staff will immediately:

- Refer to the student's individualized behavior plan
- Contact the school counselor/clinical staff, BCBA , school nurse, administrator if needed
- Encourage the person to the counselor's office or quiet space if indicated

The school's behavioral health response will proceed as follows:

- The teacher, school counselor, BCBA or clinical staff will assess the condition of the person(s) to determine the category of behavioral need:
    i. *Life-threatening Situation (Emergent)*: A behavioral emergency is defined as a situation in which a person presents as being at imminent risk of behaving in a way that could result in serious harm or death to self or others. Examples of this category include signs of self-injury, suicidal or irrational thoughts, and increased agitation demonstrated as verbal or physical threats.
    ii. *Serious or in need of immediate crisis intervention (Urgent)*: Signs might include inability to perform daily tasks, rapid changes in personality, mood, or behavior, signs of alcohol or substance use, history of suicide attempts or other self-harming behaviors, or significant withdrawal from friends, family members, or enjoyed activities.
    iii. *Non-life-threatening behavioral health need (Routine)*: These are defined as any behavioral needs that may affect the general health of a person (e.g., mild or moderate feelings of anxiety, irritability, frustration, sadness, anger, etc.).

iv. The school counselor may consider calling the Behavioral Health Help Line (BHHL) 833-773-2445 for additional support coordinating services.

- The BHHL can support the school counselor or others with the assessment and response to behavioral incidents as follows:

Behavioral Incident	ROUTINE	URGENT	EMERGENT
Criteria	When the person manifests an adequate premorbid level of functioning with adequate social/family support and resources, and when the person demonstrates only mild impairment in judgment, functioning, and impulse control.	The person may be distressed, or multiple risk factors are present, but there is no current potential danger of harm to self or others. The person indicates a plan and ideation to harm self or others, but no apparent means or intent are present, and protective factors are sufficient to not warrant a higher risk rating. The person indicates intoxication or mild withdrawal symptoms.	Failure to obtain immediate care would place the person's life, another's life, or property in jeopardy, or cause serious impairment of bodily functions. If the person is determined to be at imminent risk, the school counselor will initiate the outreach to active rescue and request community dispatch and safety assessment.
Response	Refer to students individual behavior plan or coping strategies, offer quiet space or sensory room, encourage talking about concern with clinical staff	Refer to school wide crisis intervention plan, Refer to social worker, contact students family and offer connection to local Community Based Health Center or Behavioral Health Urgent Care	Mobile Crisis Intervention Section 12 Or 911

When in a life-threatening situation, the school counselor or clinical staff will inform main office personnel to:

- call EMS (911) and provide the location of the person.
- activate the medical and behavioral emergency contact list for designated school staff in their respective roles.
- direct designated school personnel to remain stationed at the specific location on campus where the behavioral incident occurred and greet emergency responders upon arrival, providing updates on the situation. EMS response time to the school is estimated at 4-5 minutes
- The administrator will decide if there should be a stay in place while emergency services are on the premises.
- notify the parent/guardian of the student or the emergency contact for faculty/ staff and inform them that the person is experiencing a behavioral health emergency and is being transported to a medical facility if the information is known at the time of the call.

When an individual is in need of immediate crisis intervention, the teacher, social worker or clinical staff will:

- contact the schools BCBA or clinical staff to assess the situation and refer to student's individual behavior response plan
- call their local Community Behavioral Health Center (CBHC) or Mobile Crisis Provider using the dedicated phone line and provide the location of the person in need of immediate crisis support if necessary.
- activate the medical emergency contact list to use designated school staff in their respective roles.
- Direct designated school personnel to remain stationed with the person identified as needing crisis intervention and be prepared to greet crisis responders. If school personnel experience unforeseen delays and behavioral symptoms worse, they can then direct the main office personnel to place the call to 911.

If the school counselor or clinical staff are not in the building at the time of the behavioral emergency, main office personnel will notify the administrator in charge. The administrator will assess the situation and direct main office personnel to place the 911 call in the event of a potentially life-threatening situation. Other steps will be taken as described above.

If the behavioral condition is later determined by the school counselor or other trained personnel to be minor, the EMS call will be canceled, or EMS units will clear the scene.

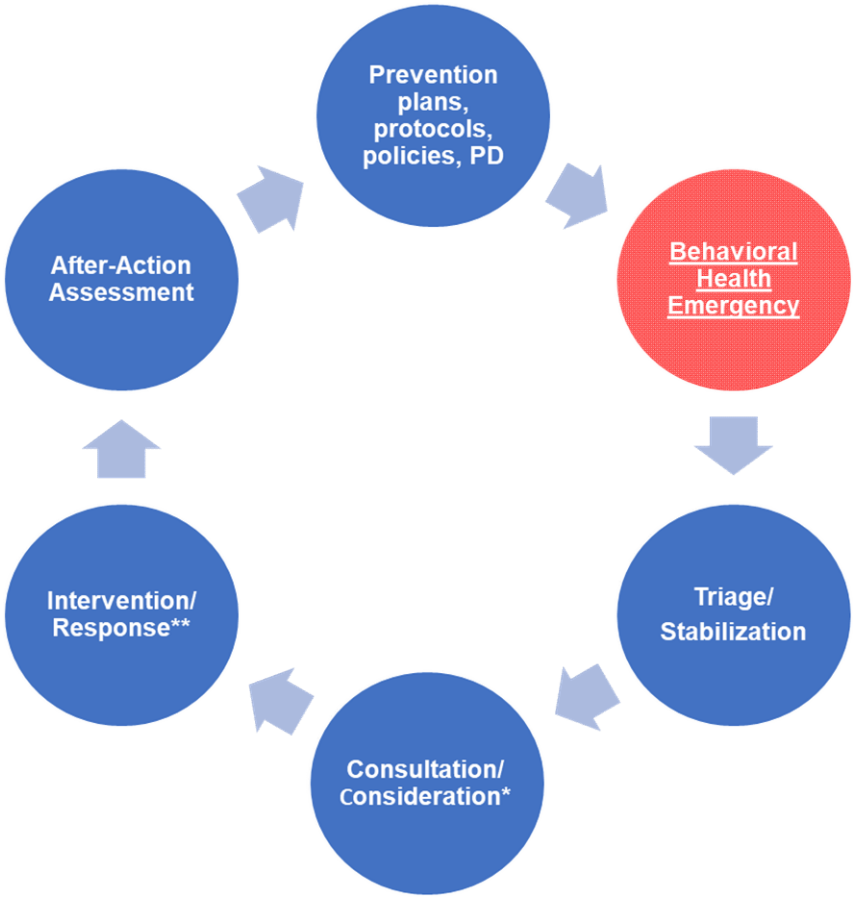
If the school counselor, clinical staff, school psychologist or other trained personnel determines that the behavioral condition is non-life-threatening, behavioral health services can be offered

onsite. Main office personnel will notify the involved student's parent/guardian or the emergency contact for faculty/staff.

All faculty and staff must adhere to the following during all behavioral incidents:

- Standard Precautions must be always followed (see Definitions).
- Avoid moving the person unless there is more danger if left there.
- Remain with the person until assistance arrives and remain calm.
- Direct other staff to manage bystanders.

Faculty and staff who are involved in school-related activities outside of regular school hours have been trained in the medical and behavioral emergency response protocols and keep a copy of the protocols with them during all school-sponsored activities and events. The protocols identify who is to be contacted during activities outside of the regular school hours.



Goals of Crisis Intervention:

- Stabilization/De-escalation
- Safety
- Reduce symptoms
- Return to adaptive functioning or facilitate access to continued care

*Consultation per protocols with Supervisor, Admin, SAC, Nurse, SRO, Parent, etc.

**Examples of Possible Interventions/Responses

- Refer to Social Worker, LMHC, Nurse, BCBA
- Refer to students Individualized Behavior Plan or Safety Care
- SW/LMHC assessment for suicide, self-harm, violence, mental status
- Nurse to assessment for substance use or self-injury
- Referral for community-based Emergency MH Risk Assessment
- Refer to Resource Officer if available
- Referral for new and/or coordination with existing community services (i.e. DCF, MH, Probation, dating/domestic violence, etc.)
- Refer for medical exam

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid Training [1]

Valley Collaborative Lead Nurse is a certified BLS instructors through the American Heart Association. They provide training to designated school staff in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), automated external defibrillators (AEDs), and first aid with the recommendations from DPH. All individuals who attend the nurses' class will be certified through the American Heart Association Heartsavers Program. The names of the individuals who successfully completed the training will be posted in the nurses' offices.

Medical/ Behavioral Response Drills

The Valley Collaborative Safety Committee will work together to schedule different drills and Professional Development situations where "medical and behavioral health emergency situations" are staged so as to monitor response times and procedures. Staff will run through different medical drills during First Aid and CPR training. Staff will run through different behavioral/de-escalation drills during Safety Care Training.

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) (All AEDs are portable)

AED's are located here at each location:

- Elementary School: Across the hall from main office/ next to the gym
- Middle/ High School: Across from main office

[1] DPH recommends that, as a minimum standard, at least five person trained in first aid/CPR be available in each school at all times, when students are on school grounds, including before and after school. The actual suggested ration is one trained staff member for every 50 students (1:50). In high-risk populations, it is recommended that there be one first aid trained person for all medically fragile person (1:1).

All AED's are housed in a wall mounted cabinet. All AED's are located in site that make them readily accessible for campus-wide access during school hours, after-school activities, and public events held at the school, and the number is sufficient for the size of the school. A list of school personnel who are trained in AED use, a map of the school's floor plan, and instructions on communicating in emergencies are in the same location and included in the Plan. Only persons trained and certified in the American Heart Association Heartsaver Program or another CPR course may have access to and use the AED during regular school hours. The school nurses are responsible for checking and documenting the status of the AEDs in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. The Lead Nurse ensures that the AED units are maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

Contact Information

School District or Charter School: Valley Collaborative
Superintendent or Charter School Leader: Dr. Chris Scott
Email: cscott@valleycollaborative.org
Phone: 978-528-7827

School: Elementary School
School Address: 135 Coburn Rd Tyngsboro, MA 01879
School Principal: Heather Mackay
Email: hmackay@valleycollaborative.org
Phone: 978-528-7817

School: Middle School, Transitional High School, Transitional Programming
School Address: 40 Linnell Circle Billerica, MA 01821
School Principal: Nicole Noska
Email: nnoska@valleycollaborative.org
Phone: 978-528-7865

School: Transitional High School, Alternative Programming
School Address: 40 Linnell Circle Billerica, MA 01821 School
Principal: Nick LeClair
Email: nleclair@valleycollaborative.org
Phone: 978-528-7834

Contact Person for the School Plan: Jessica Scalzi RN, BSN
Email: jscalzi@valleycollaborative.org
Phone: 978-528-7896

Section 1: The Medical and Behavioral Health Emergency Response Plan

A. *Essential Plan Components*

At each school, procedures must be in place to manage injury or illness of faculty, staff, students, and visitors and to respond in a timely and efficient manner to medical and behavioral health emergencies. Under the Medical Emergency law, each school's Plan must include:

(1) **Requirement**: a method for establishing a rapid communication system linking all parts of the school campus, including outdoor facilities and practice fields, to the emergency medical services system and protocols to clarify when the emergency medical services system, youth mobile crisis intervention teams or other emergency contact people shall be called.

School's Response: *Describe the school's method for establishing a rapid communication system.*

Valley Collaborative has purchased two way radios to be used by administrators, faculty and staff and on the school playgrounds or gymnasiums. Cell phone numbers have been shared with essential personnel for those individuals who will be off of the school grounds for field trips. The cell phones will be the primary form of communication in emergency situations that may arise on field trips.

(2) **Requirement**: a determination of emergency medical service response time to any location on campus.

School's Response: *Describe the emergency medical service response times to locations on the school campus.*

Response time to any location at 40 Linnell Circle by EMS personnel is 3-4 minutes as confirmed by Billerica Fire Department. Response time to any location in the town of Tyngsboro by EMS personnel is within 6 minutes confirmed by Tyngsboro Fire Department.

(3) **Requirement**: a list of relevant contacts and telephone numbers including behavioral health providers with a protocol indicating when each person shall be called, including names of professionals to help with post-emergency support. The plan should also include clear guidelines for the roles and responsibilities of behavioral and other health professionals, including, but not limited to, school counselors and community intervention professionals and, where applicable, school resource officers or police officers on school campuses; provided, however that such model plan shall be designed to limit referrals to law enforcement or arrests on school property to cases in which an imminent risk to the health and safety of individuals on school property necessitates such referral or arrest.

School's Response: *Provide a list of relevant contacts and telephone numbers with information indicating when each person should be called. Include names of professionals to help with post-emergency support.*

40 Linnell Circle (High School/ Middle School)

Dr. Chris Scott (Executive Director): 978-528-7827

To be contact in the event of all emergency situations

Renato Silva (Facilities Manager): 978-528-7831

To be contact if there is an emergency in relation to the buildings and facilities at any of the schools

Jessica Scalzi (Lead Nurse): 978-528-7896

To be contact in the event of all emergency situations

Nick LeClair (Transitional High School. Alternative Program Principal): 978-528-7834

To be contact in the event of an emergency at the High School, Site 2

Nicole Noska (Middle School, Transitional High School, Transitional Program): 978-528-7865

To be contacted in the event of an emergency at the Transitional High School or Middle School.

Ashley McNamara (Social Worker) ext 823

Brittany Maiuri (Social Worker) ext 842

Dana Williams (LMHC) ext 802

Tracey Marinelli (LMHC) ext 833

Jacklyn Squeglia (LMHC) ext 897

Alyse Scanlon (Social Worker) ext

To be contacted in the event of a Behavioral Health Emergency

135 Coburn Rd (Elementary School)
Kathryn Mari (Nurse): 978-528-7805
To be contacted in the event of an emergency at the Elementary School.
Heather Mackay (Elementary School Principal): 978-528-7817
To be contacted in the event of an emergency at the Elementary School.
Nicole Spampinato (Social Worker) ext: 835
Alyson Norman (Social Worker) ext: 847
Jennifer Glow (Guidance Counselor) ext 828
To be contacted in the event of an Behavioral Health Emergency

(4) **Requirement**: a method to efficiently direct emergency medical services personnel to any location on campus, including to the location of available rescue equipment.

School's Response: *Describe how emergency medical services personnel will be directed to the emergency site(s) and to available rescue equipment.*

Fire, police and EMS may obtain maps of each building in the main office of each location or from the Director of Facilities. A school administrator or their designee will meet with emergency medical services personnel at the front door of the building to escort them to the individual.

(5) **Requirement**: safety precautions to prevent injuries in classrooms and on the facilities.

School's Response: *Describe the safety precautions the school has in place to prevent injuries in classrooms and on the facilities.*

School nurses present information yearly to staff members on safety precautions to prevent injuries in the classrooms. The nurses also provide each classroom teacher and paraprofessional with a blood pathogen kit that includes gloves and first aid supplies, as to prevent the spread of blood borne illnesses. A review of Epipen use and AED trained personnel are identified. The Fire Chief also tours each building and subsequent premises to alert each school's administrator as

to what changes need to be made both to the interior and exterior of the building to maximize student safety and crisis prevention.

(6) **Requirement**: a method of providing access to training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid for teachers, athletic coaches, trainers, and other school staff, which may include training high school students in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

School's Response: *Describe how the school will provide access to CPR and first aid training for the staff listed above. Describe if the school will provide CPR training for high school students.*

The Valley Collaborative takes volunteers to become CPR/AED and first aid trained during non-school hours. Valley Collaborative follows DPH's recommendation that, as a minimum standard, at least five person trained in first aid/CPR be available in each school at all times, when students are on school grounds, including before and after school. The actual suggested ration is one trained staff member for every 50 students (1:50). In high-risk populations, it is recommended that there be one first aid trained person for all medically fragile person (1:1). The Valley Collaborative Lead Nurse and is certified AHA Instructors. Online classes are offered through National CPR Foundation.

(7) **Requirement**: in the event the school possesses an automated external defibrillator (AED),

- the location of the device;
- whether or not its location is either fixed or portable; and
- those personnel who are trained in its use.

With respect to item (7) on AEDs, the law further requires information on:

- the total number of AEDs in each school (*note: the law does not require schools to possess AEDs*);
- any volunteers (and personnel) who are trained in the AED use;
- personnel who have access to AEDs during regular school hours and after school; and
- the total estimated number of AEDs necessary to ensure campus-wide access during school hours and in after-school activities and public events *(the estimate is required whether or not the school currently has AEDs*).

School's Response: *If the school has AEDs, provide the information on the items listed above. If the school does not have AEDs, provide information on the estimated number of AEDs needed. A sample form is provided for your use in displaying the required AED information.*

Valley Collaborative has a total of 3 AED's (1 at 40 Linnell, 1 at 135 Coburn Rd and 1 at 11 Executive Drive). Valley Collaborative's Lead Nurse maintains a list of staff who are certified in CPR and AED training.

Appendix P

Central Administration
11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica, MA 01862 | Tel: (978)528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

YouTube Kids Consent Form

Dear Parent/Guardian,

YouTube Kids is a video app designed for providing safe and curated content suitable for learners. We plan to use YouTube Kids to enhance learning through age-appropriate educational videos and as a reinforcement during leisure activities.

Before we proceed, we need your permission for your student to use YouTube Kids for programming. Please review the information below and indicate your consent.

YouTube Kids Overview:

- **Content**: YouTube Kids features educational videos, music, cartoons, and more, all selected to promote safety.
- **Privacy and Security**: YouTube Kids offers parental controls, which allow you to customize the content your student can access. The app also complies with COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act).

By signing below, you consent to:

1. **Your student using YouTube Kids** for programming at Valley Collaborative.

2. **Access to age-appropriate content**, monitored by the school staff.

Consent and Acknowledgement:
I, the undersigned, hereby give permission for my child to use YouTube Kids as part of their programming at Valley Collaborative.

☐ **Yes, I give my consent.**

☐ **No, I do not give my consent.**

Student Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix Q

Crisis Intervention Plan

Updated May 2026

Student: _____ **Teacher:** _____

Valley Collaborative's school programs utilize Crisis Intervention Plans as part of their procedures for addressing behavioral crises. This plan will be used during behavioral crisis situations. A behavioral crisis is any situation in which a person's behavior puts them at risk of hurting themselves or others and/or when they are not able to resolve the situation with the skills and resources available. Prior to implementing the Crisis Intervention Plan, Staff will utilize antecedent interventions (differential reinforcement, functional communication, sensory breaks) and manage precursor or signal behaviors. The table below outlines the various behaviors and associated protocols that will be followed.

Behavior	Protocol
Bolting: Any instance of the Student running out of the classroom, down the hallway or otherwise out of a supervised area without the permission to do so by Staff.	• If the Student bolts to a specific area and STOPS, present their visual schedule (first/then) and provide one verbal reminder of expectation. • If the Student leaves the classroom by walking but does not ask permission, catch up to them and ask them to stop. • If Staff asks Student to stop and they continue, catch up to them and utilize HELP/PROMPT/ WAIT strategy as described in SAFETY CARE. Change strategy based on Student's current presentation. They do not need to go to a seclusion room. This could be done while moving or in place. • If the Student RUNS out of the classroom, away from Staff and towards an exit. Attempt to block the exit and utilize a safety care guide back down the hallway to the initial location. Utilize HELP/PROMPT/ WAIT strategy as described in SAFETY CARE and change strategy based on Student's current presentation. **They do not need to go to a seclusion room.** • If the Student RUNS out of the school away from Staff and does not stop when verbally asked. Utilize least restrictive safety care procedure (e.g. guide, escort). The Student should be prompted to process their dysregulated behavior in a calm space.
Isolated Aggression: Any attempt or actual instance of spitting, scratching, hitting, kicking, biting, pushing or throwing objects or items at Staff or peers regardless of contact being made	• Block aggression • Move vulnerable peers • Staff, move an arm's length away from the Student. • Offer Help/Prompt Strategy • Staff should continue to scan the room to assess for safety, if needed other Students can be moved to a different location.
Pursuant Aggression in an empty classroom: Continual attempts or actual instances of hitting, kicking, slapping, biting, or pushing Staff or peers after Staff/peers have moved away from Student or after Staff has moved other peers away from them	• If in an open area you can use safety shuffle to continue to block and move away • Call for Team • After using safety shuffle, if Student continues to aggress towards Staff, Staff **may need to use physical management/transport to a seclusion room when Staff and/or Students are at risk for serious injury**
Pursuant Aggression in a classroom with other Students: Continual attempts or actual instances of hitting, kicking, slapping, biting, or pushing Staff or peers after Staff/peers have moved away from Student or after Staff has moved other peers away from them	• Move vulnerable peers away from agitated Student • Stay within arm's length of the Student. Utilize shoulder check and/or elbow check as needed • **Staff may need to use physical management/transport to a seclusion room when Staff and/or Students are at risk for serious injury**

Seclusion Room Procedures (Previously known as "Time-Out Room Procedures")

1. Upon transport to the seclusion room, Staff shall, upon entry, coordinate the release of the Student and immediately assess the Student for safety and overall status.
   • If the Student enters and ambulates independently, proceed directly to Step 3.
2. Physical management techniques, including an escort intervention, may be utilized if Staff are unable to safely exit the seclusion room.
3. Once Staff have safely exited the seclusion room, the door shall remain open unless the Student attempts to exit the room while continuing to engage in unsafe behavior.
4. Continuous Monitoring: Staff shall maintain uninterrupted visual observation of the Student at all times.
5. If, at any time, the Student engages in unsafe behavior within the seclusion room that poses a risk of harm to the Student or others, Staff shall contact nursing personnel and a BCBA to assist in monitoring the Student's safety. Staff may implement Safety-Care approved physical management interventions as necessary to maintain safety.
6. Staff shall implement the PROMPT/WAIT strategy in accordance with Safety-Care protocols and shall modify intervention strategies as appropriate based upon the Student's current presentation and behavioral status.
7. The door shall be opened promptly once the Student has de-escalated and it has been determined that there is no ongoing risk to safety.
8. Once the Student demonstrates a reduction in escalation, Staff shall restate and reinforce expectations regarding safe behavior.
9. Upon demonstrating sustained safe behavior and meeting the established behavioral expectations, the Student shall exit the seclusion room and return to their regular daily schedule and programming.
10. Staff shall comply with all required documentation protocols as outlined by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and as set forth in Valley's Student & Family Handbook and Policies and Procedures Manual.

BCBA Signature	**Printed Name**	**Date**
Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker Signature	**Printed Name**	**Date**
Principal Signature	**Printed Name**	**Date**
Parent/Guardian Signature**	**Printed Name**	**Date**
Licensed Physician's Signature	**Printed Name**	**Date**

** Valley Collaborative's school programs utilize Crisis Intervention Plans as part of their procedures for addressing behavioral crises. By signing above, the Parent/Guardian acknowledges and represents that they have informed the Student's licensed physician of all material aspects of Valley Collaborative's school programs, including the potential use of emergency seclusion interventions. Accordingly, the physician's affirmative response of "Yes" to the statement, "This Student may participate fully in the school program," as set forth on the Massachusetts School Health Record: Health Care Provider's Examination form, shall constitute the physician's determination that the Student has no medical, respiratory, cardiac, seizure-related, or other physical health contraindications that would render the use of an emergency seclusion room unsafe.

Today & Tomorrow Program Handbook and Policies & Procedures Manual

11 Executive Park Drive
North Billerica, MA 01862
www.valleycollaborative.org
Tel: (978) 528-7826
Fax (978) 663-0759

DRAFT

*Updated and Approved by the Board of Directors of Valley Collaborative on June 11, 2026.

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INTRODUCTION

Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook. The Collaborative is hopeful that the handbook will answer many questions you may have about the Collaborative, its programs, rules, and policies. Guardians and Individuals are required to sign the Individual/Guardian Acknowledgement of Receipt of the Today & Tomorrow Program Handbook & Policies and Procedures Manual and return it to the Director of DDS Services.

Valley Collaborative's Today and Tomorrow Program provides individuals the opportunity to be "Worker Trainees" within the Group Supported Employment model. For the purposes of this Handbook, the word "Individual" shall mean the Today & Tomorrow Program participant referred to Valley Collaborative Adult Services Department by a Health and Human Services Agency.

By enrolling in Valley Collaborative's Today and Tomorrow Program, individuals will have the opportunity to work in a group supported employment setting as a "Worker Trainee" supported by Valley Collaborative staff and to earn a stipend equivalent to the hourly minimum wage in Massachusetts. Also, and as defined by the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance, individuals may not be eligible for unemployment benefits if the only source of employment is from working as a worker trainee in a program run by a nonprofit or public institution (i.e. Valley Collaborative).

Individuals enrolled in the Today and Tomorrow Program are not an employee of Valley Collaborative, or any other organization where they participate in Group Supported Employment. As such, individuals will not receive the employee benefit package offered by Valley Collaborative or the businesses where they participate in Group Supported Employment as a worker trainee program does not meet the eligibility requirements of employment. As such, "Worker Trainees" are not eligible for employee benefits such as paid leave, holiday pay, vacation time, workers compensation, unemployment insurance, state pension, etc.

About the Collaborative

Valley Collaborative is operated by the following school districts: Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Groton-Dunstable Regional, Nashoba Valley Technical High School, North Middlesex Regional, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough, and Westford.

The Collaborative is a Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) approved public school entity and a contracted provider of services for the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) that provides high quality academic, transitional, vocational, and community inclusion services.

The Collaborative's Today & Tomorrow Programs offer opportunities for Individuals to work in the community with supports funded through Department of Developmental Services and Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Valley Collaborative Adult Services Department is to empower Individuals to navigate confidently and with optimal independence in their community by promoting lifelong learning and self-direction of services.

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Vision Statement

Valley Collaborative partners with families, districts, and the community to provide innovative programming that empowers Individuals and adults to discover their individual strengths, interests, and abilities. In doing so, Individuals become responsible contributing members of society.

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Valley COLLABORATIVE

2026 - 2027 Calendar
Adult Program

July 2026

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	
			1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
26	27	28	29	30	31		22

August 2026

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16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
23/30	24/31	25	26	27	28	29	21

September 2026

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27	28	29	30			

October 2026

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25	26	27	28	29	30	31	21

November 2026

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15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
29	30						18

December 2026

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

January 2027

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	
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24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30	19

February 2027

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21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
28							19

March 2027

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April 2027

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18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
25	26	27	28	29	30		21

May 2027

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29	20
30	31						

June 2027

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Holiday(s) Observed	240 Total Program Days
Professional Development Day All Staff - No Programming	
Board of Directors Meeting (Regular Day for Staff and Adult Participants)	
Early Release - 11:00AM	

2026 – 2027 PROGRAM YEAR

List of Holidays or Closings

July 3, 2026	Fourth of July
September 1, 2026	Professional Development
September 7, 2026	Labor Day
October 12, 2026	Columbus Day
November 11, 2026	Veterans Day
November 25, 2026	Half Day
November 26 - 27, 2026	Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 23, 2026 - Jan. 1, 2027	Winter Break
January 18, 2027	Martin Luther King Day
February 15, 2027	Presidents Day
March 26, 2027	Good Friday
April 19, 2027	Patriots' Day
May 31, 2027	Memorial Day
June 18, 2027	Juneteenth

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GENERAL PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Program Closing Announcements

On occasion, the Collaborative may need to close programing because of bad weather or an emergency situation. Announcements for Program cancellations, delayed openings, and early release will be made on: AM radio - WBZ (1030); local television channels; the Collaborative website: www.valleycollaborative.org.

Program Closings

In the event of inclement weather or an emergency, the Today & Tomorrow Program will be closed.

- 40 Linnell Circle, Billerica, MA
- 11 Executive Park Drive, North Billerica, MA

Early Release

In case of inclement weather or an emergency that develops in the middle of the day, the Executive Director may make the decision to release Individuals early for the sake of safety.

NOTE: Individuals/Guardians should make sure that a current emergency form with proper emergency contact information, including the contact information of alternative caretakers is on file with the Program Nurse.

Observation Policy

The goal of this observation policy is to allow a guardian, consultant to the Program, or evaluator to observe an Individual or Program in order to gain the information the observer is seeking with as little disruption as possible to the Individuals, staff, and Program.

Program Visitor Procedures

While the Today & Tomorrow Program encourages the involvement of guardians and community members in the services provided to Individuals, the Program has a duty to protect the safety and confidentiality of its Individuals, as well as to ensure that their Program Services are not disrupted. As a result, certain rules and procedures must be followed to ensure that visits are beneficial to the visitors and not harmful to the Individuals.

All visitors to the Program must report to the Program Coordinator/Program Nurse immediately upon entering the building. All visitors must sign in, noting the time of their arrival and identifying the purpose of their visit. The Program Coordinator/Program Nurse will designate a staff member to escort visitors to their appropriate destination.

All visitors must sign out, noting the time of their departures. Visitors may not proceed to any areas of the building other than the designated locations of their meetings, visits, or observations.

Release of Individual Other than Guardian

The Today & Tomorrow Program will not allow anyone other than the Individual/guardian to dismiss from the Program without prior notification. If a guardian wants a relative, friend, or care provider to pick up an Individual from the Program, the guardian must give permission to the Director of DDS Services. If a guardian calls, the Program must verify that it was

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the guardian making the call. The Individual must be signed out by the guardian/relative/provider before the Program will release the Individual.

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is vital in order for Program Services to be delivered in a meaningful and consistent manner. The Today & Tomorrow Program requires Individuals maintain an attendance rate of at least 90% throughout the Program year. This translates into a maximum of 24 annual absences, albeit for vacation, illness, or personal reasons.

Attendance dropping below 90%; that is not the result of hospitalization, may result in removal from the Program.

As per our health policy, any absences due to illness lasting 3 or more consecutive days require a doctor's note before returning to the Program.

Whole Program or Community Emergencies

There may be instances where there is a disaster or community emergency. In such instances, the Program will work to reunite guardians/group home managers/parents with Individuals if the Program is in containment or needs to be evacuated. Occasionally, there may also be a need to increase the level of security because of a possible disturbance in the community. When this happens, visitors may not be allowed into the Today & Tomorrow Program, and Individuals and staff may not be allowed to leave until local authorities have deemed it safe to do so.

Emergency Evacuation Safety Plan

The Today & Tomorrow Program will develop and ensure that staff are familiar with emergency procedures, including the emergency evacuation safety plan for their building. During an evacuation, the priority is to get all Individuals out of the building in an orderly, prompt, and safe manner. Staff should make arrangements in advance with the Program Coordinator (or designee) to provide additional assistance for the evacuation of any Individual requiring such assistance.

The Today & Tomorrow Program Emergency Evacuation Safety Plan includes the following procedures:

- Every two years the plan is reviewed in the location that affects safe evacuation;
- When existing evacuation plans are no longer effective or changes are proposed, the plan is updated and sent to DDS Area Director(s);
- A minimum of 2 evacuation drills are conducted by the Program annually;
- Initial training, including a walk-through of the setting, identification of sprinkler and fire extinguisher locations, and location of emergency number postings;
- Embedded Program strategies to help all Individuals understand the nature of the drills;
- Special provisions for the evacuation of any mobility-impaired Individual;
- Identification of the location of emergency information for Individuals to be taken during an evacuation;
- A written log of each evacuation drill report sheet that includes date, time elapsed, participants (Individuals and staff), witnesses, etc.

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Written Notification and Communication

The Today & Tomorrow Program staff welcomes and encourages communication between program and home.

The Director of DDS Services or his/her designee has the responsibility of notification and communication with Individuals, families, state agencies, and stakeholders. Such persons include the Program Coordinators and Program Nurse. The following is a guideline for delegation of collaboration and communication:

Program Nurse: Distribution of reports; scheduling meetings; distribution of attendance records; and medical emergency, injury or hospitalization; Today & Tomorrow Program related issues; medical emergency, injury or hospitalization; and behavior implementation plans/functional behavioral assessments; filing of an incident or DPPC report.

Program Coordinator: Distribution of reports; scheduling meetings; distribution of attendance records; ISP implementation, development, updates; and progress reports; behavior implementation plans/functional behavioral assessments; filing of an incident or DPPC report.

Case Manager: Distribution of reports; scheduling meetings; distribution of attendance records; ISP implementation, development, updates; and progress reports; behavior implementation plans/functional behavioral assessments; filing of an incident or DPPC report.

Director of DDS Services: Today & Tomorrow Program related updates; behavior implementation plans/functional and safety assessments; filing of an incident or DPPC report.

Director of DDS Services/Executive Director: Medical Emergency, injury or hospitalization and death of an Individual.

Individual Records

115 CMR 4.00 governs the creation, maintenance and destruction of, and access to, records relating to services and supports provided, purchased, or arranged for the Individuals by the Department of Developmental Disabilities and shall apply to all programs and services or supports which are operated, licensed, certified, or contracted by the Department.

Valley Collaborative maintains legal and Program Services binders for all Individuals in the Today & Tomorrow Program. Please see Appendices A and B.

Per 115 CMR 4.03 and 4.04 Individual records will consist of the following:

- Identifying Information including but not limited to Individual's full name, Social Security number, religious preference (if disclosed voluntarily), language, health and insurance information, identification of family and/or guardians including addresses and phone number(s), legal competency status including guardianship documents, a list of providers current and from previous 2 years, and employment history.
- Emergency Information including but not limited to a photograph taken within 5 years after age 18 and/or marked change in Individual's appearance, name (including nicknames), age, general physical characteristics, contact information of legal guardian, emergency contact information, health insurance information, relevant abilities and behavior characteristics, list of allergies and medications, pattern of movement (if lost previously), likely response to search efforts, places frequented, physician(s) information, contact information for service coordinator and other providers if applicable.
- Current assessment reports
- ISP
- Medical Information including recent physical and dental exams, special diet, record of medical protocols

including occurrence log, and list of health conditions requiring ongoing management
- Incident Reports
- Behavior Modification Plans
- Referral/Transfer Information
- Record Access Log
- Progress Notes
- Medication Information
- Human Rights Trainings

Access to Individual Records

The following Program personnel are authorized to access Individual records:

- Program administrators
- Direct service personnel
- Administrative office staff
- Clerical personnel
- Evaluation team which evaluates an Individual

Authorized Program personnel are permitted access to the records of the Individuals to whom they are providing services in order to perform their official duties. The consent of the eligible Individual or the guardian is not necessary.

A log of access is to be kept as part of each Individual's record. If parts of the Individual's record are separately located, a separate log will be kept with each part. The log is to indicate all persons who have obtained access to the Individual record stating:

- The name, position and signature of the person releasing the information
- The name, position and, if a third party, the affiliation if any, of the person who is to receive the information
- The date of access
- The parts of the record to which the access was obtained
- Purpose of access

4.06: Access to Records and Record Privacy

(1) *Access or Inspection by the Individual, Guardian, or Representative*.

(a) The Individual, guardian, designated representative, or other legally authorized representative shall be permitted to inspect and copy the Individual's records upon request. Legally authorized representatives shall be permitted to inspect and copy on request only those records relevant to those matters within their authority.

(b) When necessary for the understanding of the Individual, guardian, or representative, the staff shall read or interpret the record.

(2) *Inspection by Other Persons*. Records of an Individual shall be private and not open to inspection by third parties, other than those in 115 CMR 4.06(1)), except as provided in 115 CMR 4.06(2).

(a) Records shall be open to inspection by a third party upon informed consent by the Individual or guardian:

-Before consent is obtained, the Individual or guardian shall be afforded an opportunity to examine the records to be released, and shall be provided with the name of the recipient, possible uses of the information, and possible risks and benefits of, and alternatives to disclosure.

-A record of such authorization shall be included in the Individual's record.

(b) Records of an Individual shall be open to inspection upon proper judicial order. For the purpose of 115 CMR 4.06(2)(b), the term "proper judicial order" shall mean an order signed by a justice or special justice of a court of competent jurisdiction.

(c) The head of the provider or a designee shall provide access to an Individual's record by:

-Provider staff, as necessary and appropriate, including the human rights officer and associated professional consultants providing habilitation services and supports to the Individual;

-Persons authorized by the Department to monitor the quality of services and supports offered to the Individual, including the human rights committee;

-Persons approved by the Department and authorized under Department regulations to engage in research;

-Agencies which require specified information as a prerequisite for third party reimbursement of essential service;

-Department investigators appointed to conduct an investigation pursuant to 115 CMR 9.00 or M.G.L. c. 19C;

-Agencies or attorneys who are authorized by statute, by court decision, or by the Department to represent, advocate for, or protect the legal rights of the Individual.

(d) Where the Individual is legally competent, but not capable in fact of making a knowing decision concerning the release of records, the head of the provider or a designee may authorize, where necessary and appropriate, inspection of records by persons likely to further the habilitation of the Individual, including:

-Staff of providers proposed to provide habilitation services to the Individual in the near future;

-Insurers, trustees, and other persons through whom financial or legal assistance is or may be available.

(e) The head of the provider or a designee may make records available, as necessary and appropriate, to a physician who requests such records in the treatment of a medical emergency; provided, however, that the Individual and any guardian are given notice of the access as soon as possible.

(f) The provisions of 115 CMR 4.06(2)(a) through (e) notwithstanding, the Commissioner or the Commissioner's written designee may authorize access to Individual records when deemed in the best interest of an Individual or Individuals served by the Department.

(g) The Commissioner may authorize access to Individual records by attorneys representing the Department when necessary to the defense of specific legal claims brought by, concerning, or on behalf of the Individual against the Commonwealth, the Department, or its agents or employees.

(3) *Restrictions on Scope of Access*. Where the head of the provider or a designee authorizes release of the records, every precaution shall be taken to protect the confidentiality of the Individual.

(a) The head of the provider or a designee shall, wherever possible, set reasonable restrictions on access to a person's records by ascertaining from the area office director the persons who may inspect the record and the permitted uses to be made of the record, specifying the duration of time that the record may be held, and setting any other restrictions that will serve to protect the confidentiality of the record.

(b) Only those records which are necessary to meet the legitimate purposes of the requesting person(s) shall be released, and, whenever possible, the name or personal identifying information of the Individual shall be withheld.

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(c) A listing shall be kept of every person or organization, other than those identified in 115 CMR 4.06(1) and 4.06(2)(c)1., given access to the Individual's records, the uses to be made of that information, a brief description of the information which has been released, and the person authorizing access. A list of such accesses shall be made available to the Individual, guardian, designated representative, legally authorized representative, and the human rights committee, upon request.

(d) The Individual, guardian, designated representative, or legally authorized representative of the Individual may challenge a decision to permit access to a record by filing a complaint with the head of the provider in accordance with the Department's regulations on investigations, 115 CMR 9.00. The provider shall promptly send a copy of this complaint to the human rights committee. Once a complaint is filed to challenge access to a record, no records which are the subject of the complaint shall be further disclosed to the person(s) or organization(s) involved until the complaint is resolved.

(e) An Individual or guardian shall be informed of a subpoena or court order commanding production of an Individual's records in a court or agency proceeding, and of the Individual's right to request the court to quash or modify the subpoena or order on the grounds that it is unreasonable or oppressive, or on any other grounds permitted by law.

(4) *Accuracy of Information*. The record maintained by the provider and area office shall contain accurate, complete, timely, and relevant information, consistent with the requirements of 115 CMR.

(a) If an Individual or guardian believes that the record contains inaccurate or misleading information, or objects to the collection of information or its use, he or she may file a complaint with the head of the provider. If the Individual or guardian seeks to challenge the decision made at this level, or if the complaint concerns information contained in the records at the office of the case management team, a complaint may be filed with the Department. A copy of this complaint shall be sent promptly to the human rights committee.

(b) If an Individual or guardian believes that the record contains inaccurate or misleading information, he or she may prepare a statement of disagreement, with assistance if requested, which shall be entered into the record.

(5) *Disclosure of Existence of Record*. The provider shall inform an Individual, guardian, or designated or legal representative, upon request, whether the Individual is the subject of a record system maintained by the provider.

Privacy and Security of Individual Records

In accordance with federal and state requirements, the Collaborative protects the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information that it collects, uses or maintains. The Collaborative maintains and provides access to Individual records in accordance with federal and state requirements.

Records for Individuals No Longer Enrolled

The Program Coordinators will keep the Individual records for a minimum of three years from the Individual's exit date from the Program.

The Director of DDS Services is responsible for the ongoing process of identifying documents that have met the required retention period and overseeing their destruction.

Per 115 CMR 4.07 (b) and (c) the last three years of the Individual's record will be made available to the Department of Developmental Services.

*For full and complete regulations please see 115 CMR 4.00: RECORDS Section

Reporting Abuse and Neglect – Disabled Persons Protection Commission

As mandated reporters, Collaborative employees are required to file a complaint per 115 CMR 9.00 guidelines when there is believed to be a non-frivolous allegation of mistreatment, an illegal, dangerous, or inhumane condition or incident, or a

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medicolegal death of an Individual. It is also mandated to file a report with DPPC under M.G.L 19C if there is reason to believe serious harm either physical or emotional has been inflicted to an Individual.

Immediate Notification

In the event of a serious or unusual incident occurring, the Collaborative's Executive Director is notified immediately. Upon notification, the Executive Director directs the gathering of all available pertinent information from involved parties. The Executive Director meets with involved parties as necessary. The Collaborative Incident Report Form is to be completed by staff and included in the Individual's record. The incident report form documents the incident, precipitating events prior to the incident, and follow up needed. The report form also documents notification to all parties of the incident. Serious incidents are those that result in injury, safety concerns, substantial discipline code violations, or emergency personnel responses. In addition to the Executive Director, the Director of DDS Services will notify the appropriate state agencies.

- Death of an Individual
- Filing of a DPPC report or a complaint to the Disabled Persons Protection Commission against the Program or a Program staff member for abuse or neglect of an Individual
- Any action taken by a federal, state or local agency that might jeopardize the Program's approval with the Department
- Any legal proceeding brought against the Program or its employee(s) arising out of circumstances related to the care or education of any of its Individuals regardless of state of residency
- Unexpected hospital visit
- Motor vehicle accident during transport by Program staff
- Individual runaway/leaving Program property without notification/permission
- Significant behavioral incident
- Fire
- Theft
- Criminal activity
- Victim of physical altercation
- Property damage
- Suicide attempt
- Emergency termination of an Individual under circumstances in which the Individual presents a clear and present threat to the health and safety of him/herself or others
- Medical/psychiatric intervention not requiring a hospital visit

Guardian Consent and Notification

The Program collects consents for a variety of activities and protocols, including emergency medical treatment, medication administration, community outings, Program events, photographs and publicity.

Once a newly referred Individual is accepted for participation in the Program, the start date is not finalized until all consents and medical forms are returned by the Individuals/guardians.

Per fiscal year, a packet of consent forms which are included in the Appendix will need to be returned to the Program Nurse. If the consents have not been received within 30 days, the Program Nurse will notify the Individual/guardian and participation may be interrupted until completed consent forms are returned.

Change of Legal Status

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If staff is notified of a change of legal status, the Director of DDS Services will:

- Request a copy of official court documents.
- Enter official court documents into the Individual's Record, including restraining orders or other legal judgments.
- Notify the appropriate staff involved in the care and education of the Individual.
- In the event that a non-custodial Individual attempts to violate a court order and attempts access to an Individual, the Director of DDS Services is to be notified immediately.

Complaints and Grievances

In the event differences of opinion or conflicts arise between Valley Collaborative and the Individuals and families we support a formal conflict resolution model specific to Individuals being served will be established:

Step 1

- Attempted resolution through communication between the Individual/guardian with the Program Coordinator of Adult Services. Area Office Staff will be notified and included if they so choose.
- A summary of meeting and outcome will be made available to all participants. If resolution is agreed upon, it will be included in said summary.

Step 2

- If conflict is not resolved at Step 1 the Individual/guardian can escalate the issue to the Director of DDS Services. Area Office Staff will be notified and included if they so choose.
- The Director of DDS Services can enter into mediation with the Individual/guardian.
- A summary of meeting and outcome will be made available to all participants. If resolution is agreed upon, it will be included in said summary.

Step 3

- If conflict is not resolved at Step 2 either the Individual/guardian and/or the Director of DDS Services can escalate the matter to the Valley Collaborative Executive Director and Senior Level Area Office Staff would be notified and included in the attempt at resolution.
- A summary of meeting and outcome will be made available to all participants. If resolution is agreed upon, it will be included in said summary.

Valley Collaborative recognizes that from time to time an Individual/guardian may choose to work with another provider and supports their choice to do so. If at any time an Individual seeks to leave the Collaborative family, Valley is committed to a smooth transition and uninterrupted services for that individual. Valley will work closely with the Individual and the local area office to make the changes as stress free and seamless as possible for all those involved.

Program Oversight-DDS

The Collaborative is responsible to ensure that the Individual's ISP is being appropriately implemented and that the service delivery is aimed at assisting the Individual to meet the goals identified within the Individual's ISP, and welcomes site visits for Program monitoring. Program visits by external support staff are documented in each Individuals' access log. Any person either internal or external requesting access to an Individual's binder must provide the proper documentation prior to access. The Collaborative ensures that instructional groupings do not exceed the applicable guidelines per 115 CMR of Individual to staff ratio and intensity level.

Individual Referral and Admissions

Prior to Individual placement in a Collaborative Program, DDS will forward a comprehensive referral packet to the Program in which the Individual's enrollment is to be considered. Upon receipt, the Director of DDS Services or his/her designee will work with the Service Coordinator to schedule a site visit and intake meeting with the guardians at which time detailed information about the Program will be discussed. Such information will include the Collaborative's services and policies.

The Director of DDS Services or his/her designee will also conduct a tour of the Program in which the Individual would be placed. Prior to enrollment, an Admissions Packet will need to be filled out by the Individual/guardian. Please see Appendix B.

Placement Meeting

Upon acceptance to a Collaborative Program, the Service Coordinator may schedule a Team Meeting. Team participants will include: the Individual, guardian(s), Service Coordinator, Director of DDS Services or his/her designee, external support staff working with the Individual, designee of any district/agency cost sharing the placement (if applicable), and any other persons determined appropriate by members of the team.

Service Agreements

It is the responsibility of the state agency to enter into service agreements with the Collaborative Program in which an Individual is being placed. In each service agreement, the Collaborative will provide the following assurances:

Assurances on the part of the Collaborative that the Program will comply with all elements of the ISP (Individual Service Plan) for the Individual and shall provide, in writing, to state agency detailed documentation of such compliance through completion of required Individual Progress Reports.

1. The Today & Tomorrow Program shall allow state agency to conduct announced and unannounced site visits and to review all documents and Program.
2. The Today & Tomorrow Program shall afford all applicable legal requirements of the regulations and applicable policy statements and directives issued by both federal and state health and human service agencies.

The Today & Tomorrow Program assures the state agencies that it does not deny an Individual access to its programs or services on the grounds of race, color, age, disability, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.

INDIVIDUAL POLICIES: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF INDIVIDUALS AND GUARDIANS 115 CMR 5.03 and 5.04

Rights of Individuals

It is impossible to list all Individuals' rights. The following is a non-exhaustive list of individual rights which shall not be construed to deny or limit other rights retained by Individuals, in their capacity as members of a Program, or as citizens.

Individuals have the right to:

Receive services and supports provided in a manner that promotes:

- Human Dignity
- Humane and adequate care and treatment
- Self-determination and freedom of choice to the Individual's fullest capability

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- The opportunity to live and receive services or supports in the least restrictive and most typical setting possible
- The opportunity to undergo typical developmental experiences, even though such experiences may entail an element of risk; provided however, that the Individual's safety and well-being shall not be unreasonably jeopardized
- The opportunity to engage in activities and styles of living which encourage and maintain the integration of the Individual in the community
- The right to communicate
- The right to be protected from private and commercial exploitation
- The right to be visited and to visit others under circumstances that are conducive to friendships
- The right to enjoy basic goods and services without threat of denial or delay for any purpose by providers
- The right to reasonable expectation of privacy
- The right to decline any service or support
- Physical safety and protection of personal property
- Safe buildings, sanitary facilities, and available drinkable water. Individuals have the right to use Program supplies and facilities and work in a clean, organized environment
- Respect from staff and administrators, which would exclude their being subjected to cruel and unusual punishments, especially those which are demeaning or derogatory, or which diminish their self-esteem
- Consulting with staff and anyone else connected with their Program if they so desire at appropriate times
- Expressing their opinions and feelings

Responsibilities of Individuals

While it is not possible to list all Individual responsibilities, Individuals who consistently behave in accordance with the following list of broad responsibilities will be in compliance with the rules of the Program.

Individuals have the responsibility to:

- Respect the rights of all persons.
- Respect the diversity of staff and Individuals in the Collaborative with regard to race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, marriage, pregnancy, guardianship, sexual orientation, gender identity, primary language, handicap, special needs, age, and economic class.
- Contribute to the maintenance of a safe and positive environment.
- Exercise the highest degree of professionalism in observing and adhering to rules and regulations.
- Recognize that responsibility is inherent in the exercise of every right.
- Comply with Program service definitions as set forth by DDS.

Individual Code of Conduct

Nondiscrimination, Civil Rights, and Due Process

The Collaborative is committed to maintaining an environment where bigotry and intolerance, including discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religious beliefs, disability, or age have no place; and where any form of coercion or harassment that insults the dignity of others and creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment is unacceptable. The Collaborative will not tolerate discrimination or the infringement of another's civil rights. This policy shall apply to conduct that occurs on Collaborative or Program grounds, at Program or Collaborative related activities, or traveling to or from Collaborative Program related activities.

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Prohibited Conduct

Conduct prohibited under this policy includes, but is not limited to:

Bias Motivated Conduct: Any act, including conduct or speech, directed at or which occurs to a person or property because of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender identify, sexual orientation, disability, or age.

Discrimination: The unequal treatment of others based on race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or age.

Harassment: Unwelcome, verbal, written or physical conduct targeting specific person(s), which is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to create an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or offensive program environment, or substantially interfere with the progress of an Individual's services.

Sexual Harassment: Physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature, not limited to but including sexual advances, which foster a hostile environment for the victim, sexual assault, and rape.

Hate Crimes: Criminal acts to which recognized types of bias motives are an evident contributing factor. Criminal bias-motivated conduct entails, at a minimum, threats. Criminal conduct includes acts putting someone in fear of immediate physical harm (assaults), and actual physical violence (assault and battery), and grows most serious if a victim suffers any bodily injury. Repeated threatening or menacing actions like following someone can amount to the crime of stalking.

Hostile Environment: Subjecting another Individual to threats, intimidation, or coercion that is/are sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive so as to interfere with or limit an Individual's ability to participate in or benefit from the Collaborative's programs or activities or place the Individual in reasonable fear for his or her safety. Whether a Program environment has become hostile must be evaluated based on the totality of the circumstances. A hostile environment does not necessarily entail that an Individual exhibits quantifiable harm.

Stalking: Intentional conduct involving two or more acts directed at a specific person, which would cause an average person substantial distress, where the perpetrator has made threats causing the targeted person fear of death or injury.

Retaliation: Retaliating in any way against another Individual for complaining of conduct prohibited under this policy.

Commitment to Prevention and Investigation

The Collaborative is committed to the prevention and accurate reporting of all incidents of civil rights violations such that all Individuals and staff can enjoy a safe, non-threatening educational and working environment. Program administrators will thoroughly investigate all instances of violation and take disciplinary action in accordance with this Handbook, as well as report such instances to law enforcement agencies where appropriate. Collaborative staff must intervene in all civil rights violations and instances of harassment whenever witnessed, reported or suspected. The Director of DDS Services and the applicable Program Coordinator will be notified immediately whenever civil rights violations are in question, and Collaborative staff will move quickly in preventing a recurrence of any civil rights violation or incident of harassment.

Procedures for Responding to and Investigating Incidents

All instances of civil rights violations, witnessed or suspected, must be reported to the Program Coordinator or Director of DDS Services.

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Any Individual coming forward to report a civil rights violation he or she has experienced will be directed to the Program Coordinator or Director of DDS Services, following any emergency needs being attended to.
Consideration will be given to whether any immediate or interim steps are necessary to ensure the safety of and avert retaliation of the complainant.

-The investigation must determine whether a civil rights violation has in fact occurred.
-The investigation must include preservation and gathering of evidence from the scene of an incident. For example, bias-related notes will be copied.
-The investigation will include interviewing victims and witnesses as soon as possible, as well as others who may have relevant knowledge.
-The investigation may include other methods and documents deemed relevant and useful.
-All interviews and evidence should be carefully evaluated for the presence of bias indicators that would characterize the matter as a civil rights violation.
-The investigation will conclude with a finding as to whether a civil rights violation has or has not occurred.

Consequences for Civil Rights Violations

Non-disciplinary corrective actions: Some violations can be addressed with steps that do not necessitate disciplinary action. These steps usually lay within the discretion of the Program Coordinator or his/her designee. Such instances may warrant counseling, diversity awareness training, separating offender and victim, guardian conferences, and/or special Program assignments.

Disciplinary Action: Disciplinary actions will be taken toward the goal of eliminating the offending conduct, preventing recurrence, and reestablishing a Program environment conducive for the violator to learn. Violations of civil rights of Individuals or staff may result in sanctions including suspension, emergency termination of enrollment, and expulsion for Individuals and suspension, depending on the severity of the infraction.

Failure to Act by Administrators or Staff: All staff have a duty to act to stop witnessed civil rights violations, as safely as can be done, and report such instances to Program administrators. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Commitment to Non-Retaliation

The Collaborative will deal seriously with any and all threats or acts of retaliation for the good faith filing of a complaint. Such action will result in disciplinary proceedings. Staff will monitor situations to ensure that no threats or acts of reprisal are made. Program administrators may use non-disciplinary procedures to prevent retaliation from occurring

Referral to Law Enforcement Authorities

The Executive Director or his/her designee has the responsibility of notifying the local police when they have reason to believe that a hate crime has been or is to be committed. This is mandatory for all hate crimes violations.

Documentation Requirements

Record keeping – Records of all civil rights violations and hate crimes reported are maintained. Records will be compiled by Program year. Record keeping will include particulars of the incident, response actions taken, results of the investigation and intervention.

Monitoring and tracking to identify patterns – Records should be maintained and monitored to detect patterns in violations, repeat offenders, and locations for problems. Actions will be taken once patterns have been revealed.

Dissemination of Information and Training

This policy will be available to staff, Individuals and guardians. Staff will receive training relevant to this policy annually during staff orientation. Individuals and guardians will receive this policy annually and at time of admission to a Collaborative Program. This policy will be reviewed annually for compliance with state and federal law.

Individual Guidelines

Attendance and Tardiness: Individuals are encouraged to attend the Program on all days and on time. The Individual or caretaker are expected to let staff know prior to 6:00AM if an Individual will not be attending the Program that day, or will be tardy/dismissed. Individuals/Guardians are to call the Program Dispatcher at 978-799-7358 for Individuals who will not be using Collaborative transportation for that day. If an individual is absent or tardy and no phone call is made, a call will be made to the individual's home. Individuals who are tardy will be allowed to join the Program day as long as they arrive before 11:00AM. Individuals leaving the Program early will be allowed to do so as long as it is after 11:00AM. This policy may be adjusted based on unforeseen medical needs. Excessive unscheduled absences, dismissals, and tardiness are unacceptable.

Appropriate Language: Collaborative Individuals are encouraged to behave in a professional manner which includes refraining from swearing, making rude comments or inappropriate noises, or using inappropriate voice levels.

Appropriate Dress: Individuals are expected to wear appropriate clothes for the Program or work. Individuals should adhere to the dress code of their work site(s). Please refer to Appendix C for specific work site dress code.

Transportation: The Collaborative provides transportation for many Individuals in the Today & Tomorrow Program. Service Coordinators are responsible to contract for the transportation of Individuals to/from the Program/home each day. Individuals cannot be driven to the Program or picked up from the Program without permission from an authorized representative. Individuals/Guardians are to call the Program Dispatcher at 978-799-7358 for Individuals who will not be using Collaborative transportation for that day. Individuals will only be permitted to be transported by those people the guardian has indicated are appropriate (See Release of Individuals to Adults Other than Guardians).

Appropriate Conduct: Individuals are expected to behave in an appropriate manner exhibiting respect for themselves and others at all times while in the Program or participating in Collaborative Programs or activities.

Personal Property: The Collaborative strongly encourages that Individuals do not bring valuable items to the Program. If the personal property of an Individual causes disruption while at the Program, the Collaborative may take the property away from the Individual. The Collaborative will make every effort to return all personal property to the Individual or guardian. However, the Collaborative is not responsible for lost or stolen property or compensating Individuals or guardians for value of such property.

Drugs or Alcohol: No drugs or alcohol are permitted in the Program or on the Program grounds, and Individuals are not permitted to come to the Program under the influence of substances. The possession, use, manufacture, distribution, sale, or possession with intent to sell, or dispensation of alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, or other illegal or controlled substances of any kind is strictly prohibited.

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Smoking and Tobacco: The use of any tobacco products is prohibited within the Collaborative Program buildings, the Program facilities, on the Program grounds, or on Collaborative vehicles by any Individual, including Program personnel.

Theft and Vandalism: Individuals are prohibited from stealing, vandalizing, or destroying the property of others, including property belonging to the Collaborative or its staff, faculty, Individuals, guardians, volunteers, and visitors. Program pride is enhanced by a well maintained and clean building. The Collaborative hopes that all Individuals will share in this belief. Individuals involved in theft, vandalism, graffiti, destruction of property, or arson will be required to reimburse the Program for the materials and labor necessary to fix any damage they cause, and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to or including suspension, emergency termination, and legal action.

Weapons: The Collaborative strictly prohibits the possession of all weapons in the Program, on Program grounds, Program buses, or at any Program functions. All knives, handguns, rifles, shotguns, other fire arms, explosives, incendiary devices, and other weapons are forbidden. If an Individual is found to be in possession of such an object, the weapon will be confiscated and the police will also be contacted.

Violence and Threats of Violence: All violence and threats of violence (including physical fighting, assault, battery, kidnapping, threat of robbery, robbery using force, homicide, other drug-related or crime-related violence, and all acts that endanger or cause bodily harm to others) are strictly prohibited at the Program, the Collaborative, or Collaborative related activities. All threats of violence or physical attack will be taken seriously by the Collaborative.

Destruction of Property: Individuals are prohibited from the destruction of Collaborative property or the property of others.

Rules of Public Programs with Co-located Collaborative Programs: Individuals in Collaborative Programs co-located within public programs are also subject to the rules of those public programs.

Internet Use

The Program provides Individuals with Internet access in most locations. All Individuals may have access to the Internet. Individuals using this access must read and adhere to the following use policies:

Authorized Use

That means we expect Individuals to use Internet access primarily for Program-related purposes, i.e. to research relevant topics and to obtain useful information. The following are specific provisions regarding authorized use of the Collaborative's Internet connection:

• Users may use the Collaborative's Internet services for personal improvement provided that such use is consistent with staff and Program conduct.

• Internet use should be restricted to sites and materials such as news or information that might be considered reasonable if read as a text publication in a professional environment.

Unauthorized Use

Users shall not use the Collaborative's Internet services to view, download, save, receive, or send material related to the following:

- Offensive content of any kind, including pornographic material.

- Propagating a virus, worm, Trojan horse, or trap-door Program code.
- Disabling or overloading any computer system or network.
- Circumventing any system intended to protect the privacy or security of another user.
- Promoting discrimination on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, age, or marital status.
- Visiting websites that promote threatening or violent behavior.
- Using the Internet for illegal activities including the illegal downloading of music, movies, or other copyrighted materials.
- Distributing commercial messages.
- Gambling websites.
- Hosting of 'game servers' for online or network gaming.

The above list is by way of an example only and is not intended to be exhaustive.

MEDICAL POLICIES

The Program maintains a Program Nurse to promote the health and safety of its Individuals, intervene with actual and potential health and behavioral issues, manage complex medical issues, and provide case management services. The Program Nurse makes the decision if an Individual is to be sent home for medical reasons. All Individuals must provide the following documentation: physical (required yearly) and dental exam (or opt-out option), up-to-date immunization records, list of all medications taken by Individual, medical and guardian consents, and if applicable: verification to self-administer, any required action plans due to allergies, asthma, diabetes, seizures, and any diet or nutritional guidelines or restrictions. Every Program year, Individuals will be provided with a Valley Collaborative Health Packet containing relevant forms to be completed to ensure that the Collaborative has updated medical emergency contact information, medication information, and all other information relevant to the Individual's health including guardian authorizations for treatment and/or the administration of medication. The Collaborative maintains a separate Health Services Manual with more detailed medical policies. Copies of the Health Services Manual are kept in the Collaborative nurse's office and are available for Individuals upon request.

Please note no medication is to be brought to the Program without first consulting with the Program Nurse.

Please see Appendix E.

Special Medical Conditions

The Collaborative will maintain the Individual's safety at all times. Individuals with special medical conditions (ex. allergies, asthma, seizure disorders, and diabetes) will be required to have a doctor's order on file (yearly) explaining any protocols and procedures.

Seizures: Seizure Action Plan - For any Individuals whose seizure lasts more than 5 minutes an ambulance will be called. (An exception will be made if a physician specifies in a physician's order.) An ambulance will be called immediately for any Individual with no history of seizure activity. Parents/Guardians will be notified whenever any seizure activity has taken place.

Asthma: Asthma Action Plan – Individuals who have a diagnosis of asthma and require a rescue MDI (metered dose inhaler) or nebulizer treatment will have guidelines written by a physician; this includes any activity/weather/situation that exasperates the asthma and if the Individual can self-administer the inhaler.

Allergies: Allergy Action Plan – For Individuals with life threatening allergies who require an Epi-Pen, an Allergy Action Plan will be written by the Program Nurse; this includes the Individual's name, DOB, allergies and reaction. The Program Nurse will ensure a valid physicians order for Epi-Pen is on file (required yearly). An ambulance will be called immediately if an Epi-Pen is used. Parents/Guardians will be notified whenever an allergic reaction has taken place. The Program Nurse will educate staff on signs and symptoms of allergic reactions.

Diabetes: Diabetic Treatment Plan - Individuals who have a diagnosis of diabetes will be required to have a treatment plan signed by a physician; this includes any glucose monitoring, medication to be administered, emergency protocol, and if the Individual can self-administer/self-test blood glucose. The Program Nurse will educate staff about the signs and symptoms of hypo/hyperglycemia.

Diet and Nutrition: Any dietary guidelines or restrictions must be documented by a physician yearly. Staff will encourage healthy eating by following Executive Order of Health and Human Services 504.

Communicable Disease

In order to prevent the spread of communicable disease, Individuals with a diagnosed communicable disease will be advised to stay home for the following period of time as listed in the table below.

Communicable Disease	Requirements
Bacterial Conjunctivitis	May return to the Program after medical treatment has been provided for 24 hours.
Chicken Pox	May return to the Program after all lesions have dried and crusted or one week from appearance of first eruption.
Coronavirus	May return to the Program 5 days after positive test assuming symptoms have subsided.
Measles	May return to the Program four days after first appearance of rash.
Impetigo	May return to the Program after all open sores have healed or is small enough that a Band-Aid will cover the entire area.
Strep Throat	May return to the Program after antibiotic treatment has been given for 24 hours.
Ringworm	May return to the Program after treatment with antifungal cream has begun; lesions should be covered.
Pediculosis /Scabies	May return to the Program when treated; scabies must be treated with anti-parasitic for 24 hours before Individual may return to work or after one treatment.

Dismissal from Program due to Illness

The Program Nurse may exclude an Individual from the Program for health reasons if the Individual:

- Has returned from a hospital admission within the past 24 hours. This does not include routine tests or minor injuries. The Individual will remain at home for observation for the first 24 hours.
- Has a temperature of 100.5 degrees tympanic (by ear). Temperature must be 98.6 for a full 24 hours prior to returning to the Program. The exception is an Individual with a hypothalamic problem (temperature regulation

problem) and is symptom free. Each case will be discussed individually.

- Has an infectious disease (Strep Throat/Pneumonia, etc.) and has not been on antibiotic therapy for 24 hours or as designated by MD.
- Eye drainage yellow/green in color with pink or red eyes, eyelids, etc.
- Any undiagnosed rash.
- Has a culture(s) pending (exceptions can be made at the discretion of the nurse).
- Is on respiratory precautions, cough/cold or has a significant change in respiratory secretions (green/yellow nasal drainage).

Hospital Re-Entry

To ensure the health and safety of every Individual re-entering the Program following a psychiatric or medical hospitalization, the Program has adopted the following policy:

1. Any Individual who has required a psychiatric evaluation, and emergency room visit or had been placed in inpatient hospitalization will be readmitted to their respective Program upon collaboration with their treatment planning team.
2. The Individual can return to the Program with the receipt of a signed discharge summary from the hospital/clinician providing treatment and medical clearance from his/her medical provider.
3. This summary will ensure that the most recent and credible information regarding treatments, goals and restrictions are relayed back to the Program and allow for a smooth transition.

The plan should include, in writing, any changes in medications, medical procedure, and any follow-up plans with clinicians, therapists, and any other treatment providers.

When this policy is followed the Program can also ensure that the Individual will be safe upon their return and provisions are in place should they decompensate once back in the setting.

INDIVIDUAL SERVICE PLAN (ISP) PROCESS

ISP Development and Implementation

The Director of DDS Services or his/her designee is responsible for overseeing the implementation of all components of the Individual's ISP.

- Where the ISP of the Individual has been accepted in whole or in part by that Individual's guardian, the Program provides the mutually agreed upon services without delay.
- There must be an ISP in effect for each enrolled Individual. Individuals just beginning services with DDS will have an ISP scheduled within 60 days.
- Each provider described in the ISP is informed of his or her specific responsibilities related to the implementation of the Individual's ISP and the specific accommodations, modifications, and supports that must be provided for the Individual under it.

In circumstances where services many no longer be beneficial or that an Individual's needs can no longer be met, the Collaborative will notify the ISP Team and set up a meeting. All appropriate parties will be notified at least ten (10) days in advance of the intended date of the meeting. At the meeting a plan will be developed so that the Individual can transition from the Collaborative Program in an organized manner.

Progress Reports

All Collaborative Programs will complete Semi-Annual Progress Reports two times each year. In all cases the Semi-Annual Progress Reports will be submitted in HCSIS and sent to the Service Coordinator and will be kept on file at the Collaborative.

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Annual Progress Reports will report to guardians the progress of each ISP goal individually. Service providers must comment on whether they anticipate the Individual being able to meet the goal by the end of the ISP period. If they believe that the Individual will be unable to meet the goal, that must be indicated on the Progress Report and a Team Meeting must be held to amend the ISP. Progress Reports must answer two questions for each goal:

(1) What is the Individual's progress toward the annual goal and
(2) Is the progress sufficient to enable the Individual to achieve the goal by the end of the ISP period?

Information included on the Annual/Semi-Annual Progress Reports will be derived from data collected throughout the reporting period. Copies of Progress Reports will be maintained in the Individuals' records.

Please see Appendix E for ISP Timeline

Assessments

All Individuals in the Today & Tomorrow Program are given the Assessment of Functional Living Skills (AFLS) assessment upon starting the program and then annually. This assessment measures safety, adaptive living skills and work readiness. This helps to develop an Individual's Person Centered Plan which focuses on four domains. This includes Community Living, Employment, Adaptive Living Skills and Quality of Life. This is also reviewed annually with the Individual as part of the ISP process.

Please see Appendix F for AFLS and Appendix G for Person Center Plan.

STAFF EXPECTATIONS

Valley Collaborative considers its employees to be one of its most valuable resources and is committed to providing the supports and structures necessary for them to be successful in their positions. Supervisory staff work closely with Valley Collaborative employees to ensure services are being provided in a safe, skillful, and respectful manner. Regular Team Meetings are held to facilitate the highest levels of communication and support.

Feedback is regularly solicited from Individuals, agency staff, parents/guardians, stakeholders and Valley Collaborative staff to continually measure the quality of staff providing services to Individuals at various locations in the community. Valley Collaborative uses this feedback to continually improve upon programming and staff development. Individuals receiving services from Valley have formal and informal opportunities to provide feedback at the time of hire and on an ongoing basis on the performance of staff that support them.

All Valley Collaborative staff are expected to:

- Follow all policies and procedures, manuals, and handbooks as outlined.
- Behave in a professional manner at all times while on the Program premises or at a function at which the staff is a representative of the Collaborative.
- Conduct day-to-day activities in a safe, responsible manner, and avoid situations that may endanger the safety of others.
- Maintain the security of confidential information. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information is forbidden.
- No smoking or other use of tobacco products and no illegal or unauthorized drugs or alcohol at any Collaborative Program, field trip or function.

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- Provide accurate and non-judgmental information on all Program records and reports.
- Regularly report to work on time, and give notification of any absences in a prompt and responsible manner in accordance with Collaborative policies and procedures.
- Complete assignments accurately and in a timely manner.
- Utilize only Collaborative-sanctioned modes of communication with Individuals and follow all applicable laws, regulations, and Collaborative policies. This includes complying with the social media policy in the Valley Collaborative Employee Handbook.
- Support and advocate for the rights of all Individuals in the Program.

The above list is by way of an example only and is not intended to be exhaustive.

[End of Handbook]

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Appendix A

Individual: _____ ISP/LP Month: _____

Individual File- Today & Tomorrow Program, Valley Collaborative
Table of Contents

Front Pocket

- Emergency Fact Sheet
- Access Log

I. Identifying Information

1. Copies of identification Cards (ID, Health Insurance, Social Security, Passport, Birth Certificate, etc.) as applicable or available
2. Intake Info (Referral Packet, SRF, etc.)
3. Search Plan

II. Service Planning

4. Current ISP/ LP Packet
5. ISP Assessments (Annual Progress Summaries, Safety, Semi-Annual Progress Summaries)
6. Provider Support Agreement, Goal 1- "Work"
    a. Monthly notes (if 3168 applicable)
7. Provider Support Agreement, Goal 2- "CBDS"
8. Assistive Technology Assessment

III. Vocational Information

9. Current T&T Schedule
10. Vocational Assessments (Person-Centered Plans, Worksite Surveys, AFLS, Resume)
11. Financial Information (Direct Deposit Info, I9, M4, W4, etc.)
12. Misc. Vocational Information/ Correspondence (Specific Employer Info, Trainings, etc.)

IV. Health & Medical Information

13. Health Packet
14. Annual Physical & Dental
15. Medication Sheet
16. Immunization Records
17. Specific Health Protocols (if applicable)
18. Misc. medical paperwork/ assessments (if applicable)

V. Legal Information

19. Current Consent Forms
    b. Release of Information Form
    c. Photo/ Media Releases
    d. Transportation/ Home Alone Form
    e. Worksite-Specific Consents (if applicable)
    f. Other Misc. Consent Forms
20. Documentation of Annual Trainings (HR, Safety, etc.)
21. Guardianship & Roger's Monitor Info (if applicable or available)
22. Incident Reports (All)
23. Misc. Legal Information or Correspondence

Inactive (Previous year ISP/ Life Plan, Annual ISP Assessments, Semi-Annual Assessments)

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Appendix B

Admissions Checklist

Legal Documents:

- Copy of Birth Certificate
- Copy of Social Security Card
- Court Mittimus (If Individual is in the custody of the State)
- Guardianship Decree
- Court Appointment Letter (for Individuals who have medical Guardian Ad Litems')
- Conditions of Probation (if applicable)
- Signed Releases of Information completed by the Individual/Legal Guardian
- Signed Acknowledgement of the Human Rights Handbook
- Signed Releases for Transportation/Photographs and related Permission Slips
- Referral/Request Form
- Billing/Services Form/CDAT

Medical/Health Documents:

- Physician's Orders for prescribed medications.
- Health and Immunization Record
- Standing Orders/Protocols from the physician with regard to medical issues (Epilepsy, Allergic Reactions, etc.)
- Copy of Roger's Orders (for Individual's in state custody receiving psychotropic medications)
- Emergency Medical Form
- Copy of Insurance Card
- Copy of most recent Psychiatric, Neuropsychiatric, or other related Evaluations and Assessments.

Vocational Documents:

- I-9 Forms/Tax Forms/W-2
- Direct Deposit Form
- Copy of Social Security Card or Copy of Birth Certificate
- Copy of picture ID (if available)
- Vocational or Adaptive Assessments
- Copy of Social Security Benefit Statement (if applicable)
- Naturalization Card (if applicable)

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Appendix C

Dress Code

In order to continue to maintain our professional presentation in the community, it is important to follow the dress code for each work site. Please see below:

3M, D'Youville
- Closed toe shoes
- Long pants (no shorts)
- No tank tops

Billerica Town Hall
- Closed toe shoes
- Long pants preferred
- No tank tops

Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS)
- Closed toe shoes
- Long pants (no shorts)
- Clean and neat T-shirts without large graphics
- No tank tops

Cross Point
- Closed toe shoes
- T-shirts without large graphics
- Khaki material shorts in the summer
- No tank tops or hats

Chelmsford High School (CHS)
- Closed toe shoes
- Long pants preferred
- No tank tops

Chelmsford High Kitchen, Sodexo
- *Black closed two shoes*
- *Plain white t-shirt (no graphics)*
- *Black pants*

Billerica Housing Authority (BHA)
- Closed toe shoes
- Long pants preferred
- No tank tops

Community Catering
- Closed toe shoes
- Plain white t-shirt (no graphics)
- Long pants (no shorts)

Camp Paul
- Closed toe shoes
- Long pants (no shorts)

Meals on Wheels, Food Bank, Strongwater Farm
- Closed toe shoes
- Long pants preferred

Please note that schedules can occasionally fluctuate, so closed toe shoes and pants are suggested on a regular basis. Feel free to reach out with specific questions as seasons change. Thank you!

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Health Packet



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Adult Services
Today & Tomorrow Program

Dear Individual, Guardian(s), and/or Caregiver(s),

The Valley Collaborative Today and Tomorrow Program, in accordance with DDS and DPH, requires the following documentation to be on file and updated yearly:

- A copy of an annual physical exam and immunizations (if applicable)
- A list of current medications
- A fully completed Valley Collaborative Health Packet (attached) including:
  - Health Care Provider Order for Tylenol (if consenting)
- If the individual has one of the following medical conditions, the following documentation is required by a medical provider:
  - Seizure Action Plan, signed by a physician
  - Allergy Action Plan (Requiring an EpiPen), signed by a physician
  - Diabetic Action Plan, signed by a physician
  - Dietary Restrictions or Modified Diet information, signed by a physician
  - Eye Glasses – copy of prescription, signed by a physician
  - Hearing Aid – copy of prescription, signed by a physician
  - Supportive Protective/ Health-Related Devices (i.e. AFOs, braces, walker), signed by a physician
  - Medical Monitoring Devices (i.e. CGM, VNS magnet, oxygen), signed by a physician

If an individual requires one of these forms, please contact the Health Office:

Jessica Marcotte, RN, BSN (Lead Nurse) Phone: (978) 528-7896 Email: jscalzi@valleycollaborative.org Fax: (978) 362-2329	Gabriela Marquez, CNA Phone: (978) 528-7889 Email: gmarquez@valleycollaborative.org Fax: (978) 362-2329

Please inform the Valley Collaborative Nursing Department of any notable medical changes as they arise.

Thank you for your cooperation!

This document will expire one year from date signed.
Please inform Valley Collaborative Nursing Department of any changes at (978) 528-7889.

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EMERGENCY CONTACTS & MEDICAL INFORMATION

Individual's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Current Address: _____ Individual Cell: _____

Emergency Contact #1

Name: _____ Relation: _____

Best Phone Number: _____ Alt. Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Emergency Contact #2

Name: _____ Relation: _____

Best Phone Number: _____ Alt. Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Emergency Contact #3

Name: _____ Relation: _____

Best Phone Number: _____ Alt. Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Notable Medical Specialists:

Primary Care: _____ Phone:_____ Fax: _____

Other: _____ Phone:_____ Fax: _____

Insurance Information *(to be used in the event of an emergency hospitalization)*

Insurance Company: _____ Policy Number: _____

Policy Holder: _____

Individual's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

This document will expire one year from date signed.
Please inform Valley Collaborative Nursing Department of any changes at (978) 528-7889.

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Consent Information

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT CONSENT

I understand that, in the event of a medical emergency requiring treatment or hospitalization, the individual will be transported to the nearest appropriate medical facility and provided with all necessary lifesaving measures, unless otherwise specified. I also give consent for Valley Collaborative staff to administer basic first aid as needed.

Individual/ Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

RELEASE OF RECORDS
(Select One)

I **DO / DO NOT** authorize Valley Collaborative to exchange medical information with the individual's medical team to share relevant information necessary for appropriate treatment. Any information obtained by Valley Collaborative will be kept strictly confidential.

Individual/ Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

If you do not wish for your individual to receive ANY medical treatment while attending Valley Collaborative Programs please sign the declination form below:

HEALTH CARE DECLINATION

I,_____, prefer that,_____not receive any health care during program hours. I understand in the event of a medical emergency, 911 will be called. In the event of an illness or injury while at program please contact me at the following number(s):_____

Individual/ Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

This document will expire one year from date signed.
Please inform Valley Collaborative Nursing Department of any changes at (978) 528-7889.

Individual's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Medical Diagnoses (Disability-Related, Health-Related, Mental Health-Related, etc.):

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Does the individual have:

	YES	NO
Seizure Activity		
Diabetes		
Condition(s) Requiring Emergency Medication (EpiPen, Inhaler, Emergency Seizure Medication, etc.)		
Supportive Protective Device (AFOs, Braces, Cane, Walker, etc.)		
Medical Monitoring Device (CGM, VNS Magnet, O2, etc.)		

If "YES" is marked for any, specific protocols are required to be written by a physician. Please reach out to nursing department for specific paperwork.

Please list all allergies:

Allergy	Describe Reaction	Any Treatment Required? If yes, please describe:

This document will expire one year from date signed.
Please inform Valley Collaborative Nursing Department of any changes at (978) 528-7889.

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Individual's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Allergies/ Adverse Medication Reactions:

_____

_____

Medications

Medications Prescribed to Individual

Medication	**Purpose**

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Are any medications taken during day program hours? **YES / NO**

If yes, which? _____

Does the individual wear glasses? **YES / NO**

Does the individual wear hearing aids? **YES / NO**

This document will expire one year from date signed.
Please inform Valley Collaborative Nursing Department of any changes at (978) 528-7889.

Individual's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Allergies/ Adverse Medication Reactions:

_____

_____

Health Care Provider Order

Brand: Tylenol
Generic: Acetaminophen
Strength: 325mg
Amount: 2 tabs
Dose: 650mg
Route: PO
Frequency: Every 4 hours as needed, not to exceed two doses per day during program hours.
Reason: For complaint of pain self-reported or fever 100.5 and above
Notify HCP if: No improvement in 48 hours
Special instruction: N/A

Physician Signature:_____ Date:_____

Physician Name/Clinic:_____ Tel:_____

Guardian/ Individual Signature: _____ Date: _____

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This document will expire one year from date signed.
Please inform Valley Collaborative Nursing Department of any changes at (978) 528-7889.

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Adult Services

11 Executive Park Drive, North Billerica, MA 01862 * Tel: (978)-528-7826
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ALLERGY ACTION PLAN

Place photo here

Name:_____Date of birth: _____

ALLERGY TO:_____

Asthmatic: ☐ Yes* ☐ No *High risk for severe reaction

SIGNS OF AN ALLERGIC REACTION:

Systems:	**Symptoms:**
MOUTH	Itching & swelling of the lips, tongue, or mouth
THROAT	Itching and/or a sense of tightness in the throat, hoarseness and hacking cough
SKIN	Hives, itchy rash, and/or swelling about the face or extremities
GUT	Nausea, abdominal cramps, vomiting and/or diarrhea
LUNG	Shortness of breath, repetitive coughing, and/or wheezing
HEART	"Thready" pulse, "passing-out"

The severity of symptoms can quickly change.

***All above symptoms can potentially progress to a life-threatening situation.**

1. If ingestion is suspected and/or symptoms are:_____

_____,give _____**IMMEDIATELY!**

2. Call 911. DO NOT HESITATE TO CALL EMS/ 911 !!!

3. Notify Parent/Guardian- Name:_____
(In boxes below please list preferred contact order 1- being first 3- being last)

☐ Home phone#:_____
☐ Work phone#:_____
☐ Cell phone#:_____

Emergency Contact (if parent/guardian cannot be reached) –Name:_____
Telephone#:_____Relation to student:_____

Parent/guardian Signature: _____Date:_____

For physician use only:

Physician Name_____Phone#:_____

Physician Signature:_____Date:_____

Does above individual have permission to self- medicate? Please circle: yes or no

**A medication order and Allergy Plan must be on file for any individual with an allergy that requires an Epipen. Physician may use this form or provide their own.*

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Individual's Name:_____Date of birth:_____

Mild to Moderate Hypoglycemia	Treatment
• Behavior changes (may include): • Acting quiet and withdrawn • Being stubborn or restless • Tantrums of sudden rage • Confusion • Inappropriate emotional responses (eg: laughter, crying) • Poor concentration or day dreaming • Shakiness • Sweatiness • Headache • Dizziness • Pallor • Increased Heart Rate • Staggering walk • Uncontrollable crying episode • Slurred speech • Blank stare • Refusal to take anything by mouth	**If blood sugar is below:_____** • If you don't know what the blood sugar is, treat the symptoms. • Give the individual some quick-acting sugar such as: 2 – 4 glucose tablets 3 – 4 ounces of juice 6 – 8 ounces of REGULAR soda 6 – 8 ounces Milk • Check the blood sugar 10 -20 minutes after treatment. If the blood sugar result is less than 80, or if the individual still has symptoms, repeat the quick sugar treatment and blood sugar testing cycle until the individual is symptom free and the blood sugar result is above 80. • When the individual feels better and the blood sugar result is above 80, give additional snack if next meal is more than 30 minutes away and/or if the child will be participating in active play/ sports following this low blood sugar episode. • The individual may resume program activities after the blood sugar is above 80 and the child is symptom free. • Notify parent/ guardian as soon as possible

Symptoms Individual *may* exhibit:

Mild to Moderate Hyperglycemia	Treatment
• Frequent urination • Increased thirst • Blurred vision • Fatigue • Headache • Fruity-smelling breath • Nausea and vomiting • Shortness of breath • Dry mouth • Weakness • Confusion • Coma • Abdominal pain	**If blood sugar is over:_____** • If the Individual has warning signs of high blood sugar, check the blood sugar. • Encourage water • Notify parent/guardian

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Severe Hypoglycemia	Treatment
• Unconscious • Unresponsive • Convulsion-like movement • Failure to respond to cake icing (gel type) or glucose gel	• Be sure the Individual is lying down in a safe area protected from head and bodily injury. • Position the individual on his/her side • Call 911 • Inject glucagon if ordered/available. (RN only, if a registered nurse is unavailable to administer, 911 should be called) • Please note that as the individual regains consciousness, nausea and vomiting may occur • Notify parent/guardian as soon as possible

Individual's Name:_____Date of birth:_____

Daily Medications:_____

_____

Physician Name:_____Phone Number:_____
Physician signature:_____

Notify Parent/Guardian- Name:_____
(In boxes below please list preferred contact order 1- being first 3- being last)

☐ Home phone#:_____
☐ Work phone#:_____
☐ Cell phone#:_____

Emergency Contact (if parents cannot be reached) -Name:_____

Telephone#:_____Relation to Individual:_____
Program Nurse Signature:_____ Date:_____

Health Office Phone Number: 978-528-7889

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Feeding & Diet Sheet

To be completed by Physician

Individual's Name:_____

Date of Birth:_____ Weight:_____Height:_____

Allergies:_____

Reason for Modified Diet: _____

History of Aspiration?

- ☐ Yes, when:_____
- ☐ No

Has this individual undergone past feeding evaluation or Modified Barium Swallow Study?

If yes, please attach copies of all reports to this form. Please see attached release of information form.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Current Diet Recommendations:

Texture:

- ☐ Regular/Solid
- ☐ Mechanical Soft
- ☐ Ground
- ☐ Pureed with some texture possible
- ☐ Pureed
- ☐ Non-oral-feeding tube

Liquids:

- ☐ Regular/Thin
- ☐ Nectar/Thick
- ☐ Honey Thick
- ☐ Pudding
- ☐ Non-oral-feeding tube

Medications:

- ☐ Whole with water
- ☐ Whole with puree
- ☐ Crush and mix with puree
- ☐ Use liquid form
- ☐ Non oral-feeding

Supplement taken:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes: Name of supplement:_____
Time(s) given:_____

Route given: (PO, PGT, PJT):_____ Feeding Rate:_____

Flush amount:_____

_____ _____

Physician Signature Date

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Individualized Seizure Protocol

Name: _____ DOB: _____

Type of Seizure: _____ Duration: _____

Last Seizure: _____

Duration:

_____
_____
_____

CALL EMS (911)

- If seizure lasts greater than _____ minutes (VC policy 5 mins)
- If the individual has one seizure after another **yes** **no**
- If there is a CHANGE in the seizure pattern **yes** **no**
- If the individual has been injured **yes** **no**
- Other instructions or any changed to the above statement:

  _____
  _____
  _____

Additional Information:

_____
_____
_____

Neurologist Name: _____ Tel: _____

Neurologist Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Valley Collaborative Seizure Protocol

PROTOCOL:

1. All individuals' physical safety will be insured at all times.
2. **For seizure lasting more than 5 minutes 911 will be called & individual will be transported to nearest hospital.** (An exception will be made if a physician specifies in a physician's order.)
3. For students who exhibit any seizure like activity and do not have a current seizure diagnosis **911 will be called immediately & individual will be transported to nearest hospital.**
4. Guardian/parent will be notified whenever any seizure activity has taken place.
5. Individuals with a diagnosed seizure activity must have protocol signed by Physician.
6. When possible, two staff members should be present when an individual is having a seizure, one staff to maintain safety, one staff to make phone calls if necessary.
7. If individual has a witnessed, unwitnessed or suspected head or other bodily injury, **911 must be called.**

PROCEDURE:

1. As soon as seizure activity is noted, a safe position will be established either in their chair or on the floor.
2. Remove any furniture or equipment that may pose as a safety issue.
3. Loosen clothing around neck and chest and release body jacket if wearing one.
4. Turn person onto side or if sitting tip head slightly forward.
5. Never place anything in the mouth (tongue depressor or airway).
6. Do not try to restrict the person's movements.
7. Stay with the person until motor segment of the seizure is over.
8. During the seizure observe the characteristics of the seizure including the following:
   - ❑ Precipitating factors (fever, menses, loud noise, bright lights etc.)
   - ❑ Time of onset
   - ❑ Aura
   - ❑ Clinical progression of the seizure activity (from arm twitching to generalized activity) skin pallor, cyanosis of tongue or around the mouth
   - ❑ Loss of consciousness
   - ❑ Duration of motor activities
   - ❑ Post-ictal state (sleepy, lethargic, confusion, crying, vocalizing, and headache).
9. As per protocol, inform parents/guardian that seizure activity has occurred.

Individuals name:_____Date of birth:_____

Additional Information:

_____

_____

Neurologist Name: _____ Tel: _____

Neurologist Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Self-Medicating Order

Name: _____ DOB: _____

Allergies: _____

Medication Name

_____

_____

_____

If any emergency arises, call 911.

Additional Information:

_____

_____

_____

Individual may self-carry and self-administer at all times while in Valley Collaborative's Today and Tomorrow program.

Physicians Name: _____ Tel: _____

Physicians Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Medical Monitoring Devices- L99

Individual Name:	**Date of Authorization:** *(Expires in 1 year or if device changes)*
Name of Medical Monitoring Device:	
Rationale for Use:	
Instructions for Use of Device/ Correct Implementation of Device:	
Guidelines for Cleaning and Maintenance of Device:	
Signature of Person Authorizing Device (Qualified Practitioner):	**Signature of Person Agreeing to the Use (Individual or Guardian):**
Signature of Person Supervising Use (Qualified Professional/ Valley Staff):	

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SUPPORTIVE AND PROTECTIVE DEVICES MAY ONLY BE USED IN ACCORDANCE WITH 115 CMR 5.12 (2)&(3) – Valley Collaborative Today & Tomorrow Program

NAME:	**DATE OF AUTHORIZATION (Expires in 1 year or if changes in devices used)**

DESCRIBE IN DETAIL THE SUPPORTIVE AND PROTECTIVE DEVICE (S) TO BE USED AND THE REASONS FOR USE :

DESCRIBE IN DETAIL THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION AND USE OF EACH DEVICE: *INCLUDING PROCEDURES FOR AND FREQUENCY OF SAFETY CHECKS* (Include attachment where applicable)

SPECIFY TIME(S) OF DAY OR ACTIVITIES DURING WHICH THE DEVICE (S) IS TO BE USED:

LESS RESTRICTIVE METHODS PREVIOUSLY UTILIZED

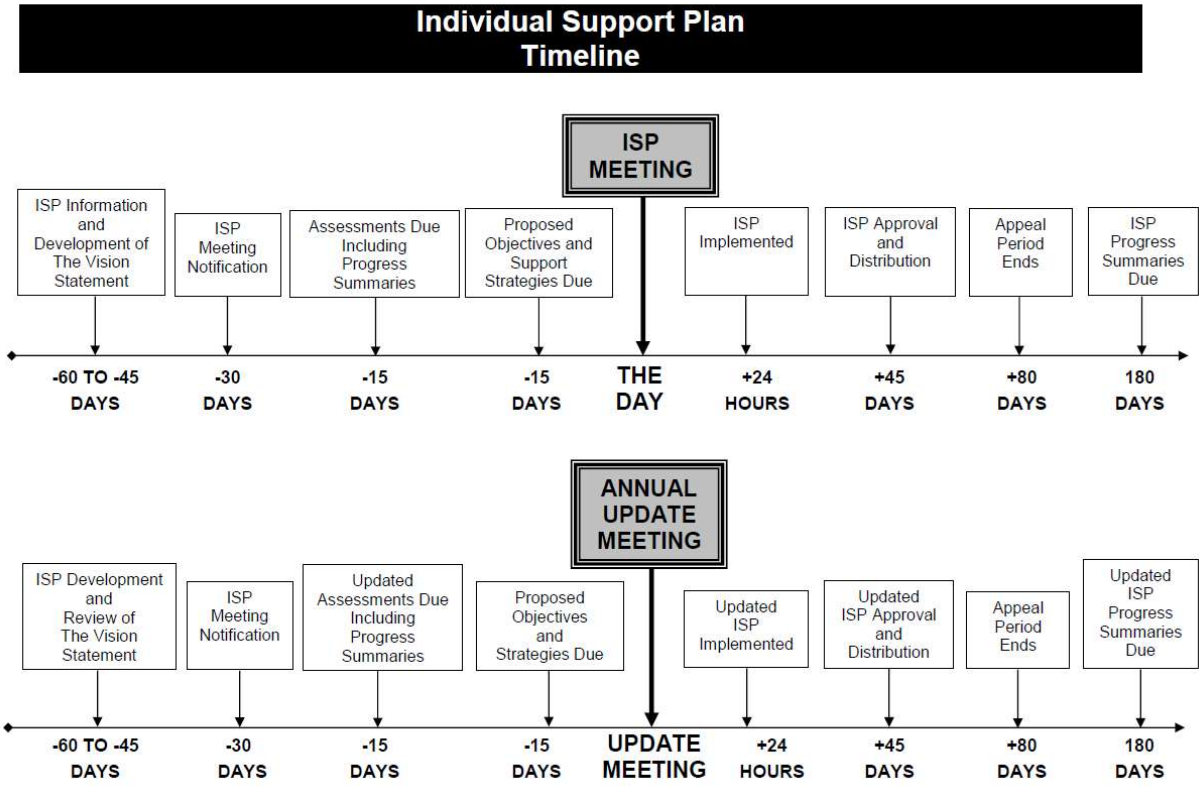
CONDITION(S) INDICATING NEED TO MODIFY (RE-FIT) SUPPORTIVE OR PROTECTIVE DEVICE (S)

CONDITION(S) INDICATING NEED TO DISCONTINUE USE OF THE SUPPORTIVE AND PROTECTIVE DEVICE (s)

DATE LAST EVALUATED BY PROFESSIONAL (For proper design and fit) RECOMMENDED REVIEW DATE:	SIGNATURE OF PERSON AUTHORIZING DEVICE. (Qualified Practitioner) Signature:_____ Date:_____
	PERSON SUPERVISING USE. (Qualified Professional) Signature:_____ Date:_____
Human Rights Committee Review: Signature:_____ Date:_____	SIGNATURE OF AGREEING TO THE USE: (Individual and/or Guardian)

SUPPORTIVE DEVICES: AUTHORIZATION FOR USE

Individual Support Plan (ISP)



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Appendix E

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Valley COLLABORATIVE

Adult Services

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Assessment of Functional Living Skills

Basic Vocational Skills (Employment & CBDS Assessment: 3168, 3181, 3163)

Individual Name:_____ **Date**: _____
Worksite: _____ **Staff Assessor**: _____

Topic	Almost Always	Most Days	Sometimes	Rarely/ Never
Individual is reliable with their attendance at work.				
Comments:				

Topic	Almost Always	Most Days	Sometimes	Rarely/ Never
Individual maintains appropriate hygiene and dress for work.				
Comments:				

Topic	Almost Always	Most Days	Sometimes	Rarely/ Never
Individual appropriately greets and interacts with coworkers, supervisors, customers, etc.				
Comments:				

Topic	Almost Always	Most Days	Sometimes	Rarely/ Never
Individual regularly remains focused on work tasks.				
Comments:				

Topic	Almost Always	Most Days	Sometimes	Rarely/ Never
Individual works at a speed appropriate for the task.				
Comments:				

Created based off of the Assessment of Functional Living Skills
(Partington, J. W., & Mueller, M. M. (2013). The Assessment of Functional Living Skills: School Skills Assessment Protocol. San Francisco: Behavior Analysts, Inc. and Stimulus Publications.)

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Topic	Almost Always	Most Days	Sometimes	Rarely/ Never
Individual prioritizes tasks correctly at work.				
Comments:				

Topic	Almost Always	Most Days	Sometimes	Rarely/ Never
When a task is complete, individual independently finds additional work or asks for more.				
Comments:				

Topic	Almost Always	Most Days	Sometimes	Rarely/ Never
Individual recognizes and corrects mistakes and/or alerts supervisor for assistance.				
Comments:				

Topic	Almost Always	Most Days	Sometimes	Rarely/ Never
Individual is willing to learn new tasks and work skills.				
Comments:				

Topic	Almost Always	Most Days	Sometimes	Rarely/ Never
Individual keeps work area and personal belongings neat and tidy.				
Comments:				

Additional Comments:

Created based off of the Assessment of Functional Living Skills
(Partington, J. W., & Mueller, M. M. (2013). The Assessment of Functional Living Skills: School Skills Assessment Protocol. San Francisco: Behavior Analysts, Inc. and Stimulus Publications.)

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Person Centered Assessment & Career Plan

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Case Manager: _____

Created with information & resources gathered from Institute for Community Inclusion, UMass Boston – www.communityinclusion.org

Table of Contents

Person Centered Assessment

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- Important To & Important For Page 3
- Interest Inventory (C40 & C41) Page 4
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Career Plan (C39)

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- Annual Worker Trainee Evaluation Category Key (C35, C23) Page 7
- Vocational Preference Assessment (C22) Page 8-9
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Summary

- Overall Personal Profile Summary Page 17

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My Person-Centered Assessment

Vision Questions

DDS Service Coordinator: _____

Guardianship Information: _____

Overall Needs, Strengths, and Interests

What notable health information or needs do you have?

Who are the important people in your life that help support you?

What do you consider to be your strengths/ skills?

What are your current interests?

Home & Community Engagement

What chores and responsibilities do you have at home? Which do you like or dislike?

What do you like to do for fun in the community?

Who do you like to spend time with?

Success & Future Plans

What makes you truly happy?

What kind of environments do you prefer? (Examples: noisy, quiet, crowded, not crowded, indoors, outdoors, etc.)

What long-term goals could Valley help you accomplish?

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Important To & Important For

What is important to you? *Include things that are important to the person in their daily life.* (Person's own input)	What is important for you? *Include things that need to be kept in mind regarding issues of health or safety and what others see as important to help the person be a valued community member.* (Staff/ support team member input)

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Interest Inventory (C40 & C41)

Which of the following would you like to explore/ learn more about?

	OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES		SPORTS		ARTS & CRAFTS		MUSIC & ACTING		READING & WRITING
	Hiking		Soccer		Painting		Playing instruments		Journaling
	Camping		Basketball		Drawing		Singing		Poetry
	Cycling		Yoga		Knitting		Listening		Blogging
	Gardening		Swimming		Photography		Performing arts		Fiction or non-fiction
	Other:		Other:		Other:		Other:		Other:

	TECHNOLOGY		TRAVEL		SCIENCE & NATURE		HEALTH & WELLNESS		COMMUNITY
	Coding		Exploring new places		Animals & Plants		Meditation		Museums
	Social Media		Backpacking		Weather		Cardio Exercises		Libraries
	Tablets & Laptops		International trips		Environmentalism		Cooking & Baking		Parks
	Surfing the web		Modes of transport		Engineering		Healthy recipes		Community classes
	Other:		Other:		Other:		Other:		Other:

	HISTORY & CULTURE		LIFE SKILLS		SOCIAL CAUSES		GAMES & LEISURE		OTHER
	Researching		Travel training		Volunteer work		Video games		
	Cultural studies		Job skill development		Community service		Board games		
	Archaeology		Learning about money		Human Rights		Bowling		
			Working on ADLs		Politics & Voting		Movies & TV		
	Other:		Other:		Other:		Other:		

My top 3 interests from this list are: _____

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Interest Inventory Follow Up (C40 & C41)

Interest Category	Research or CBDS/ Work Activity	Date

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C24

My Career Plan (C39, C23)

Annual Worker Trainee Evaluation (C35, C22)

Date/ ISP Period: _____

Safety Awareness
- Excellent
- Good
- Needs Improvement
- Unsatisfactory

Independence & Self Advocacy
- Excellent
- Good
- Needs Improvement
- Unsatisfactory

Attendance & Punctuality
- Excellent
- Good
- Needs Improvement
- Unsatisfactory

Personal Development & Learning
- Excellent
- Good
- Needs Improvement
- Unsatisfactory

Health & Hygiene
- Excellent
- Good
- Needs Improvement
- Unsatisfactory

Adaptability & Coping Skills
- Excellent
- Good
- Needs Improvement
- Unsatisfactory

Communication & Social Skills
- Excellent
- Good
- Needs Improvement
- Unsatisfactory

Collaboration with Others
- Excellent
- Good
- Needs Improvement
- Unsatisfactory

Overall performance feedback—include strengths & areas for growth:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Individual Signature: _____

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Annual Worker Trainee Evaluation Category Key (C35, C23)

Safety Awareness

- Demonstrates an understanding of safety rules at program and sites.
- Follows safety guidelines to ensure personal well-being.
- Stays with the group.

Attendance & Punctuality

- Maintains regular attendance.
- Transitions with group effectively.

Health & Hygiene

- Takes responsibility for personal health and hygiene to the best of their abilities.
- Engages in activities that promote physical and mental well-being.
- Arrives to program clean and appropriately dressed.

Communication & Social Skills

- Engages in effective and respectful communication with peers and staff.
- Demonstrates social skills appropriate to the individual's abilities.
- Collaborates and interacts positively with others.

Independence & Self Advocacy

- Demonstrates self-advocacy skills by expressing needs and preferences.
- Takes initiative in decision-making when appropriate.

Personal Development & Learning

- Engages in offered lessons in skill development.
- Demonstrates an eagerness to learn new tasks or activities.

Adaptability & Coping Skills

- Adapts to changes in routine or environment with support.
- Utilizes appropriate strategies to effectively manage stress and anxiety.

Collaboration with Others

- Works effectively with staff & peers.

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Vocational Preference Assessment (C22)

Read the following list and check your preferences relating to employment:

	Yes	Maybe	No
Working indoors			
Working outdoors			
Doing physical labor/ lifting			
Doing clerical work (like filing & making copies)			
Doing cleaning			
Organizing and sorting things			
Working with food			
Working on a computer			
Having to read things			
Having to write things			
Having to do math			
Doing the same thing all day			
Doing lots of different things during the day			
Working in an office			
Working in a factory or warehouse			
Working in a store			
Working by yourself			
Working with a few people			
Working with lots of people			
Working in a place that is noisy			
Working in a place that is quiet			
Having to talk to people			

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	Yes	Maybe	No
Having to be quiet all day			
Having a supervisor nearby most of the time			
Not having a supervisor nearby			
Helping customers			
Dressing up for work			
Wearing a uniform			
Dressing however you want			
Moving and walking around			
Sitting most of the day			
Standing most of the day			
Working around children			
Starting work in the morning			
Starting work in the afternoon			
Starting work in the evening			
Working on weekends			

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Learning Style

How do you like to learn?

Listening to Directions Watching Someone Else Reading Instructions

Doing it Myself A Combination Not Sure

Competitive Employment

Are you interested in competitive independent employment at this time? **Yes** **No**

Worker Trainee Experiences

These are the worker trainee experiences I've participated in with the Valley group:

Site	Have I tried it and/ or do I go now?	Did or do I enjoy it?
25 Linnell Circle		
3M		
Billerica Housing Authority		
Billerica Town Hall		
Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS)		
Camp Paul		
Chelmsford High Kitchen		
Chelmsford High School		
Cold Snap		
Community Catering		
Community Gardening		
Cross Point		
D'Youville		
Drumlin Farm		
Food Bank/ Pantry		
Household Goods		
MassPack		
Meals on Wheels		
Primark		
Segue		
Sodexo Catering		
Strongwater Farm		
Tyngsboro Sports Center		

Independent positions I participate in without the Valley group: _____

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C24

Resume

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Strengths/ Skills & Barriers to Employment (C38, C36, C25)

What strengths do you have related to employment?

What strengths/ skills do I have related to employment? *(Person's own input)*	What strengths/ skills do staff identify that the individual has? *(Staff/ support team member input)*

What barriers exist that may need to be addressed before considering competitive employment?

What barriers or challenges do I have related to employment? *(Person's own input)*	What barriers do staff identify that the individual has? *(Staff/ support team member input)*

What skills can I focus on over the next year? (C25)

	How skill development was supported:
Skill 1:	
Skill 2:	

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Plan to Fade/ Minimize Supports (C34, C38, C36, C39)

Based on the learning style of the individual and culture of their worker trainee experiences or independent positions, individualized support strategies are developed to help them meet their goals. Job coaches encourage individuals to connect with natural supports onsite. Individuals have opportunities for specific job skills training via daily curriculum offered. Performance assessments (progress summaries) are completed every 6 months based on data from daily notes and feedback from Direct Support Professionals. Support strategies are assessed and adjusted as needed to encourage independence.

How can I be supported to be more independent and meet my goals?

Support strategies that I think work well for me. *(Person's own input)*	Support strategies that staff feel work well for me. *(Staff/ support team member input)*

Other information on providing optimal level of support to promote success and minimize supports:

_____
_____
_____
_____

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Career Cluster Interest Inventory (C22)

*** If individual has opted in to biweekly Career Planning placement, please see specific Career Planning binder to review assessments and career exploration information.*

Which of the following would you like to explore/ learn more about?

	Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources		**Architecture & Construction**		**Business Management & Administration**		**Education & Training**		**Finance**
	Farm, fish, work to improve the environment		*Design, build, and maintain homes & structures*		*Plan, oversee, and organize a business*		*Teach in schools, libraries, museums, and businesses*		*Manage and work with money*

	Government & Public Administration		**Health Science**		**Hospitality & Tourism**		**Human Services**		**Information Technology**
	Make laws and provide public services		*Work in the healthcare field treating people and animals*		*Work in restaurants, hotels, and casinos*		*Help individuals and families with their personal needs*		*Work with computers, software, and network systems*

	Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security		**Manufacturing**		**Marketing**		**Science, Technology, Engineering & Math**		**Transportation, Distribution & Logistics**
	Enforce laws and keep people safe		*Make products using machines and tools*		*Promote and sell goods and services*		*Use math and science to do research and solve problems*		*Transport people and foods from one place to another*

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Job Exploration (C22, C29, C44)

*** If individual has opted in to biweekly Career Planning placement, please see specific Career Planning binder to review assessments and career exploration information.*

Based on my assessments and preferences, what jobs or positions am I interested in looking into further to see if they're a good match? Work with staff to explore two potential positions.

Date of Exploration	Position Explored	What research did we do?	Is it a good match? Why or why not?	Am I still interested?	What do I want my next step to be?

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Goal Planning (C38, C23)

Specific habilitative and behavioral goals necessary to prepare individuals for work are identified by evaluating a myriad of information gathered about the individual through the team's analysis of the following assessments: AFLs, Important To/For, interest inventories, the worker trainee annual evaluation, vocational preference assessment, worker trainee experience survey, outline of strengths and barriers to employment, plans to fade and minimize supports, daily progress notes. The individual and their team* then collaborates to identify specific areas to encourage growth and success in vocational and community-based environments. Goals are submitted to DDS for approval and reviewed formally at the annual ISP meeting.

*The individual's team consists of self, family/guardians, Valley Collaborative Case Manager, Job Developer, and Direct Support Professionals, DDS Service Coordinator, and/or additional provider agencies as applicable.

Based on all of these assessments, input from myself and my team, my goals for the year will be…

Vocational:

CBDS:

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Overall Personal Profile Summary

Name: _____

Interests	*Support Team*
Strengths, Skills, & Knowledge	*Learning Style(s)*
Health or Assistive Tech Notes	*Positive Personality Traits*
Environmental Preferences	*Dislikes*
Preferred Worker Trainee Experiences and/or Independent Position(s)	*Current Barriers*
Effective Support Strategies	*CBDS & Vocational Areas to Explore*
Other or Miscellaneous	

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Adult Programming

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DDS Program Worker Trainee Disclosure Form

Valley Collaborative's Today and Tomorrow Program provides individuals supported on the 3181 contract the opportunity to be "Worker Trainees" within the Group Supported Employment model.

By enrolling in Valley Collaborative's Today and Tomorrow Program, I understand I will have the opportunity to work in a group supported employment setting as a "Worker Trainee" supported by Valley Collaborative staff and to earn a stipend equivalent to the hourly minimum wage in Massachusetts. Also, and as defined by the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance, individuals may not be eligible for unemployment benefits if the only source of employment is from working as a worker trainee in a program run by a nonprofit or public institution (i.e. Valley Collaborative).

By signing this form, I understand that being enrolled in the Today and Tomorrow Program does not make me an employee of Valley Collaborative, or any other organization where I participate in Group Supported Employment. I have been made aware that I will not receive the employee benefit package offered by Valley Collaborative or the buisnesses where I participate in Group Supported Employment as my worker trainee program does not meet the eligibility requirements of employment. As such, "Worker Trainees" are not eligible for employee benefits such as paid leave, holiday pay, vacation time, workers compensation, unemployment insurance, state pension, etc.

Name:_____ Date:_____

Signature:_____

If applicable, Guardian Signature:_____

DRAFT

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica, MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Ph.D., Executive Director
Date: April 23, 2026
Re: Quarterly Reports on Collaborative Business – FY26 Third Quarter

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As per 603CMR 50.00: Educational Collaboratives – Education Laws and Regulations and in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E, please find below Valley Collaborative Quarterly Reports on Collaborative Business:

1. quarterly information and updates to the programs and services provided by the collaborative and any regional collaborative efforts;
    - Please find Valley Collaborative's Spring Newsletter attached
    - Please find Valley Collaborative's January 8th Finance Memo attached
    - Please find Valley Collaborative's Dec 2025 - March 2026 Treasurer Report attached

2. a report on significant changes in programs, services, budgets, and property as they arise;
    - Please find attached the Interim Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Assets January 2026 – March 2026
    - Please find attached a copy of the FY'27 Budget and tuition Rates and Services & Fees Distributed by Treasurer Heidi Kriger on January 12, 2026

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Volume 14, Issue 3 News for the extended Valley Collaborative community Spring 2026

New Beginnings at Valley Collaborative



DR. CHRIS A. SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; MATTHEW GENTILE, DIRECTOR OF DDS & MASSABILITY SERVICES; **MATT BOOTH OF CHELMSFORD, VALLEY'S DDS INDIVIDUAL OF THE MONTH**; AND DR. JAY LANG, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER, AND SUPERINTENDENT OF CHELMSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Dear Students, Staff, and Families:

As we move further into the school year, I am filled with pride and gratitude for the incredible work happening across Valley. It has truly been a successful and inspiring year, and I want to take a moment to recognize the many ways our students, staff, and families contribute to the vibrant community that makes Valley so special.

One of the highlights of this year has been the exciting experiential trips our students have had the opportunity to participate in. These experiences extend learning beyond the classroom walls and provide meaningful opportunities for students to grow socially and emotionally. Whether exploring new environments, participating in hands-on activities, or simply sharing time together outside of the typical school day, these trips help strengthen the connections that make our community thrive.

At Valley, one of the most important factors influencing the positive impact we have on the youth and DDS participants we serve is the relationships we build with one another.

»continued on page 7



Hitting Our Stride

■ Page 2: Valley Elementary students are head over heels for cross country skiing.



Making Big Gains

■ Page 3: Students in the Transitional Programming at Valley Middle/High School are making big gains in reading, thanks to a new focus on literacy.

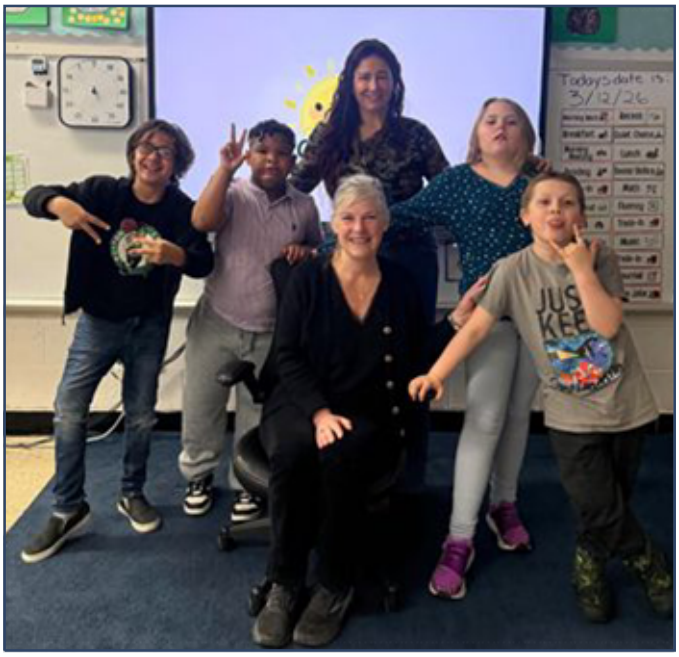


Working Independently

■ Page 6: Individuals in Valley's Adult Services programs work independently at dozens of area organizations.

Elementary School: An Action Packed Year

From out-door activities including cross-country skiing and horseback riding, to a revamped cooking program, and a celebration of reading, the school year at Valley Elementary has been action packed! Here's a look at some of the highlights of the school year so far.



READ ACROSS AMERICA COMES TO VALLEY ELEMENTARY LEFT TO RIGHT: KURTIS LEDOUX, OMARO CAPERS, JAZMYNA CATALANOTTI AND ETHAN BARRY. CENTER: DR. CHRIS A. SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; REAR: HEATHER MACKAY, PRINCIPAL.

Hitting the trails

Students were invited to experience cross country skiing and snow shoeing at Northfield Mountain this winter free of charge. "There were a lot of falls and perseverance," says teacher Matt McCarthy, who led the outdoor adventures. In fact, students enjoyed their new winter activity so much that they made two more trips to Great Brook Farm in Carlisle, which generously gave the Valley skiers a discount. Says Matt: "We are hoping for another snowy winter next year for more cross-country skiing!"

Cooking up skills and independence

When elementary students take part in a weekly cooking program led by our occupational therapists, they're learning to do more than follow a recipe. They're also building independence, practicing motor skills, and enjoying hands-on learning. Each classroom follows the same simple recipe each week, with the occupational therapists guiding students through the steps of preparing each recipe, encouraging communication, problem-solving, and teamwork. Students also participate in brief community shopping trips to purchase ingredients—an important opportunity to practice real-world skills such as planning, navigating stores, and interacting with community members.

A celebration of reading

Valley Elementary celebrated reading throughout the month of March, with a reading-themed spirit week, guest readers, including Dr. Scott and the Tyngsboro Fire Department, a guest author assembly and a door decorating contest. This year's Scholastic Book Fair was a huge success, says administrative assistant Karen Blackburn, who oversaw the fair. "We earned $808 dollars of scholastic money for our classrooms, doubling what we earned in the previous two years. Thanks to all who participated!"

In the saddle

Valley Collaborative Elementary School is now partnering with Ironstone Farm to offer a therapeutic horseback riding program for our students. "This unique experience gives students the opportunity to build strength, confidence, communication skills, and emotional well-being while working with trained therapeutic riding instructors and the wonderful horses at the farm," explains occupational therapist Madison Pesa. During visits to the farm, students work together to complete obstacle courses and relay activities on horseback, as well as spending time with the farm's friendly donkey, Spud. "The program has been a fantastic way for students to connect with animals, enjoy time outdoors, and grow both socially and emotionally in a supportive and fun environment," says Madison.



TOMMY O'MELIA DURING A VISIT TO IRONSTONE FARM.

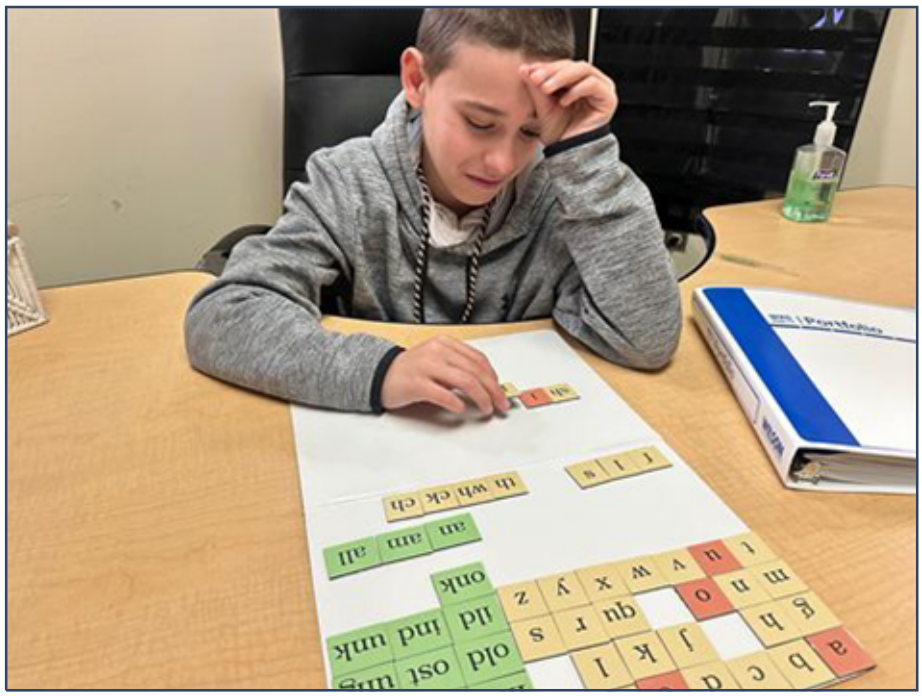
Transitional Programming at Valley Middle/ High School: Celebrating Student Progress

When Shana Cheevers received the results of students' mid-year reading tests, she could barely believe her eyes. The kind of progress teachers might hope to see by June was already showing up halfway through the year. "We have students who have jumped up two grade levels," says Shana, the reading specialist at the Transitional Middle/High School. "Teachers are really encouraged by this level of improvement."

The progress reflects an increased emphasis on literacy at Valley, starting with recognizing the varied needs of students. While some students needed help with the fundamentals, things like letter sounds and decoding words, others could read the words but struggled to make meaning from them. Shana says that a big part of her focus has been on giving teachers everything they need to assist students. "Teachers now have a whole toolbox to use, including a set curriculum, lessons and activities," says Shana, who spent 10 years as a middle school classroom teacher before transitioning to her current role.

Middle school teacher Kali Rowe says that the new tools are working exactly as intended. "The implementation of our new curriculum and programs have greatly helped to streamline my classroom and teaching to better meet student needs."

While teachers can see the results of their hard work in their students' data, it is the individual stories of student success that stand out the most. One Valley high schooler who started out the year insisting that he didn't like reading has since made two grade levels worth of progress in just a few months. "Now he's committed to working on his reading because he knows that he'll need those skills in the future and he can see for himself that he's getting better," says Shana.



LOUIS LORINO WORKS ON HIS LETTERS IN AN EFFORT TO BECOME A STRONGER READER. AN INCREASED EMPHASIS ON LITERACY HAS PRODUCED BIG GAINS FOR VALLEY STUDENTS.

Another post-grad student who began the year reading at a first-grade level has seen her skill level jump up to that of a third-grade reader. "That's a huge difference," says Karen Rowe, Team Chairperson. "Especially when you consider how much information for the general public is written at a 6th grade level." For older students, these literacy gains will translate into greater independence. "They can use these skills functionally when they're reading directions or filling out job applications," says Karen.

Perhaps most impressively, the hard work of Valley staffers is creating a culture of reading among middle and high school students– not an easy task. When asked what they think of all of the emphasis on reading, these students had only rave reviews. Louis Lorino was eager to show off what he's been working on. "This year I learned about suffixes and buddy letters!" Abram Brittsan once found reading dull, but no longer. "Reading can be boring if you don't have the right book, but if you do have the right book it can be interesting." For Javian Pettengil, books are transporting. "Reading gives me another form of imagination."

Shana says that she expects to see continued progress when students' reading skills are tested at the end of the year, further evidence that their teachers' efforts are paying off. "Our teachers can see that the hard work they put in with these kids is paying off," says Shana. "It's right there in the data."

Alternative Programming at Valley Middle/ High School: Hitting the Slopes

By Jennifer C. Berkshire, newspaper editor, with help from student Cam Greene.

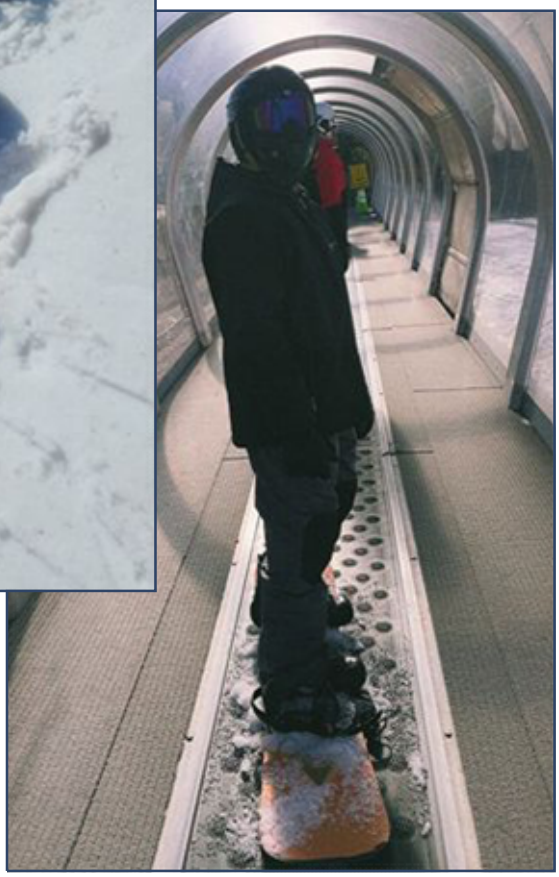
During a frigid stretch of March, Valley students piled into the vans. The destination: Mount Wachusett, the 2,000 foot ski resort in central Massachusetts. Over two different trips, 30 students in Valley's middle and high school alternative programming would hit the slopes.

Student Cam Greene was one of them. "I've been snowboarding since I was eight, so it was fun to be able to go with my friends and stuff and just have a good time out on the mountain," says Cam.

For students without Cam's experience, the day started with lessons at the base of the mountain–an introduction to equipment, technique and the skiing basics, including how to stop. Outdoor educator Pete Loring says that thanks to the warmth and flexibility of the Mt. Wachusett team, Valley's new skiers did great. "We've been going there for a few years now and the group services folks are just great to work with," says Pete. "That's definitely a big part of what makes these trips so special."

With skis and helmets on, and some essential new skills under the belts, it was time to head to the summit in one of the resort's high-speed chairlifts–something one student in particular couldn't wait to try out, says Pete. "He just couldn't wait to get on the lift, and even though this was his first time on the mountain he did great, and he made it down safely."





HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT MICHAEL "MJ" JEAN (LEFT) TAKES A BREAK FROM SNOWBOARDING; MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT ANTHONY "TONY" ESTRADA TAKES A SNOWBOARDING LESSON ON MT. WACHUSETTS' NEW SHORTY CARPET LIFT.

Speech pathologist Christine Brennick, who led the trip along with Pete, says that adventures like this one allow the students to try out an activity that they might never do on their own. Even students who might have found skiing intimidating or scary didn't want to miss out on something their friends were doing. "I think there's a group mentality that works in our favor. When everybody you know is going, you want to go too, and you want to try to be good at it even if you're scared."

For Cam, that meant helping his friends who'd never skied before get over their fear of falling. "I was falling, though not as bad as some of the other kids. It's not that big of a deal. You just get up and try it again."

Skiing activities aren't new at Valley. This was the fourth year that Pete and Christine have run a ski trip together. Valley staff also previously worked with a small group of students who were passionate about skiing, taking them to the Nashoba Valley Ski Area. What's different about the current trips, says Pete, is that they include students who are brand new to skiing. "This is an activity that lets students take risks, but in a way that's respectful of others and is about making good choices," says Pete.

»continued on next page

Hitting the Slopes

»continued from previous page

Some of the students' favorite memories of the trips involved the opportunity to interact with other skiers on the mountain. Cam says that he especially enjoyed getting to meet new people. "I met some really nice people on the hill, a bunch of nice people. We'd meet in the lift or coming down the hill. It was just a fun experience to be out there and be with everybody."

Cam says that other students on the trip had experiences that were just as positive. When he interviewed three fellow adventurers, they all said that they'd had a great time skiing, even if it was their very first time.

Cam: "What'd you think about the ski trip?"

Nathaniel Goodwin, "I think it was amazing. It was good bonding time with friends, and helping people out, and a good environment."

Isaiah Deans, "It was a good experience. This was my second time skiing and I like going to Mt. Wachusett. It's a nice place."

Gavin Correia, "It was fun. I liked that it was a new experience for me. I did a lesson by myself, then went down the bunny hill, but I didn't even really need to do that."

For Christine and Pete, the rave reviews from these students are confirmation that these ski trips are a worthwhile investment. They're also an opportunity for Christine and Pete, both seasoned skiers, to share their experience on the slopes with Valley students. "We feel really fortunate to have the skills to be able to do this," says Christine. "Having these opportunities in our lives has been really important, so being able to share that with our students is really meaningful to both of us."

"Skiing field trips provide students with the opportunity to engage in outdoor learning, build confidence, and try a sport they might not otherwise have access to. Several staff members fondly remember learning to ski as students themselves and understand firsthand how meaningful it is to overcome challenges and celebrate progress on the mountain."
Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director, Valley Collaborative

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Valley Collaborative executive director, says that she's thrilled that Valley is able to offer an opportunity to students that they might not otherwise have. "Skiing field trips provide students with the opportunity to engage in outdoor learning, build confidence, and try a sport they might not otherwise have access to. Several staff members fondly remember learning to ski as students themselves and understand firsthand how meaningful it is to overcome challenges and celebrate progress on the mountain," says Dr. Scott. "With Valley's support, we are able to offer this experience to our students—an opportunity that might otherwise be out of reach for many due to cost, access, or limited exposure."

While skiing season may be done for this year, these Valley adventurers are just getting started. On the agenda: a hiking trip to New Hampshire's Lonesome Lake, where students are hoping to complete their most ambitious hike to date, 4,000 feet up Cannon Mountain. Says Christine: "The momentum's not stopping."

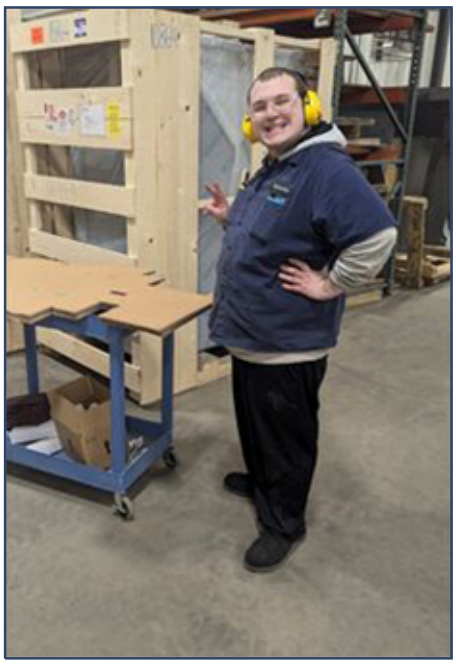


TEACHER COLLEEN MCANESPIE AND STUDENT SKYLAR MOLOY-PILGRIM PREPARE TO SKI MOUNT WACHUSETT, THE SITE OF TWO RECENT VALLEY FIELD TRIPS.

Adult Services: Expanding Opportunity, One Community Connection at a Time

As the Today and Tomorrow program continues to expand and grow, it is important to recognize the three main services we provide the individuals served: Community Based Day Supports, Group Supported Employment, and Independent Employment Supports. These services are meant to transition into one another, with growth in one service leading to enhancement in the next service. Individuals use Community Based Day Supports (CBDS) to engage with their surrounding communities through recreational activities and social learning opportunities.

The soft skills individuals develop in CBDS are then put to work, literally, in a group setting where they complete employment tasks with four of their peers and a Direct Support Professional in a 5:1 ratio, while also being compensated.

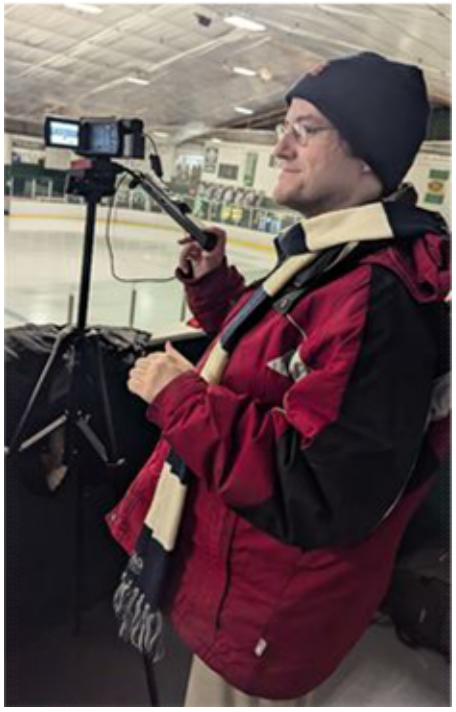


TONY BERRY AT CONSOLIDATED STERILIZER SYSTEMS.

For some individuals, this is the extent of their service plan. They have a mix of CBDS and Group Supported Employment and they focus on goals geared toward continuous personal growth and achievement. But for many individuals, the Group Supported Employment acts as a catalyst toward the individual one-day working independently, with on-going support from a Valley Job Developer.

Independent employment can be difficult for any person to manage on their own. The individuals served by Valley through the Independent Employment Supports model are provided with 1:1 job development and coaching as they highlight interests, search for opportunities that align with these interests, apply for jobs, navigate the onboarding process, and then receive continuous support on the job to ensure both the individual's and employer's needs are being met. While independent employment may not be the goal for all of the individuals, Valley currently serves 50 individuals who do receive this specific service through the DDS contract. Of the 50 individuals currently in the contract, 40 of them actively hold an independent employment position.

Organizations our individuals work at independently include; Jones Lang LaSalle, Market Basket, Five Guys, Consolidated Sterilizer Systems, Sodexo Catering, TJ MAXX, Tyngsboro High School, Build a Bear, Wegmans, Tyngsboro Sports Center, Stop & Shop, Knowledge Beginnings, Chelmsford High School, Walmart, O'Conner's Hardware, 3M, Billerica Access Television, Carleton-Willard Village, Bedford Public Schools, and Four Oaks Country Club.



LEO VAHEY FILMING A HIGH SCHOOL-HOCKEY GAME FOR BATV.

All of these organizations listed on the next page continue to be essential community partners and play a vital role in the lives of the individuals we serve. These employment opportunities continue to display how capable the individuals served by Valley Collaborative truly are. With just a touch of support on the job site, our individuals are able to contribute to different organizations overall output while leaving a lasting and positive impact on each and every specific organizational culture. The adults served by Valley Collaborative continue to show how successful they can be if provided the opportunity. With reinforcement from the job development team, our individuals are able to work independently as they continue to grow and hone their skills in order to unlock new employment opportunities in the future.

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

New Beginnings at Valley Collaborative

»continued from cover

The bonds that develop between our students, DDS individuals, and our dedicated staff are at the heart of everything we do. These relationships create trust, foster growth, and ensure that every individual feels supported and valued.

When you walk through our schools or visit our DDS headquarters, it becomes immediately clear that Valley is a place where people genuinely care about one another. You can feel it in the conversations in the hallways, the encouragement offered in classrooms and programs, and the way our community celebrates each person's successes. Our students, DDS individuals, and staff share a profound sense of belonging, and that sense of connection is what makes Valley such a powerful place for learning and growth.

As we welcome the arrival of spring, we are reminded of the beauty of new beginnings and growth. Just as we see the world around us coming back to life, we also see tremendous growth in our students—academically, socially, and emotionally. It is a privilege to witness the progress they make each day and the confidence they build along the way.

Thank you to our remarkable staff for your dedication and compassion, to our families for your continued partnership, and to our students and DDS participants for bringing energy, curiosity, and joy to our community. I look forward to all that the remainder of the school year will bring. Please reach out if I can ever be of assistance. We are here to serve. My door is always open.

My best to you always,

Chris A. Scott
Executive Director
Valley Collaborative





TOP: JILLIAN WENDLER, SLP; ERIN FRAZIER, BCBA; DR. JAY LANG VALLEY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER, SUPERINTENDENT OF CHELMSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS; BRYAN THOMAS, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL; HEATHER MACKAY, PRINCIPAL; **OLIVIA BUONAMANO, VALLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT OF THE MONTH**.

BOTTOM: DR. CHRIS A. SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; DR. KERRY CLERY, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE, SUPERINTENDENT, BILLERICA PUBLIC SCHOOLS; NICOLE NOSKA, PRINCIPAL, MIDDLE SCHOOL, TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMS, TRANSITIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMS; AND **LOUIS LORINO, GRADE 7 BILLERICA, VALLEY TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMMING MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT OF THE MONTH**.

Valley Collaborative Leadership Team



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Executive Director, Finance and Operations

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Valley Collaborative Board of Directors



Dr. Jay Lang, Chair

Chairman of the Board, Executive Committee Member

Superintendent
Chelmsford Public Schools



Dr. Kerry Clery

Superintendent
Billerica Public Schools



Mr. Steven Stone

Superintendent
Dracut Public Schools



Dr. Geoff Bruno

Superintendent
Groton-Dunstable Regional School District



Dr. Denise Pigeon

Executive Committee Member

Superintendent
Nashoba Valley Technical School District



Mr. Brad Morgan

Superintendent
North Middlesex Regional School District



Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan

Executive Committee Member

Superintendent
Tewksbury Public Schools



Dr. Michael Flanagan

Executive Committee Member

Superintendent
Tyngsborough Public Schools



Dr. Christopher Chew

Superintendent
Westford Public Schools

Central Administration
11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica MA 01821 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Mr. James George, Accountant/Business Manager
Date: January 8, 2026
Re: Financial Update – FY'26

FY' 26 Budget Amendment

Valley has concluded a very strong first quarter and the second quarter is also very healthy. Typically, the first quarter of the year's expenses exceed the percentage of the year complete, as Valley does most of its capital purchasing for the school year in Q1. Valley's revenue is above expectation as we do not usually see revenues outpace expenses in the second quarter. Enrollment as of January 5, 2026 is 271 students, whereas last year at this time, enrollment totaled 262 students. Enrollment currently is comprised of approximately 50% member and 50% non-member students. A financially significant data point, as non-members pay approximately 25% more to attend. DDS/Adult Services will hit a January enrollment record of 141 individuals and its revenue is up approximately 15% over last year. The Board amended the FY'26 budget at the December 4, 2025 Board meeting to reflect the increase in revenue from the original $28,279,500 to $29,592,981 and expenses from $27,517,015 to $27,557,015. The increase in expenses is due primarily to healthcare costs associated with being fully staffed and support of the five-year technology plan.

As of November 30, 2025, Valley has completed 90 of 210 days (42.9%) for FY'26 and revenues are on target at 42.09% and expenses are significantly lower at 40.06% of the amended budget. Valley is on track to return upwards of $2M to its member districts in FY'27 due to the 25% surplus regulation.

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
TREASURER'S REPORT
DECEMBER 31, 2025

		Beginning Balance	Receipts	Payroll	Accounts Payable	Earnings	Transfers	Ending Balance
ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS								
Operating	**a/c 493426**	$ 3,297,732.69	$ 2,441,322.41		$ (290,092.25)		$ (2,596,000.00)	$ 2,852,962.85
Payroll	**a/c 795823**	$ 98,611.00		$ (2,482,890.15)			$ 2,600,000.00	$ 215,720.85
Joe's Bistro	**a/c 531401**	$ 3,293.42	$ 1,767.84				$ (4,000.00)	$ 1,061.26
ICS MMDA	**a/c 856490**	$ 4,787.82				$ 1.01		$ 4,788.83
Capital Reserve	**a/c 4063467**	$ 1,500,000.00						$ 1,500,000.00
Independence Project	**a/c 821315**	$ 114.36	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 114.36
TOTAL ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS		$ 4,904,539.29	$ 2,443,090.25	$ (2,482,890.15)	$ (290,092.25)	$ 1.01	$ -	$ 4,574,648.15
MMDT	**a/c 0044263747**	$ 1,178,223.13	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 4,016.39	$ -	$ 1,182,239.52
Total Unrestricted Cash		$ 6,082,762.42	$ 2,443,090.25	$ (2,482,890.15)	$ (290,092.25)	$ 4,017.40	$ -	$ 5,756,887.67
PARS OPEB Trust		$ 8,859,619.81	$ -	$ -	$ (2,346.15)	$ 21,207.80	$ -	$ 8,878,481.46
TOTAL CASH		$ 14,942,382.23	$ 2,443,090.25	$ (2,482,890.15)	$ (292,438.40)	$ 25,225.20	$ -	$ 14,635,369.13

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
TREASURER'S REPORT
JANUARY 31, 2026

		Beginning Balance	Receipts	Payroll	Accounts Payable	Earnings	Transfers	Ending Balance
ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS								
Operating	**a/c 493426**	$ 2,852,962.85	$ 1,982,998.29		$ (255,258.51)		$ (2,110,000.00)	$ 2,470,702.63
Payroll	**a/c 795823**	$ 215,720.85		$ (2,036,376.30)			$ 2,110,000.00	$ 289,344.55
Joe's Bistro	**a/c 531401**	$ 1,061.26	$ 1,490.53					$ 2,551.79
ICS MMDA	**a/c 856490**	$ 4,788.83				$ 1.00		$ 4,789.83
Capital Reserve	**a/c 4063467**	$ 1,500,000.00						$ 1,500,000.00
Independence Project	**a/c 821315**	$ 114.36	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 114.36
TOTAL ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS		$ 4,574,648.15	$ 1,984,488.82	$ (2,036,376.30)	$ (255,258.51)	$ 1.00	$ -	$ 4,267,503.16
MMDT	**a/c 0044263747**	$ 1,182,239.52	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 3,945.13	$ -	$ 1,186,184.65
Total Unrestricted Cash		$ 5,756,887.67	$ 1,984,488.82	$ (2,036,376.30)	$ (255,258.51)	$ 3,946.13	$ -	$ 5,453,687.81
PARS OPEB Trust		$ 8,878,481.46	$ -	$ -	$ (2,351.61)	$ 169,584.75	$ -	$ 9,045,714.60
TOTAL CASH		$ 14,635,369.13	$ 1,984,488.82	$ (2,036,376.30)	$ (257,610.12)	$ 173,530.88	$ -	$ 14,499,402.41

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
TREASURER'S REPORT
FEBRUARY 28, 2026

		Beginning Balance	Receipts	Payroll	Accounts Payable	Earnings	Transfers	Ending Balance
ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS								
Operating	**a/c 493426**	$ 2,470,702.63	$ 1,669,038.55		$ (176,107.74)		$ (1,380,000.00)	$ 2,583,633.44
Payroll	**a/c 795823**	$ 289,344.55		$ (1,478,448.65)			$ 1,380,000.00	$ 190,895.90
Joe's Bistro	**a/c 531401**	$ 2,551.79	$ 1,261.46					$ 3,813.25
ICS MMDA	**a/c 856490**	$ 4,789.83				$ 0.90		$ 4,790.73
Capital Reserve	**a/c 4063467**	$ 1,500,000.00						$ 1,500,000.00
Independence Project	**a/c 821315**	$ 114.36	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 114.36
TOTAL ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS		$ 4,267,503.16	$ 1,670,300.01	$ (1,478,448.65)	$ (176,107.74)	$ 0.90	$ -	$ 4,283,247.68
MMDT	**a/c 0044263747**	$ 1,186,184.65	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 3,528.37	$ -	$ 1,189,713.02
Total Unrestricted Cash		$ 5,453,687.81	$ 1,670,300.01	$ (1,478,448.65)	$ (176,107.74)	$ 3,529.27	$ -	$ 5,472,960.70
PARS OPEB Trust		$ 9,045,714.60	$ -	$ -	$ (2,394.34)	$ 160,228.38	$ -	$ 9,203,548.64
TOTAL CASH		$ 14,499,402.41	$ 1,670,300.01	$ (1,478,448.65)	$ (178,502.08)	$ 163,757.65	$ -	$ 14,676,509.34

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE
TREASURER'S REPORT
MARCH 31, 2026

		Beginning Balance	Receipts	Payroll	Accounts Payable	Earnings	Transfers	Ending Balance
ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS								
Operating	**a/c 493426**	$ 2,583,633.44	$ 3,655,122.59		$ (486,044.24)		$ (2,220,000.00)	$ 3,532,711.79
Payroll	**a/c 795823**	$ 190,895.90		$ (1,607,055.74)			$ 2,220,000.00	$ 803,840.16
Joe's Bistro	**a/c 531401**	$ 3,813.25	$ 1,773.49					$ 5,586.74
ICS MMDA	**a/c 856490**	$ 4,790.73				$ 1.00		$ 4,791.73
Capital Reserve	**a/c 4063467**	$ 1,500,000.00						$ 1,500,000.00
Independence Project	**a/c 821315**	$ 114.36	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 114.36
TOTAL ROCKLAND TRUST ACCOUNTS		$ 4,283,247.68	$ 3,656,896.08	$ (1,607,055.74)	$ (486,044.24)	$ 1.00	$ -	$ 5,847,044.78
MMDT	**a/c 0044263747**	$ 1,189,713.02	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 3,878.83	$ -	$ 1,193,591.85
Total Unrestricted Cash		$ 5,472,960.70	$ 3,656,896.08	$ (1,607,055.74)	$ (486,044.24)	$ 3,879.83	$ -	$ 7,040,636.63
PARS OPEB Trust		$ 9,203,548.64	$ -	$ -	$ (2,430.95)	$ (385,779.10)	$ -	$ 8,815,338.59
TOTAL CASH		$ 14,676,509.34	$ 3,656,896.08	$ (1,607,055.74)	$ (488,475.19)	$ (381,899.27)	$ -	$ 15,855,975.22

Valley Collaborative

Interim Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets

For the Period Ending January 31, 2026

124 of 210 (59%) School Days

UNAUDITED

	AMENDED BUDGET	ACTUAL	
REVENUES			
Services	$ 23,012,981	$ 13,287,555	
State Contracts	5,800,000	3,180,902	
Other	750,000	428,876	
Interest	30,000	25,265	
Total Revenues	**29,592,981**	**16,922,598**	57.18%
EXPENSES			
Salaries	18,788,975	11,464,827	
Employee Benefits	4,074,850	2,140,888	
Operating Expenses	3,347,463	1,659,806	
Leases & Rentals	594,727	319,473	
Depreciation	751,000	509,845	
Total Expenses	**27,557,015**	**16,094,839**	58.41%
Change in Net Assets - Operating	**$ 2,035,966**	**$ 827,759**	
Non Operating Activities			
Return to Member Districts	-		
Non-Operating Expenses (1)	(1,275,000)	(927,991)	
Change in Net Assets	**$ 760,966**	**$ (100,232)**	

Substantially all disclosures and the Statement of Cash Flows required by GAAP are omitted. No assurance is provided on these financial statements.

Valley Collaborative

Interim Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets

For the Period Ending February 28, 2026

136 of 210 (64.8%) School Days

UNAUDITED

	AMENDED BUDGET	ACTUAL	
REVENUES			
Services	$ 23,012,981	$ 14,752,143	
State Contracts	5,800,000	3,551,543	
Other	750,000	468,082	
Interest	30,000	32,739	
Total Revenues	**29,592,981**	**18,804,507**	63.54%
EXPENSES			
Salaries	18,788,975	12,827,580	
Employee Benefits	4,074,850	2,413,051	
Operating Expenses	3,347,463	1,786,956	
Leases & Rentals	594,727	334,583	
Depreciation	751,000	0	
Total Expenses	**27,557,015**	**17,362,170**	63.00%
Change in Net Assets - Operating	**$ 2,035,966**	**$ 1,442,337**	
Non Operating Activities			
Return to Member Districts	-		
Non-Operating Expenses (1)	(1,275,000)	(981,032)	
Change in Net Assets	**$ 760,966**	**$ 461,305**	

Substantially all disclosures and the Statement of Cash Flows required by GAAP are omitted. No assurance is provided on these financial statements.

Valley Collaborative

Interim Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Assets

For the Period Ending March 31, 2026

158 of 210 (75.2%) School Days

UNAUDITED

	AMENDED BUDGET	ACTUAL	
REVENUES			
Services	$ 23,012,981	$ 17,278,407	
State Contracts	5,800,000	4,002,092	
Other	750,000	512,497	
Interest	30,000	36,617	
Total Revenues	**29,592,981**	**21,829,613**	73.77%
EXPENSES			
Salaries	18,788,975	14,217,674	
Employee Benefits	4,074,850	2,709,706	
Operating Expenses	3,347,463	2,012,722	
Leases & Rentals	594,727	349,693	
Depreciation	751,000	563,250	
Total Expenses	**27,557,015**	**19,853,045**	72.04%
Change in Net Assets - Operating	**$ 2,035,966**	**$ 1,976,568**	
Non Operating Activities			
Return to Member Districts	-		
Non-Operating Expenses (1)	(1,275,000)	(1,014,291)	
Change in Net Assets	**$ 760,966**	**$ 962,277**	

Substantially all disclosures and the Statement of Cash Flows required by GAAP are omitted. No assurance is provided on these financial statements.

Valley Collaborative 2026 - 2027 Tuition Rates

Program	Grades	Member District Rates					Non-Member District Rates				
		School Year Per Diem	School Year (180 Days)	Summer Per Diem	Summer (30 Days)	Total Tuition (SY+Summer)	School Year Per Diem	School Year (180 Days)	Summer Per Diem	Summer (30 Days)	Total Tuition (SY+Summer)
Intensive Special Needs (ISN) Member and Non-Member Tuition Includes: SLP, OT, PT, BCBA, SW	K – Age 22	$326	$58,680	$342	$10,260	$68,940	$414	$74,520	$435	$13,050	$87,570
Elementary School Member and Non-Member Tuition Includes: SLP, OT, PT, BCBA, SW	K-6	$266	$47,880	$280	$8,400	$56,280	$339	$61,020	$356	$10,680	$71,700
Middle School Member and Non-Member Tuition Includes: SLP, OT, PT, BCBA, SW	6-8	$266	$47,880	$280	$8,400	$56,280	$339	$61,020	$356	$10,680	$71,700
High School Member and Non-Member Tuition Includes: SLP, OT, PT, BCBA, SW	9 – Age 22	$238	$42,840	$250	$7,500	$50,340	$303	$54,540	$319	$9,570	$64,110

Valley Collaborative 2026 -2027 Contract & Related Services Rates

Hourly Services	Member District	Non-Member District
Speech, Occupational, Physical Therapy, BCBA, Social Work, Reading Specialist, and Cognitive/Intelligence Testing - Three Year Evaluations	$112/hr.	$145/hr.
Tutoring	$56/hr.	$74/hr.
1:1 District Paid Aide	$261/day	$338/day
Nurse	Contingent on qualifications	Contingent on qualifications
Interim Alternative Education Setting – Extended Evaluation	program tuition day rate + $56/hr. related services	program tuition day rate + $74/hr. related services
Initial/Reevaluation/ 3 year Evaluations	N/A	billed at the hourly rate for the appropriate service

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Drive, N. Billerica, MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: June 11, 2026
Re: Student, DDS/MRC Adult Program Participant and Staff Making a Difference Award Presentation

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We would like to recognize Valley's student and staff members of the month from the Elementary, Middle, and High School as well as a DDS/MRC Adult Program Participant and staff member from the Adult Services Program for all their hard work and dedication to the Collaborative.

Valley Elementary School
Student of the Month: Nathaniel Skuse
Staff of the Month: Alyssa Thomas

Valley Alternative Programming Middle/High School
Student of the Month MS: Anthony Estrada
Student of the Month HS: Keegan Carter
Staff of the Month: Joshua Plunkett, Katharine Werner, Timothy P. McDonald, Danielle E. Sheehan-Brabant, Stephanie M. Wallace

Valley Transitional Programming Middle School
Student of the Month: Jude Galbraith
Staff of the Month: Faithe Shatford

Valley Transitional Programming High School
Student of the Month: Anthony Normand
Staff of the Month: Kiely Tenhope

Valley Adult Services
Individual of the Month: Arun Maudgal
Staff of the Month: Victoria Jarome

Valley District Staff:
Christina Foss
Brian Mihalek
Bryan Thomas
Holly Tierney
Nick LeClair
Karen Rowe

Required Action:

- None

Attachments:

- None

Central Administration

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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: June 11, 2026
Re: The Annual Dr. Anthony Bent Leadership Award

Each year the Dr. Anthony Bent Leadership Award is given to a Valley employee who exemplifies leadership qualities and has made a significant difference to the climate and culture of the collaborative. This year the award will be presented by Dr. Bent himself to Brian Mihalek, Assistant Principal, Valley Middle & Transitional High School – Transitional Programming.

Required Action:

None

Attachments:

None

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Nick LeClair, Principal, Alternative Programs
Date: June 11, 2026
Re: The Annual Community Partner Award

This year, the Alternative High School is proud to recognize Haran Painting, LLC as the recipient of the Community Partner Award. Through their partnership with our program, Haran Painting provided a meaningful work placement opportunity for graduating senior Tyler Marchand, allowing him to gain valuable hands-on experience in a professional setting.

Throughout his placement, Tyler was welcomed as a member of the team and given the opportunity to learn a wide range of skills related to the painting trade. The staff at Haran Painting demonstrated patience, professionalism, and a genuine commitment to mentoring Tyler. Their guidance helped him develop not only technical skills, but also the confidence, work ethic, and responsibility needed to succeed in the workforce.

The impact of this partnership has been significant. Tyler has discovered a passion for the trade and now plans to pursue painting as a career after graduation. We are grateful to Haran Painting, LLC for their support of our students and for helping create a pathway to future employment. Their commitment to providing real-world learning opportunities exemplifies the spirit of community partnership, and we look forward to continuing our relationship in the years ahead.

Required Action:
None

Attachments:
None

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Matthew Gentile, Director of DDS Services
Date: June 11, 2026
Re: The Annual Community Leader Award

This year, Valley Collaborative will be recognizing 3M with the annual Community Leader Award.

3M is a Group Employment site for the individuals of the Valley Collaborative Adult Program. Individuals participate in stipended internships at 3M through the Group Employment model, five days a week. 3M contracts Valley for over $132K annually to support this program.

3M Corporation is a global company that manufactures and sells assorted types of plastics and tubing materials for a variety of industries.

Individuals engage in a number of different tasks while working at 3M. They complete assembling tubing kits consisting of several different lengths and sizes of tubing. Individuals also participate in a range of packaging including assembling and sealing of boxes. Counting, sorting, and attention to detail are a necessary part of this job.

Valley Collaborative has been partnering with 3M for over twenty years. Over the years, 3M has continued to highlight opportunities within their organization where our individuals can access new work opportunities, even hiring some high performing individuals to independent jobs.

Often a favorite Group Employment site of the individuals, 3M has become an important cog in Valley's Adult programming. 3M staff continue to be incredibly supportive of our individuals, and of Valley as a whole. Even through administrative changes within 3M, their support of Valley Collaborative has never wavered.

Hector Rivera, Maria Espinoza, Luis Santiago, Wilmary Garcia, Claudia O'Rourke and their entire team have shown Valley a great deal of support and a clear understanding of our over-arching mission. 3M continues to provide Valley individuals an opportunity to develop and hone their employment skills, while regularly working toward independence.

It is difficult to accurately describe the contributions of the 3M team and how this opportunity has acted as such a positive component of Valley programming. Valley is forever grateful to the 3M team, and we look forward to a continued partnership in the future.

Required Action:
None

Attachments:
None

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: June 11, 2026
Re: MTSS & The Novak Group Update

This school year, we tapped a local expert in order to address another topic identified by staff -developing a more systematic approach to our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). That expert is Dr. Katie Novak who was a contributing author of the Massachusetts DESE Blueprint for MTSS. Dr. Novak began a ground-up approach by assessing what is already in place regarding instruction and school culture and capitalizing on that solid foundation to build a plan for Professional Learning that will continue over the next year or more. This is an exciting journey that has been enthusiastically received by our Valley professional learners. We will share a short video of Dr. Novak's response the opportunity to work with Valley staff.

Required Action:

- None

Attachments:

- Feedback re: Katie Novak session at Valley Elementary School
- Email re: Katie Novak session at Valley Middle School & Valley Transitional High School

Summary of Professional Learning at Valley Collaborative
2025 - 2026

As we bring another year of remarkable learning at Valley to a close, we are celebrating and reflecting on all of the learning that took place. That includes our wonderful Valley personnel who continued to learn along with our students. Our rich tradition of Professional Learning was enhanced and expanded in a number of exciting and innovative ways. Each year, our goal is to provide better and more varied opportunities for all staff to grow their skills which, in turn, elevates the quality and level of learning for our students. We sought input from teachers, therapists, support staff and administrators to help identify their professional needs which change over time in response to emerging research and best practice and the population of students.This year, teachers and specialists wanted to learn more effective strategies and approaches to support students who experience a combination of OCD, anxiety and emotional and behavioral difficulties. In order to find experts in this specialized area, we had to look outside of New England. After our search, Julianne Bell, who has a solid knowledge base in Clinical Behaviour Analysis and Contextual Behaviour Science, presented remotely from Northern Ireland. Dr. Heidi Eilers, an adjunct professor at Pepperdine University and UMass Lowell, shared her expertise regarding the creation of innovative therapeutic strategies via Zoom from San Diego. In addition to this long-distance learning, we continued to capitalize on local options as well!

We tapped a local expert in order to address another topic identified by staff - developing a more systematic approach to our Multi Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). That expert is Dr. Katie Novak who was a contributing author of the Massachusetts DESE Blueprint for MTSS. Dr. Novak began a ground-up approach by assessing what is already in place regarding instruction and school culture and capitalizing on that solid foundation to build a plan for Professional Learning that will continue over the next year or more. This is an exciting journey that has been enthusiastically received by our Valley professional learners.

Three years ago, Valley opened its doors on the Academy for its Special Education Assistants (SEAs). This Academy offers Valley's SEA's a robust educational pathway that ensures they are highly educated and up-to-date on best practices. We recognized that our SEAs, who provide invaluable and essential support to our students, wanted and needed to enhance their knowledge and skills just as our teachers and specialists do. On the early release days, our newly hired SEAs once again attended a series of workshops offered by our Valley in-house experts in areas such as speech and language, reading and occupational and physical therapy. Our more experienced SEAs attended sessions prescribed by their principals which included attending the same

sessions as the teachers or accessing online resources through Vector Solutions or Massachusetts Partnerships for Youth or other sources.

We continued to invite all administrators, teachers/specialists and support staff to join our Leadership Teams and participate in a unique Valley Professional Learning offering.This year, the Teams met throughout the year to discuss the book *Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know* by Adam Grant. The author contends that "great minds don't think alike - they challenge each other to think *again* about their long held beliefs and assumptions". This thought provoking book was the catalyst for many interesting conversations and influenced the thinking of the Teams. They are already looking forward to next year's reading selection!

A series of workshops that focused on best practices for multilingual learners was offered once again by Dana Gastich French of Upriver Education. Several teachers took advantage of this opportunity to enhance their knowledge and meet the DESE requirement for recertification. All of the above offerings were in addition, of course, to our ongoing CPR/First Aid, Safety Care and In School Safety/Intruder training offered each year as well as the Professional Learning pursued by staff members on their own. As can be seen, our growth mindset is not only alive, but also thriving at Valley! As always, we look forward to building on this foundation and learning even more in the school year to come!

novakeducation | PD Exit Ticket

Katie Novak - Today

I want to see individual responses

Visited
47

Started
47

Completed
47

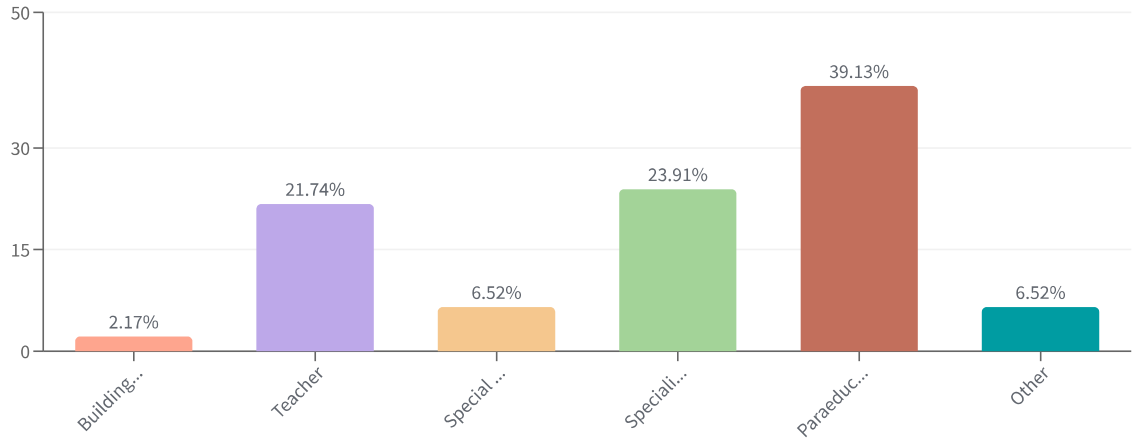
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GET STARTED 2 Questions

QUESTION 01 | MULTIPLE CHOICE

What best describes your role?

Answered: **46** Skipped: **0**



OTHER RESPONSES

Anonymous
School Nurse

Anonymous
Occupational therapist

Anonymous
Nurse

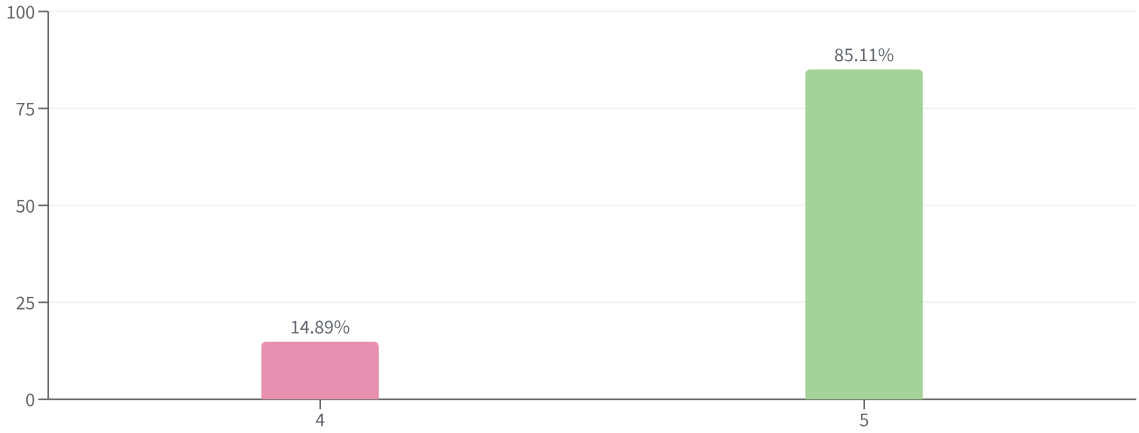
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GET STARTED

QUESTION 02 | RATING

How would you rate today's professional development session on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 is the best!)

Answered: **47** Skipped: **0** Average: **4.85**



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	RESPONSE PERCENTAGE
4	7	14.89 %
5	40	85.11 %

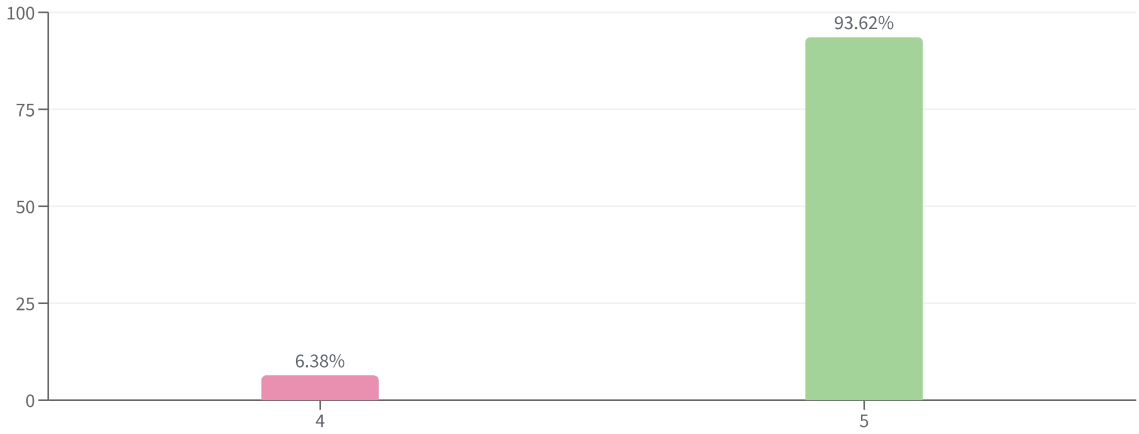
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FACILITATOR 4 Questions

QUESTION 03 | RATING

The facilitator was knowledgeable.

Answered: **47** Skipped: **0** Average: **4.94**



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	RESPONSE PERCENTAGE
4	3	6.38 %
5	44	93.62 %

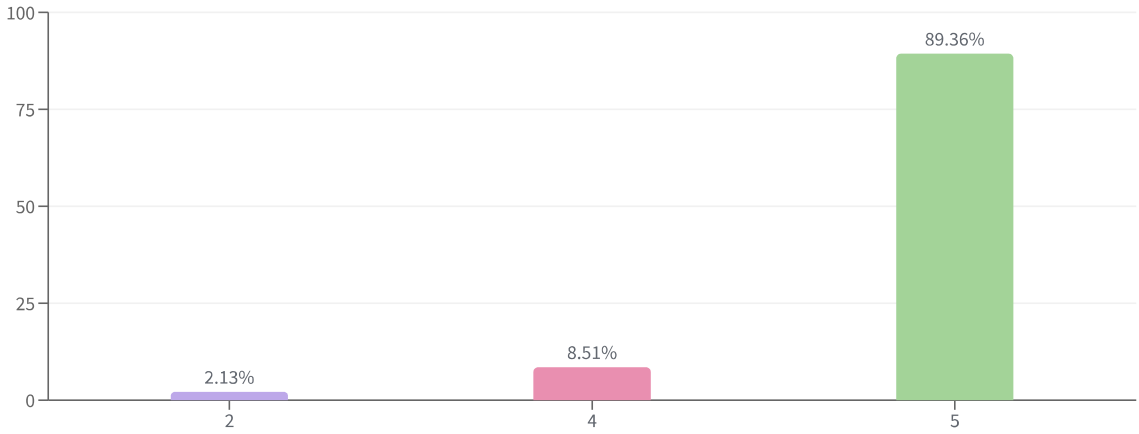
Made with SurveySparrow

FACILITATOR

QUESTION 04 | RATING

The facilitator was engaging.

Answered: **47** Skipped: **0** Average: **4.85**



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	RESPONSE PERCENTAGE
2	1	2.13 %
4	4	8.51 %
5	42	89.36 %

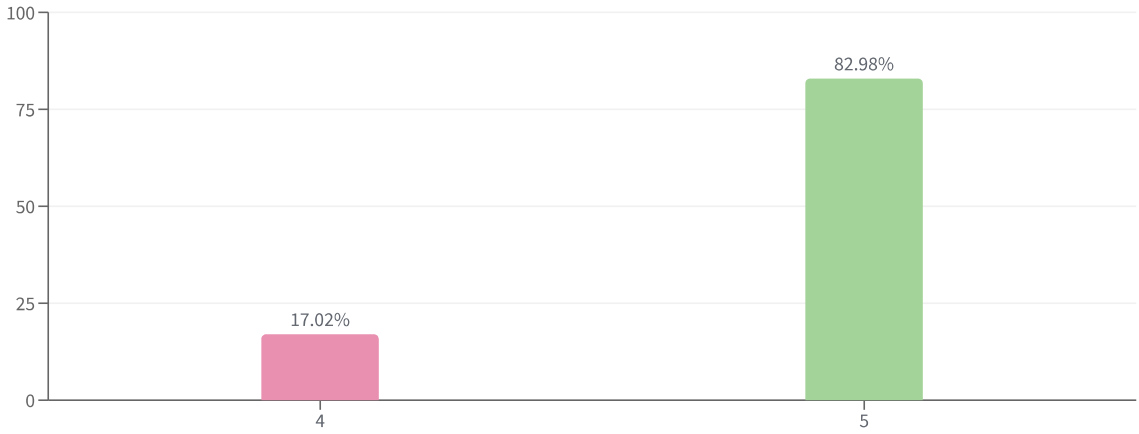
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FACILITATOR

QUESTION 05 | RATING

The instructional materials (slides/resources) were high-quality.

Answered: **47** Skipped: **0** Average: **4.83**



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	RESPONSE PERCENTAGE
4	8	17.02 %
5	39	82.98 %

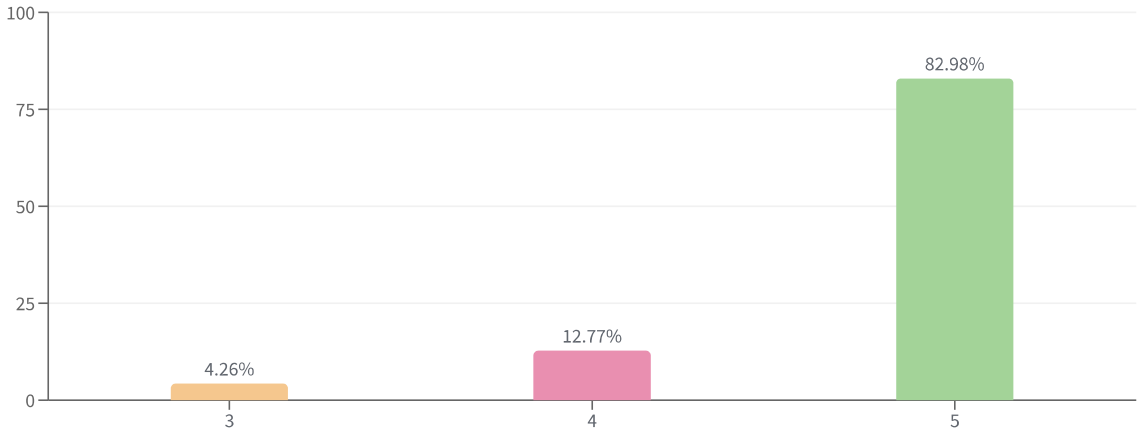
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FACILITATOR

QUESTION 06 | RATING

I acquired valuable knowledge or skills during the session.

Answered: **47** Skipped: **0** Average: **4.79**



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	RESPONSE PERCENTAGE
3	2	4.26 %
4	6	12.77 %
5	39	82.98 %

Made with SurveySparrow

OPEN ENDED FEEDBACK 2 Questions

QUESTION 07 | TEXT

What was the most meaningful or impactful aspect of today's session for you?

Answered: **47** Skipped: **0**



Anonymous 7 Days ago
Resources that you provided to do learning outside the PD

Anonymous 7 Days ago
The Learner Agency breakdown

Anonymous 7 Days ago
I thought that the environment you created - comfortable seating, movement, lots of choices of groups, etc. was great and modeled how easily environments can be adapted in classrooms, faculty meetings, etc.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Learning the detailed aspects of UDL.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
How engaging the presenter was. I could have listened even longer.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Providing choices!

Made with SurveySparrow

Anonymous 7 Days ago
The impact of having a choice through flexible means to a goal

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Learning how not school fits into the tiers

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Learning more about the systems that are in place to better educate our children in school and to help them in life.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
The HVAC example about how the mind the mind works to facilitate learning

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Recognize that everyday is not the same there are days where flexible options can make all the difference.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
The balance between difficult topics and the high energy attitude

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Reminders to empower students to learn their needs

Anonymous 7 Days ago
I thought all the information presented was impactful

Anonymous 7 Days ago
It was really easy to learn new perspectives on every day situations because of how informative and engaging she was. I got a better understanding on how I can approach the kids I work with and use strategies to help push them to be the best they can.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Learning how to help the kids more

Anonymous 7 Days ago
She modeled what she was teaching us, by doing with us what we should do with our students.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
I loved all of it

Anonymous 7 Days ago
The most impactful aspect in today's session was the power of choices.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
The real life scenarios you gave to make the connection to what you were teaching.

Made with SurveySparrow

Anonymous 7 Days ago

It really put into perspective all the supports we implement daily and have available to students

Anonymous 7 Days ago

Scaffold ideas were interesting

Anonymous 7 Days ago

Great information about best practice for special needs teaching

Anonymous 7 Days ago

I really enjoyed learning about the flexibility when it comes to supporting my students' needs. I believe that it is so important to try to grow the program we are in and continuously try to improve the lives of the students.

Anonymous 7 Days ago

It was very relatable.

Anonymous 7 Days ago

The session encouraged me to collaborate with other teachers and take free time to go observe other teachers teaching.

Anonymous 7 Days ago

It was meaningful because a lot of what she spoke about related directly to our kids.

Anonymous 7 Days ago

I think the way she talked about giving students options but having the same goal was super great

Anonymous 7 Days ago

I really enjoyed your perspective and energy!

Anonymous 7 Days ago

Seeing MTSS and UDL beyond just academics, but helping students understand what choices they have and what works best for them to utilize in the future

Anonymous 7 Days ago

The flexibility options we can give students instead of minimizing those options

Anonymous 7 Days ago

I feel like training is inline with how our school runs

Anonymous 7 Days ago

Loved and appreciated how engaging this was and great conversation.

Made with SurveySparrow

Anonymous 7 Days ago
The concrete explanation of the whole process and ideas was amazing!

Anonymous 7 Days ago
talking about flexibilility

Anonymous 7 Days ago
It was very validating for what we do at valley.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
The accessibility and flexibility of how we learned. Letting us pick the way we learn.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Understanding how flexible the world around us is.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
having access to the slides with all of the resources used linked in it so i can access them again.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
I really overall enjoyed every part of todays PD, our presenter was knowledgable and engading .

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Feedback and self reflection has to go together for it to have impact.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Using reflection regularly

Anonymous 7 Days ago
The types of feedback I can use with students in my subject

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Types of reflection

Anonymous 7 Days ago
the exam wrapper

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Lesson Reflection ideas

Anonymous 7 Days ago
.

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OPEN ENDED FEEDBACK

QUESTION 08 | TEXT

In future trainings focused on this topic, it would be great if...

Answered: **31** Skipped: **6**

Anonymous 7 Days ago
time management of teaching and addressing individual plans. How do you make it easier on the teacher to meet all the needs of multiple students, functional for the student to access the lesson, and still have time to teach the lesson?

Anonymous 7 Days ago
There are educator shares on successful scaffolds they use and with which population they were successful with.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
I think that the feedback from building educators, paras and admin would be more pertinent than mine!

Anonymous 7 Days ago
The training time was a bit shorter and possibly divided into a two part training.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
More of everything you did today!

Anonymous 7 Days ago
More about learner agency

Anonymous 7 Days ago
There were concrete examples through case studies

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Observe at the achook

Anonymous 7 Days ago
We had a group conversation where we ask each other the hard questions

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Having in moment examples from staff from our school.

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Anonymous 7 Days ago
More time was spent on each slide

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Continued in depth of this info

Anonymous 7 Days ago
You could come in and observe classrooms/provide feedback

Anonymous 7 Days ago
None comes to mind at the moment.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
She structured it the same way she did today.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Observing classrooms

Anonymous 7 Days ago
You continued to give more scenarios tailored towards the Valley.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
We discussed tier levels more - discrete trials is what tier, reading small groups vs whole group, etc.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
If you could observe us and fill in the gaps we may not see

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Focusing on classrooms that have more individualized instruction and how we can use these supports in those classrooms would be helpful.

Anonymous 7 Days ago
I think she killed it

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Just like 2 less breaks, I got lost and unmotivated by the last 2 breaks

Anonymous 7 Days ago
We could brainstorm together about kids in our school

Anonymous 7 Days ago
Continue to learn strategies to help our students be successful

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Anonymous 7 Days ago

The slides if they were more spaces out and have less information on each.

Anonymous 7 Days ago

Everything was spot on!

Anonymous 7 Days ago

there were more prompts where the speaker somehow includes audience with a more hands on participation

Anonymous 7 Days ago

It wasnt as long, 3 hours on one topic was a lot for one PD.

Anonymous 7 Days ago

Provide more reading time

Anonymous 7 Days ago

Specialisy subjects could also be considered

Anonymous 7 Days ago

More strategies as students change everytime

Made with SurveySparrow

TESTIMONIAL 1 Question

QUESTION 10 | TEXT

Please enter your testimonial here.

Answered: **6** Skipped: **0**



Anonymous 7 Days ago

Katie Novak is a very knowledgeable instructor. Her dedication and passion is based in authentic experiences as a teacher and mother. Katie is energized and really made learning fun today.

Anonymous 7 Days ago

I thought Ms. Novak exhibited a depth and breadth of knowledge on the topic of MTSS and UDL. She had a command of the subject to the extent that she was able to “bring it down to earth”, so to speak - using analogies to anchor the new subject information onto something familiar, for example. She is a very thoughtful and engaging presenter, as well!

Anonymous 7 Days ago

This was the best PD day yet. It breaks through lots of established norms. It was well researched and shows that the person behind it really has the goal of the child learning in mind.

Anonymous 7 Days ago

Katie Novak balances a high energy and joyful demeanor with very difficult topics to discuss. She is extremely knowledgeable.

Made with SurveySparrow

Anonymous 7 Days ago

I found this presentation engaging and well considered. Each breakout group was made with purpose, and the flow of the presentation really helped the three hours go by. very useful very helpful.

Anonymous 7 Days ago

Learning how to empower learners to make thoughtful choices of flexible means provided by the teacher through feedback and self reflection was awesome.

Made with SurveySparrow

Thank You !

We really appreciate your time and feedback.

Made with SurveySparrow

From: Nicole Noska <nnoska@valleycollaborative.org>
Date: March 27, 2026 at 3:23:06 PM ADT
To: Nick LeClair <nleclair@valleycollaborative.org>, Katie Novak <katie@novakeducation.com>, Chris Scott <cscott@valleycollaborative.org>, Linda Balfour <lbalfour@valleycollaborative.org>, Joia Mercurio <jmercurio@valleycollaborative.org>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Feedback from Secondary

Hi Katie,

Thank you for sharing this. Our teams are so excited to be working with you next year. It really was a great session on Wednesday!

Regards,

Nicole

Nicole Noska
Principal
Middle School, Transitional Programs
Transitional High School, Transitional Programs

Valley COLLABORATIVE

40 Linnell Circle
Billerica, MA 01821
Tel. 978-528-7865
Fax 978-528-7810

From: Nick LeClair <nleclair@valleycollaborative.org>
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2026 2:05 PM
To: Katie Novak <katie@novakeducation.com>; Chris Scott <cscott@valleycollaborative.org>; Linda Balfour <lbalfour@valleycollaborative.org>; Nicole Noska <nnoska@valleycollaborative.org>; Joia Mercurio <jmercurio@valleycollaborative.org>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Feedback from Secondary

Hi Katie,

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Great session and looking forward to working with you.

Nick

From: Katie Novak <katie@novakeducation.com>
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2026 11:29 AM
To: Chris Scott <cscott@valleycollaborative.org>; Linda Balfour <lbalfour@valleycollaborative.org>; Nicole Noska <nnoska@valleycollaborative.org>; Joia Mercurio <jmercurio@valleycollaborative.org>; Nick LeClair <nleclair@valleycollaborative.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Feedback from Secondary

CAUTION: This email came from someone outside Valley Collaborative. Please use caution when clicking on any links or images in this message.

Hi all-

Wow. Wow. Wow. I can't believe how lucky you are to have such an amazing staff at Valley. Building on the strong elementary session, the secondary educators brought the same level of engagement, reflection, and commitment to improving practice. Again, the feedback was 100% positive. I cannot wait to see everyone again. You really have something special here.

Here is my video in response to the feedback to share with all those brilliant educators. ♥

Katie Novak, Ed.D.
Educational Consultant
https://bit.ly/m/NovakEducation
Author of 16 books, including *UDL Now!*, *Shift to Student-Led, and Elevating Educational Design with AI*



Listen to the latest episode of *The Education Table Podcast*!

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Dr., N. Billerica MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Dr. Lori Likis, Creative Coaching Consultant
Date: June 11, 2026
Re: District Improvement Planning Update

After completing Valley's multi-year district plan in the spring of 2025, Dr. Scott and her team identified five of the plan's strategic initiatives for implementation in the 2026-2027 school year. Five leaders were selected to serve as district plan project leaders, one responsible for each of the initiatives selected for implementation. Last spring, these leaders strategically selected individuals across the collaborative for their teams, ensuring that people with the necessary expertise and a collaborative-wide perspective were at the table for planning. The leaders themselves then participated in training with me to prepare them for facilitating the development and oversight of action plans. They conducted their first meetings with their teams last May, launching this action planning process.

This school year, action planning resumed in October, as we convened a meeting with project leaders to briefly review the process and schedule for this year as well as the coaching support available to them as they facilitated work with their teams. Project leaders then scheduled and facilitated planning meetings with their teams throughout the fall, receiving coaching support as requested. Their goal was to create a solid action plan draft with their teams by January.

In January, we convened a meeting of project leaders and all members of their teams, approximately 25 people in total. We conducted an action plan review protocol, with the leader of each team presenting their initiative's action plan to a reviewing group that was composed of members of other teams. We conducted two review rounds, which yielded very helpful feedback for each action plan.

During the months of February through March, project leaders once again convened their teams to revise the action plans based on this feedback and on feedback they received from me. In April, we brought all members of the action planning teams together once again and conducted another review of the revised plans. Project leaders then revised plans based on this feedback and presented final drafts to Dr. Scott and her team in May.

At this final May meeting, Dr. Scott and her team expressed their appreciation of and excitement for the action plan that has been created. Citing it as their best action planning work to date, they voiced excitement for the work ahead and the impact they believe it will have on Valley. They also expressed appreciation for the process itself, commenting on the new learning and the new relationships it had fostered.

As always, it has been a great professional and personal pleasure for me to work with Dr. Scott and Valley leaders, as they continue to plan for the work moving forward. I thank her for this opportunity to contribute to Valley's ongoing success.

Required Action:
None

Attachments:
Valley Collaborative 2026 – 2031 District Improvement Plan

Valley Collaborative's District Improvement Plan

Designed to achieve the Purpose and Objectives set forth in the Collaborative Agreement

2026-2031

Plan Overview

Valley Collaborative's Articles of Agreement
ARTICLE II
Mission, Objectives, Focus, and Purpose

The mission of the Collaborative is to conduct educational programs and/or services for member districts in a cost-effective manner and to increase educational opportunities and to improve educational outcomes for its students. The purpose of the Collaborative is to provide high quality intensive educational, therapeutic and transitional programs and related services to individuals with disabilities referred by member districts, non-member districts and social service agencies, including both children and adults, and to provide professional development to educators. The focus of the Collaborative is the provision of special education, transitional, occupational, and therapeutic programs and services in the least restrictive environment and comprehensive professional development within the local communities of the member districts. The overall objectives of the Collaborative include improving the academic achievement and/or occupational skills of students and individuals with disabilities in the least restrictive environment through high quality programs and services; offering a variety of high quality professional development opportunities to general and special education teachers and related service providers; and offering its programs and services in a cost-effective manner.

Mission

To work collaboratively in order to create a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and responsive learning environment that recognizes individuals and empowers them to navigate confidently with optimal independence in their community and fosters lifelong learning.

Vision

Valley Collaborative partners with families, districts, and the community to provide innovative programming that empowers all students and adults to discover their diverse individual strengths, interests, and abilities. In doing so, those we serve become self-actualized members of society who contribute in a responsible manner.

Theory of Action

If we…

- Identify students' immediate and long-term individualized goals, strengths, and needs and provide support to meet them, and…
- Build the capacity of, and invest in, our staff, and…
- Invest in community building across the Collaborative, with all stakeholder groups,

Then we will…

- Increase student independence and prepare students for successful post-secondary placement and adult living
- Increase staff professional capacity and the retention of high quality and appropriately certified staff
- Improve the engagement of all stakeholders in the Collaborative community

Strategic Objectives		
1. All students and adults will be provided with high quality programming in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment in order to prepare them for successful adult living.	***2. Valley Collaborative will provide professional learning in order to build capacity and retain high quality staff, while fostering and promoting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment.***	***3. Valley Collaborative will foster diversity, equity, and inclusivity in order to promote a sense of belonging and engagement for all stakeholders (students, adults, families, staff, districts, community partners).***
Strategic Initiatives		
a.) Continue to develop and implement new programming to meet Individual Education Plan, Individual Support Plan, and Life Plan goals and objectives of Valley's K-12 students and adult services participants through: community life skills opportunities; expanded academic opportunities through technology; transitional opportunities; and community-based day supports activities.	a.) Create and implement a robust professional learning program in order to train all professional staff, including Special Education Assistants, for their unique roles at Valley Collaborative, through various learning modules spanning special education topics, therapies, school safety, etc.	a.) Strengthen outreach and communication between staff, students/DDS and MRC individuals, and families in order to foster a sense of belonging.
b.) Develop and maintain the outdoor learning program so that students and individuals will be exposed to more wellness opportunities to support individual growth.	b.) Implement a professional learning and evaluation management system that will assist Valley in leveraging data to plan, manage, track, and evaluate employees and their training and professional learning activities.	b.) Redevelop Valley's informational materials to reflect the mission & vision and assist in educating community members about Valley's program offerings, through updated materials including Valley's website.
c.) Complete the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Mid-Cycle Review Self-Assessment of Valley's practices and policies by August of 2024 and complete the review in its entirety by the Spring of 2025, to ensure high quality programming.	c.) Implement a professional learning management system that expands professional learning offerings aligned with Valley's District goals and ensures Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) compliance.	c.) Work with stakeholders—including families, districts, DDS and MRC individuals, and community partners—to expand vocational placements for students in order to support their development as contributing members of their communities.
d.) Complete the new DESE Collaborative Financial Review by the Spring of 2025 to ensure financial stability and health, so that Valley maintains sustainable and successful programming.	d.) Improve evaluation tracking and organization, and goal alignment to Valley's district goals.	d.) Develop and administer a survey for member district Special Education Directors to gather their feedback on student experiences within their districts and student trends in order to anticipate programmatic needs and maintain responsive programming.
e.) Complete the DESE Coordinated Program Review Self-Assessment of Valley's practices and policies by August of 2027 and complete the review in its entirety by the Spring of		e.) Analyze student referral data by implementing a new admissions module, to ensure Valley continues to offer diverse, equitable and inclusive

2028, to ensure high quality programming.		programming to promote a sense of belonging.
f.) Complete the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Adult Services Licensure and Certification Audit – Full Audit by the Spring of 2025, to ensure high quality programming.		
Outcomes		
1.1 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education finds Valley in compliance on 85% or more of its Coordinated Program Review (CPR) and Mid Cycle Review (MCR) criteria	2.1 By 2030, Valley will increase staff retention by 10% as evidenced by longevity data for both certified staff and support staff	3.1 Valley will set and meet a Year 5 improvement target for sense of belonging and student engagement, using the 2023-24 DEI (sense of belonging) student, staff, and adult services survey results and the 2024-25 Special Education Directors' survey results to determine baseline
1.2 Department of Developmental Services (DDS) finds Valley in compliance on 80% or more of its Adult Services Licensure and Certification Audit criteria	2.2 Professional development opportunities will receive an overall rating of "very good" or higher on feedback evaluation forms 75% of the time by Year 5	3.2 Valley will conduct a minimum of one family/community at large engagement initiative, such as an open house, at each school annually
1.3 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education finds Valley in compliance on 85% or more of its Financial Review criteria		3.3 Valley will develop and implement promotional materials by end of Year 5 (website, brochures, videos)
1.4 Valley will conduct a minimum of 3 new outdoor learning opportunities annually		3.4 Valley will continue to develop financial budgets in response to changing enrollment trends

Valley Collaborative Action Plan

January 2026-May 2027

Strategic Initiative 1A

Strategic Objective 1: All students and adults will be provided with high quality programming in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment in order to prepare them for successful adult living.

Strategic Initiative 1A: Continue to develop and implement new programming to meet Individual Education Plan, Individual Support Plan, and Life Plan goals and objectives of Valley's K-12 students and adult services participants through: community life skills opportunities; expanded academic opportunities through technology; transitional opportunities; and community-based day supports activities.

Monitoring Progress

Process Benchmark	Person Responsible	Date	Status
1. Review and update training(s) for individuals in the adult program, to address individualized needs and interests, by January 2027.	Case Managers	January 2027	
2. Create a review committee consisting of a minimum of 5 representatives (therapy, SEA's, teachers, and admin) to review and update vocational data collection processes at the high school level in order to provide precision in transition planning, data driven interventions, and targeted skill development to meet the evolving needs of students along with their future goals. The committee will meet 4 times per year to implement and monitor vocational data collection practices.	Lia Metrakas Karen Rowe Lia Metrakas Karen Rowe	September 2026 September 2026 December 2026 March 2027 June 2027	
3. Implement a diagnostic **reading program** (iReady) in all schools by September 2025 to screen and identify students performing below grade level in reading, ensuring that results are used to develop targeted intervention plans.	Shana Cheevers (Transitional MS&HS) Amanda Aprile (Elementary) Jake Smith (Alternative MS &HS) Katie Novak, Consultant	September 2025	Completed/ Ongoing

Process Benchmark	**Person Responsible**	**Date**	**Status**
4. Assemble and lead data teams in all schools to analyze data from diagnostic **reading assessments** in order to develop intervention plans for students performing below grade level.	Shana Cheevers (Transitional MS&HS) Meghan Waters (Elementary) Jake Smith (Alternative MS &HS) Katie Novak, Consultant	September 2026	
5. Implement a **math program** (iReady) in all schools by January 2026 to assess student academic levels and identify gaps across programs.	Shana Cheevers (Transitional MS&HS) Amanda Aprile (Elementary) Matt Conant (Alternative MS &HS) Katie Novak, Consultant	January 2026	
6. Assemble and lead data teams in all schools to analyze data from diagnostic **math assessments** in order to develop intervention plans for students performing below grade level.	Shana Cheevers (Transitional MS&HS) Amanda Aprile (Elementary) Jake Smith (Alternative MS &HS) Katie Novak, Consultant	September 2026	
7. By May 2026**,** implement a new, standards-aligned **STEM curriculum** and accompanying digital learning software (Explore Learning) in all elementary grades (K–5).	Amanda Aprile	May 2026	Completed/ Ongoing
8. Expand trainings to build capacity of Special Education Assistants (SEA's) across academic and therapeutic areas. a. Implement Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) discreet trial software, Autism Curriculum Encyclopedia (ACE) and training at the elementary school, transitional middle and high school b. Create ACE support trainings for SEAs at the elementary school, transitional middle and high school	 Amanda Aprile-Elementary Transitional HS & MS-Kathleen Berry Amanda Aprile-Elementary Transitional HS & MS-Kathleen Berry	 September-October 2025 October 2026 September2025 October 2026	 Completed Completed

Measuring Impact

Early Evidence of Change Benchmark	Person Responsible	Date	Status
Early Evidence of Change for Process Benchmark 1: ● Case managers will have met at least once, and established a meeting schedule, and defined the work plan with objectives, roles, and timeline.	Matt Gentile Maureen Lydon	March 2026	Met 3/05 Established a meeting schedule, defined roles, and objectives
Early Evidence of Change for Process Benchmark 2: ● Review committee will have met at least once, and established a meeting schedule, and defined the work plan with objectives, roles, and timeline.	Lia Metrakas Karen Rowe	October 2026	
Early Evidence of Change for Process Benchmarks 3, 4: ● 100% of schools have the iReady software installed and operational October 2025.	Shana Cheevers (Transitional MS&HS) Meghan Waters (Elementary) Jake Smith (Alternative MS &HS)	October 2025	Completed
● 95% of K-12 students will have completed their initial (fall) iReady math and reading diagnostic assessments within the first three weeks of the school year.	Shana Cheevers Meaghan Waters Jake Smith	September 2026	
● 100% of students identified as "two or more years below grade level" in math and reading have a targeted intervention plan developed by their teacher within two weeks of their diagnostic results being available.	Shana Cheevers Meaghan Waters Matt Conant	October 2026	
● Students using the online instructional component will achieve an average usage of 45 minutes or more per subject per week for at least 25 weeks of the school year.	Shana Cheevers Meaghan Waters Jake Smith Matt Conant	June 2027	
● 90% of relevant staff (teachers, administrators) complete initial training on administering the math and reading diagnostic assessment and interpreting reports by the end of the first month of implementation.	Shana Cheevers Meaghan Waters Jake Smith Matt Conant	September 2025	Completed

Early Evidence of Change Benchmark	Person Responsible	Date	Status
Early Evidence of Change for Process Benchmark 5: ● The 4th, 5th, and 6th grade classes at the elementary school will have the Explore Learning Science curriculum software installed and operational by September 2025.	Amanda Aprile	September 2025	Completed
● 90% of relevant staff (teachers, administrators) will have completed an initial training on using the Explore Learning science curriculum.	Amanda Aprile	May 2026	Completed
● 90% of all teacher observations conducted by principals and assistant principals at the elementary school will contain evidence of curriculum implementation by January 2026	Amanda Aprile	January 2026	Completed
Early Evidence of Change for Process Benchmark 6: ● 90% of SEA's and Paraprofessionals at the elementary school will have completed an ACE training by October 2025.	Amanda Aprile	October 2025	Completed
● At the elementary school, 70% of staff will begin using the software for data collection during discrete trial training sessions within the first 4 weeks of the rollout.	Amanda Aprile	November 2025	Completed
● 90% of SEA's and Paraprofessionals at the Transitional Middle and High School will have completed an ACE training by October 2026.	Kathleen Berry	October 2026	

Valley Collaborative Action Plan

January 2026-May 2027

Strategic Initiative 2A

Strategic Objective 2: Valley Collaborative will provide professional learning in order to build capacity and retain high quality staff, while fostering and promoting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment.

Strategic Initiative 2A: Create and implement a robust professional learning program in order to train all professional staff, including Special Education Assistants, for their unique roles at Valley Collaborative, through various learning modules spanning special education topics, therapies, school safety, etc.

Monitoring Progress

Process Benchmark	Person Responsible	Date	Status
1. Principals, Program Director, and Central Administration will develop an annual professional learning plan outlining required and optional training for all staff roles	Principals Program Director Central Admin Linda Balfour	9/2026	Ongoing
2. Evaluate the current mandatory training catalogue to remove outdated modules, update existing modules where appropriate, or add relevant modules	Nick Nicole HR	9/2026	Ongoing
3. Create a Valley Professional Learning Platform access point on the website under "staff" that is obvious and accessible for all staff, including new hires	Tech Team Nick	9/2026	
4. Develop content outline and training materials (videos, guides) for staff on accessing and using the Valley Professional Learning platform	Tech Team Nick Nicole Joia Kate	6/2027	Ongoing
5. Coordinate with the therapies department annually to identify and develop professional learning modules that address the needs of specialized service providers	Nick Nicole	6/2026	Ongoing

Measuring Impact

Early Evidence of Change Benchmark	Person Responsible	Date	Status
Annual meetings are scheduled with principals, program director and central administrators to outline the schedule of PD offerings for the following academic year	Dr. Scott Joia Kari	9/2026	Ongoing
The office of professional development will email Valley Collaborative staff prior to an early release or full day trainings with a schedule of available events	Office of Professional Development	9/2025	Ongoing

Valley Collaborative Action Plan

January 2026-May 2027

Strategic Initiative 2B

Strategic Objective 2: Valley Collaborative will provide professional learning in order to build capacity and retain high quality staff, while fostering and promoting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment.

Strategic Initiative 2B: Implement a professional learning and evaluation management system that will assist Valley in leveraging data to plan, manage, track, and evaluate employees and their training and professional learning activities.

Monitoring Progress

Process Benchmark	Person Responsible	Date	Status
1. Review and select a unified professional learning and evaluation management system that integrates training, PD tracking, and evaluations	Nick Tech Team Nicole HR Joia	2025	Completed
2. Migrate data and create user accounts in the new selected professional learning and evaluation management system	Tech Team HR Joia	9/2025	Completed
3. Create workflow procedures for Staff to use as a guide to Vector PD Management System to enroll into courses, submit feedback and evidence, and print transcripts Vector Workflows	Joia Kari	3/2026	Completed
4. Train all evaluators and supervisors using Vector Evaluations Module to complete annual staff evaluations	HR Nick Nicole	10/2026	
5. Determine the operational system (Google or Vector) that hosts mandated trainings for all staff	Tech Team Nick Nicole Joia Kari	9/2027	

6. Create training videos for Supervisors and Staff illustrating necessary steps to use Vector PD Management System for observations, evaluations, and enrolling staff in past PD events	HR Joia Principals & Graphic Design Students	12/2026	

Measuring Impact

Early Evidence of Change Benchmark	Person Responsible	Date	Status
80% of evaluators will use professional learning and evaluation management system to complete observations and upload evaluation documents as evidenced by system reports	Kari	1/ 2027	
80% of staff will use the professional learning and evaluation management system to complete their portions of the evaluation cycle as evidenced by system reports.	Kari	6/2027	
75% of professional staff will successfully enroll in available PD events in the professional learning and evaluation management system as evidenced by system reports	Joia	12/2026	
75% of professional staff will successfully submit evidence for PD credit/PDP's in the professional learning and evaluation management system as evidenced by system reports	Joia	12/2026	
65% of staff will be able to apply learning & print transcripts in the professional learning and evaluation management system as evidenced by the submission of their transcripts to their supervisors	Nick Nicole Heather	6/2027	

Valley Collaborative Action Plan

January 2026-May 2027

Strategic Initiative 3A

Strategic Objective 3: Valley Collaborative will foster diversity, equity, and inclusivity in order to promote a sense of belonging and engagement for all stakeholders (students, adults, families, staff, districts, community partners).

Strategic Initiative 3A: Strengthen outreach and communication between staff, students/DDS and MRC individuals, and families in order to foster a sense of belonging.

Monitoring Progress

Process Benchmark	Person Responsible	Date	Status
1. Establish a committee to develop and implement a site-specific newsletter, including the creation of a strategic implementation plan.	Building admin teams	Fall 2026	In progress
2. Develop a comprehensive content strategy to curate high-impact newsletter segments, focusing on institutional culture, pedagogical highlights, and strategic initiatives. This framework will encompass program developments, student and faculty achievements, and essential organizational updates to enhance community engagement.	Newsletter committee	September 2026	
3. Formalize a universal template for site-specific newsletters to streamline content delivery and maintain a cohesive institutional identity.	Newsletter committee	Fall 2026	
4. Define the primary objectives and distribution parameters to ensure the publication effectively serves its intended audience and meets specific engagement benchmarks.	Newsletter committee	November 2026	
5. Final quality check and implementation of first monthly site-specific newsletter.	Building admin teams	Fall 2026	
6. Develop a formal evaluation framework to capture stakeholder sentiment and assess the effectiveness of the newsletter's communication strategy.		May 2027	
7. Solicit formal stakeholder feedback to evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of the current newsletter strategy.	Building admin teams	Spring 2027	
8. Identify at least 2 school activities per site per quarter that embodies a sense of belonging and communicate it to all our stakeholders.	Program leaders	Spring 2027	
9. Each site will add their staff/student/individual of the month news story in our quarterly newsletter.	Principals/central office	Fall 2026	

Measuring Impact

Early Evidence of Change Benchmark	Person Responsible	Date	Status
By December 2026, all stakeholders will have received at least one site specific newsletter.	Newsletter Committee	December 2026	
By the Spring of 2027 each program will receive 75% of stakeholders feedback on the newsletters.	Newsletter Committee	Spring 2027	
By October 2026, all student/staff of the month recipients will be highlighted in the quarterly newsletter.	Newsletter Committee	Fall 2026	
By the Spring of 2027, each program will identify and hold at least 2 school activity per site per quarter that embodies a sense of belonging and communicate it to all our stakeholders by the end of the year.	Newsletter Committee/ Building Administration Teams	Spring 2027	

Valley Collaborative Action Plan

January 2026-May 2027

Strategic Initiative 3B

Strategic Objective 3: Valley Collaborative will foster diversity, equity, and inclusivity in order to promote a sense of belonging and engagement for all stakeholders (students, adults, families, staff, districts, community partners).

Strategic Initiative 3B: Redevelop Valley's informational materials to reflect the mission & vision and assist in educating community members about Valley's program offerings, through updated materials including Valley's website.

Monitoring Progress

Process Benchmark	Person	Date	Status
1. Assess Content Needs for Program Specific Brochures w/ Principals / Program Directors in order to create 6 program brochures (Elementary, Transitional Middle, Alternative Middle, Transitional High, Alternative High, and Adult Programs)	Bryan Thomas	November. 2025	Complete
2. Collect Photos & Information for Brochures	Bryan Thomas	November 2025	Complete
3. Develop Draft Brochures	Bryan Thomas	December 2025	Complete
4. Present Draft Brochures to Building Principals/Program Directors, Executive Director, Leadership Team & Special Education Directors	Bryan Thomas	January 2026 SPED Directors Meeting	Complete
5. Revise, Edit, and Develop Final Brochures (w/ leadership team consultation)	Bryan Thomas	May 2026	Complete
6. Print, Distribute to Valley Schools/Programs, and begin using Brochures.	Bryan Thomas Vlad Stoicescu	June 2026	
7. Assess Content Content Needs for Program Specific Videos w/ Principals / Program Directors	Bryan Thomas Vlad Stoicescu	Fall 2026	
8. Film Content for Promotional Videos	Bryan Thomas Vlad Stoicescu	Fall 2026	
9. Create Draft Promotional Videos	Bryan Thomas Vlad Stoicescu	Winter 2027	

Process Benchmark	Person	Date	Status
10. Present Draft Videos to Building Principals/Program Directors, Executive Director, & Leadership Team	Bryan Thomas	Winter 2027	
11. Revise, Edit, and Develop Final Videos (w/ leadership team consultation)	Bryan Thomas Vlad Stoicescu	Spring 2027	
12. Post Videos to Website	Mazyar Moshtaghi	Spring 2027	
13. Monitor, maintain, and update brochures to keep current and relevant.	Bryan Thomas Matt Gentile Vlad Stoicescu	Annually in May Beginning May 2027	
14. Maintain and Update Website with current news, updates, and content as required by Valley Leadership	Mazyar Moshtaghi	Ongoing / As Needed	Ongoing

Measuring Impact

Early Evidence of Change Benchmark	Person Responsible	Date	Status
Promotional brochures have been distributed and are in active use across schools/programs	Bryan Thomas	June 2026	
Promotional videos have been distributed and are in active use across schools/programs	Bryan Thomas	June 2027	
Obtain feedback from community members (families / school districts / program administrators).on usefulness of promotional materials	Bryan Thomas	June 2027	
Assess feedback from community members (families / school districts / program administrators).	Mazyar Moshtaghi Bryan Thomas Matt Gentile Vlad Stoicescu	June 2027	
Website reflects up-to-date, accurate, and and well-maintained content.	Mazyar Moshtaghi Bryan Thomas Matt Gentile Vlad Stoicescu	Annual Review in May. Beginning May 2027	

Valley Collaborative Action Plan

January 2026-May 2027

Strategic Initiative 3C

Strategic Objective 3: Valley Collaborative will foster diversity, equity, and inclusivity in order to promote a sense of belonging and engagement for all stakeholders (students, adults, families, staff, districts, community partners).

Strategic Initiative 3C: Work with stakeholders—including families, districts, DDS and MRC individuals, and community partners—to expand vocational placements for students and individuals in order to support their development as contributing members of their communities.

Monitoring Progress

Process Benchmark	Person Responsible	Date	Status
1. Maintain active membership and participation in relevant networking events hosted by the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce and the Middlesex 3 Coalition	Joe Venskus Scott Morin	January 2026 & Ongoing	Complete & Ongoing
2. Plan and produce two professional videos showcasing current vocational partnerships across school programs to serve as a marketing and outreach tool	Holly Tierney Joe Venskus Scott Morin Eli Gioumbakis	May 2027	
3. Identify community site(s), staff, and students to include in the vocational partnership video(s) (1 for Alternative, 1 for Transitional) - Coordinate with Alt Middle/ High staff, Valley tech team, and/or BATV to secure equipment and editing support. - Highlight students to help with shooting and editing. - Review videos with principals/ admin teams - Share finalized video with Valley team members & community partners	Holly Tierney Joe Venskus Scott Morin Eli Gioumbakis (Vlad Stoicescu to help w/ Alt.)	October 2026 December 2026 May 2027	
4. Organize quarterly vocational team meetings to share placement leads/ contacts, exchange resources, and strengthen communication between school programs and adult program. - Meetings in October, January, April, July	Holly Tierney (Organizer, will send out invites via Zoom) Attendees: Joe Venskus, Ben Morrison, Scott Morin, Eli Gioumbakis, Lia Metrakas	October 2026 January 2027 April 2027 July 2027	

Process Benchmark	Person Responsible	Date	Status
5. Develop and maintain a comprehensive, centralized spreadsheet outlining current vocational opportunities across adult, transitional, and alternative programs to identify gaps in areas of interest/ career clusters.	Holly Tierney (Organizer) Contributors: Joe Venskus, Ben Morrison, Scott Morin, Eli Gioumbakis	September 2026 & Ongoing	
6. Update promotional materials (brochures and website content) with employment specific language & information to engage potential community partners or employers	3C DIP Team Coordinate with 3B DIP Team (Bryan Thomas) for each specific program	May 2026	Complete

Measuring Impact

Early Evidence of Change Benchmark	Person Responsible	Date	Status
Establishment of at least two new partnerships with local employers, non-profit organizations, volunteer sites, and/or consistent community activities to expand vocational and community-based opportunities for students and adults	Holly Tierney Joe Venskus Ben Morrison Scott Morin Eli Gioumbakis	May 2027	
Maintain existing community partnerships to provide consistent support and stability for students and individuals, while continuing to build essential vocational and daily living skills.	Holly Tierney Joe Venskus Ben Morrison Scott Morin Eli Gioumbakis	May 2027	
Expansion/ enhancement of vocational opportunities at existing partner sites to further align with student and adult interests, strengths, and career goals.	Holly Tierney Joe Venskus Ben Morrison Scott Morin Eli Gioumbakis	May 2027	

MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Pedro Martinez | Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

To: Chris Scott, Executive Director
From: Paulajo Gaines, Education Collaborative Coordinator
Date: January 20, 2026
Subject: Valley Collaborative - FY25 Annual Independent Audit Submission

---

Thank you for submitting the Valley Collaborative (Valley or the Collaborative) FY25 Annual Independent Audit Report. This memo confirms that the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) has reviewed the submission to determine its compliance with the reporting requirements of M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E and CMR 603 CMR 50.00.

As a part of this review, the Collaborative's independent audit report and financial statements were examined. The table below outlines the key audit reporting requirements, and whether or not the Collaborative has satisfied those requirements. If additional information is needed to complete this review, it is noted at the end of this memo. Please share this memo with the Valley Board of Directors (Board) at their next meeting.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	SATISFIED
Per M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E(d) and 603 CMR 50.00:	
Names, duties, and total compensation of the five most highly compensated employees.	**Yes**
Transactions between the collaborative and any related for-profit or non-profit organization.	**Yes**
Amounts expended on services for individuals aged 22 years and older.	**Yes**
Amounts expended on administration and overhead.	**Yes**
Any accounts held by Valley that may be spent at the discretion of another person or entity.	**Yes**
Transactions or contracts related to purchase, sale, rental, or lease of real property.	**Yes**
Per M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E(c)(m) and 603 CMR 50.07(9):	
Reported collaborative fund cumulative surplus within the 25 percent limitation.	***Yes**
Per M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E(d) and 603 CMR 50.08(2):	
Evidence of approval of the collaborative independent audit by the Board.	**Yes**
Audit report is posted to the collaborative website.	**Yes**
** Subsequent to June 30, 2025, but prior to the issuance of the financial statements, the Valley Board voted to provide member district credits to for tuition, services, etc., in the amount of $ 1,200,000 in order to comply with the 25 percent cumulative surplus limit. Member district credits must be expended by June 30. 2026.*	

No Additional Documentation Required

If you have questions regarding this memo, please contact paulajo.gaines@mass.gov.

dese MASSACHUSETTS Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Pedro Martinez | Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

To: Chris Scott, Executive Director
From: Paulajo Gaines, Education Collaborative Coordinator
Date: March 6, 2026
Subject: Valley Collaborative, FY25 Annual Report Submission

Thank you for submitting the Valley Collaborative (Valley or the Collaborative) FY25 Annual Report. Your submission has been reviewed to determine its compliance with the reporting requirements of M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E and CMR 603 CMR 50.00. Please share this memo with the Valley Board of Directors (Board) at the next public meeting.

The Annual Report Compliance Review table below outlines the reporting requirements, and whether the Collaborative has satisfied those requirements. If additional information is needed to complete this review, it is noted at the end of this memo.

Annual Report Compliance Review

Reporting Requirements - M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E and CMR 603 CMR 50.00	Satisfied
Information on the programs and services provided by the Collaborative.	Yes
Discussion of the cost-effectiveness of all programs and services.	Yes
Progress made toward achieving the objectives and purposes set forth in the Collaborative agreement.	Yes
Evidence of approval of the annual report by the Board.	Yes
The annual report is posted to the Valley website.	Yes

No Additional Information Needed

Questions regarding this memo should be directed to paulajo.gaines@mass.gov for response.

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Dr., N. Billerica MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: April 30th 2026
Re: Monthly Update – Heather Mackay, Principal of Valley Elementary School

---

The Spring Season is upon us. As we welcome the arrival of spring, our Elementary school has been buzzing with energy, excitement and plenty of engaging activities! With the warm weather finally here, students are enjoying more time outdoors with Valley's robust outdoor education. Our "almost graduates" are tackling bigger mountains and have already starting catching fish - bringing classroom lessons to life in nature. At Valley Elementary school, we've had some special events that have brought smiles to our students' faces. Some highlights include:

Autism Acceptance Spirit Week: to celebrate Autism Acceptance Month, we participated in a school-wide spirit week that included themed spirit days, art projects, and other activities that focus on Autism Acceptance. To cap off this celebratory spirit week, we held our annual Autism Acceptance Walk on Friday, April 17th.

Illstyle & Peace Assembly: Illstyle & Peace Productions is a multicultural, Philadelphia-based dance company founded in 2000 by Brandon "Peace" Albright. The company creates work rooted in various traditional dance styles including contemporary, West African, old school & new school hip-hop blended with an eclectic mix of dance and performance disciplines including Locking, Popping, Breaking, Tap, Ballet and Hip Hop. Students and staff alike found this assembly to be highly entertaining and enjoyable.

Continuing with some of the strong programming we began over the winter months with swimming and horseback riding for students, we are offering these modalities throughout the spring. Students are getting a chance to make a splash in the water and gallop through Iron Stone's trails.

These experiences reflect our commitment to supporting all of our students to grow—academically, physically, socially, and emotionally. We are proud of each and every one of our students and remain grateful to the staff, families, and all members of our Valley Community who support our vision and mission!

Valley Elementary School currently has 102 students enrolled.

Required Action:

None

Attachments:

None

Valley Collaborative Elementary School Newsletter

March 2026



Last Month in Review

In February, we celebrated love and kindness with a kindness themed week that culminated with our annual Valentine's Day Dance. Performer, Brian Chevalier, returned to our school on the 12th for "The Respect Tour – A Musical High-Energy Character Education Experience." Students danced and sang with the interactive performance.

March Events

March 2nd - 6th: Read Across America Week

We will celebrate Read Across America Week with a reading themed spirit week, door decorating, guest readers, book fair, and other activities to celebrate and promote literacy.

March 18th: Never Give Up! Assembly with "Mighty" Mike Simmel

"Mighty" Mike Simmel is an author, inspirational speaker, and basketball-trick expert (formerly of the Harlem Wizards). He will come to our school to share his book and his message. In an inspiring basketball-trick show, he will share his story of overcoming challenges to achieve his dreams.

March 17th: St Patrick's Day Event:

Students will enjoy festive crafts and activities on the 17th.

Scholastic Book Fair

Our school will be holding the Scholastic Book Fair from March 2nd through the 6th from 9am-2pm. Parents are invited to come between 2:00 & 2:30 daily. More information, including online order options, is included on a flyer that was sent home with students.



March Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 *Spirit Week & Book Fair*	**3** *Spirit Week & Book Fair*	**4** *Spirit Week & Book Fair*	**5** *Spirit Week & Book Fair*	**6** *Spirit Week & Book Fair*
9	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
16	**17** *St Patrick's Day Event*	**18** *Never Give Up! Assembly*	**19**	**20**
23 – **30**	**24** – **31**	**25** *Early Release for Students*	**26**	**27**

Valley Collaborative Elementary School Newsletter

April 2026



"Mighty" Mike Simmel

Last Month in Review

In March, we celebrated Read Across America Week with fun literacy activities, a door decorating contest, and guest reader events. Guest readers included firemen, parents, and Valley Collaborative Executive Director Dr. Chris Scott. The month was capped off with a visit from "Mighty" Mike Simmel, an author, inspirational speaker, and basketball-trick expert (formerly of the Harlem Wizards). He came to our school to share his book and his message: "Never Give Up". In an inspiring basketball-trick show, he shared his story of overcoming challenges to achieve his dreams.

April Events

April 13th: Illstyle & Peace Assembly

Illstyle & Peace Productions is a multicultural, Philadelphia-based dance company founded in 2000 by Brandon "Peace" Albright. The company creates work rooted in contemporary, West African, old school & new school hip-hop blended with an eclectic mix of dance and performance disciplines including Locking, Popping, Breaking, Tap, Ballet, Hip Hop & House Dancing. On the 13th they will be coming to our school for an interactive dance and music assembly.

April 13th-17th: Autism Acceptance Spirit Week

To celebrate Autism Acceptance Month, we will have a spirit week from 4/13- 4/17. The week will include themed spirit days, art projects, and other activities that focus on Autism Acceptance.

April 17th: Walk for Autism Acceptance

To cap off the spirit week, we will hold our annual Autism Acceptance Walk on Friday, April 17th.

Nurse's Notes

Springtime is here! Please send in sunblock and insect repellant with your student. Label your child's items with their name and instruct them to keep it handy in their school bag. If you feel the student cannot be responsible for their own sunblock please contact the nurse to make other arrangements.

April Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		1 *Early Release for Students*	2	3 *Good Friday* *No School*
6	7	8	9	10
13 *ASD Spirit Week* *llstyle & Peace Assembly*	14 *ASD Spirit Week*	15 *ASD Spirit Week*	16 *ASD Spirit Week*	17 *ASD Spirit Week* & Walk
20 *April Break* *No School*	21 *April Break* *No School*	22 *April Break* *No School*	23 *April Break* *No School*	24 *April Break* *No School*
27	28	29	30	

Valley Collaborative Elementary School Newsletter

May 2026

Last Month in Review



In April students learned all about the history of hip-hop dance and themes of community and peace with an assembly from the group *Illstyle and Peace.* We celebrated Autism Acceptance with a spirit week full of activities and education including a foam-party and a petting zoo! On the 17th, our school was a rainbow of colors for our annual Autism Acceptance Color Walk! Classes made signs, dressed in all the colors of the rainbow, and marched around the school in the beautiful spring sun. The event brought together all of the students and staff in the spirit of community, support, and acceptance.

May Events

May 13th: Mental Health Awareness Fair

For Mental Health Awareness Week, counselors are organizing a Mental Health Awareness Wellness Fair featuring interactive, hands-on stations that promote emotional regulation, resilience, and self-care. Activities may include a Feelings Detective booth, mindful yoga, hygiene and positive self-image lessons, affirmation stations, music therapy, and calming sensory experiences. Students will visit stations and collect stickers in a "passport" as they learn new wellness skills.

May 15th: DrumatiX

DrumatiX is an exciting percussion & movement assembly in the tradition of Stomp!

Nurse's Notes

Springtime is here! Please send in sunblock and insect repellant with your student. Label your child's items with their name and instruct them to keep it handy in their school bag. If you feel the student cannot be responsible for their own sunblock please contact the nurse to make other arrangements.

May Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13 *Mental Health Awareness Fair & Early Release*	14	15 *DrumatiX Assembly*
18	19	20	21	22
25 *Memorial Day No School*	26	27	28	29



Valley Collaborative Elementary School Newsletter

June 2026





Last Month in Review

In May, counselors organized a Mental Health Awareness Wellness Fair featuring interactive stations that promoted emotional regulation, resilience, and self-care. Students visited stations and collected stickers for their "passport" while learning new wellness skills. We also held an assembly from *DrumatiX:* an exciting percussion & movement assembly in the tradition of Stomp! On May 6th, many students participated in a field trip to enjoy a Woo Sox baseball game.

June Events

June 16th: Talent Show

We will hold our annual talent show. Students will celebrate the end of the year with a performance for students and staff.

June 17th: Graduation

A ceremony will be held on June 17th for graduating students.

June 18th: Field Day

Students will enjoy a day of outdoor fun, games, and activities during our annual Field Day. Students, please dress for a day of fun in the sun and pack a change of clothes.

Graduation 2026

The Elementary School Graduation Ceremony will be held on June 17th at 10am.

An email and ClassDojo message with information was sent to the families of graduating students.

For more Information and to RSVP, please reach out to your student's teacher or Principal Heather Mackay (978) 528-7843



June Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12 *Early Release for Students*
15	16 *Talent Show*	17 *Elementary School Graduation*	18 *Field Day*	19 *Juneteenth No School*
22	23	24	25 *Last Day of School Early Release*	26

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Dr., N. Billerica MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: April 30, 2026
Re: Monthly Update - Nick LeClair, Principal Valley Alternative Programs

---

It has been a strong and productive year across alternative programming at the middle and high school.

The vocational opportunities have shown consistent success across all shops. Multimedia students created engaging weekly news broadcasts with new student-focused segments. Culinary students continue to prepare high quality meals. Landscaping is preparing for the spring season with a focus on property maintenance. Students have also participated in internships and dual enrollment opportunities, including placements in trades and service industries, with one student attending the Peterson School for electrical training.

Field trips have enhanced both classroom learning and community exposure, including visits to Halibut Point State Park, Lynn Woods, local beaches, the USS Constitution, Bunker Hill Monument, and the New England Aquarium. Team-building experiences at Archery Games Boston, Boda Borg, and Level 99 have also supported peer connections.

In the PSI program, students have participated in a variety of enrichment activities, including trips to Aloha Mini Golf, the Museum of Illusions, hiking, and a trampoline park. STEM projects have included pickling vegetables, building catapults, and density experiments. Sophomores have begun exploring other program sites in preparation for next year, and several students have passed their driving learner's permit tests!

The Delta program has demonstrated strong academic performance and engagement. A recent experiential week focused on life skills, employability, and fitness, with activities such as running a thrift store, automotive maintenance, and a campground service project. Students have also been active in the Outdoor Education Club, setting team records for elevation climbed and mountains summited. Several students participated in basketball, with two earning the coveted Coaches Award.

The Alternative Middle School has also enjoyed a very successful year, with field trips including a Red Sox game and the Basketball Hall of Fame. Staff have supported transitions for incoming and outgoing students, and planning is underway for this year's eighth-grade graduation celebration.

Overall, students accessing alternative programming at Valley Collaborative continue to grow academically, vocationally, and socially while building positive relationships with staff and peers.

Required Action:

None

Attachments:

None

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: April 30, 2026
Re: Middle School Monthly Update - Nicole Noska, Principal of Valley Middle School and Valley Transitional High School, Transitional Programming

---

Middle School Update:

In Valley's transitional focused classrooms, our student scientists have been conducting individual and group research on fungus and bacteria and how it grows on bread after it touches different surfaces. Students were given two slices of fresh white sandwich bread. One slice was used as a control and the other slice was used as the test. Using the test slice, students carefully swabbed their iPads and placed the bread in a Ziplock bag. The control slice was placed in a separate bag next to the test slice so that students could observe the differences. For the group experiment, students passed a slice of bread between the class and placed it in a Ziplock bag. Then, the class all washed their hands, and repeated the process. Finally, each student used hand sanitizer and repeated the process one more time. They charted the changes and noted the environmental conditions each day. Students discussed their findings at the midway point and learned that preservatives and food additives were slowing the growth of mold. They also learned that mold spores grow deep into the porous bread leaving invisible mold within, which is why it is not safe to remove the mold and eat the rest of the bread. They hope to wrap up this experiment soon and will then present their findings to the class.

Students have enjoyed field trips to Fun City, adaptive ice skating, Gym Street, and Altitude and have had the opportunity to participate in health and fitness outdoors on warmer days. Swimming at the Beede Center continues to be a favorite activity among students, as well as biweekly community lunch. Opportunities to practice life skills that are embedded in community outings fosters the best success for our students.

This time of year is a busy one for our 8th graders looking to transition on to the Valley Transitional High School. There are many parent and student tours, as well as classroom shadow visits scheduled for all of the high school classrooms to ensure that at the start of summer school in July is a smooth one for all of our up and coming 9th graders.

High School Update:

Students in the Life Skills program have been participating in a weekly snack group to continue to build their functional life skills. During the snack group, students follow a visual recipe to prepare a small snack such as yogurt parfait, banana roll up, or a cheese and cracker plate. The recipe shows pictures of the ingredients, cooking tools, and prompts for each step. The goal of the snack group is to build transferable skills so that students can increase their independence in the home environment. The students also get a copy of the visual recipe so that they can continue practicing at home. In addition to the snack group, students also participate in a weekly cooking class where they prepare a full meal. Students are also learning how to utilize personal calendars to manage their school and work schedules, use a phone as well as email to communicate with their families.

In the School to Work classes, students are working on employability skills including preparing for job interviews, completing job applications, and identifying their strengths and interests. In addition to transition skills, students are also continuing to build their academic skills in preparation for the MCAS.

Students have thoroughly enjoyed various elective opportunities such as book club, knitting club, craft club, as well as multi-media club. The recreation program continues to offer a variety of fun social opportunities for students after school. Students are currently working on the school production of "Alice in Wonderland." They have been enthusiastically building props and making costumes for this special movie production which will premiere later this Spring.

Required Action:

None

Attachments:

None

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: June 11, 2026
Re: Program Update – Nicole Noska, Principal of Valley Middle School & Valley Transitional High School – Transitional Programming

---

Year in Review: Middle School and Transitional High School Transitional Programs

The end of the year is quickly approaching and what better way to recap all of the amazing things going on at Valley than to hear directly from the students and staff.

The question was posed, "Which new initiatives and additions to programming went really well this year for you or your students?"

"This year we offered a variety of clubs for students to explore their interests and develop their leisure skills. Students have enjoyed opportunities to try something new such as craft, multi-media, and knitting clubs and have had meaningful discussions in the book club. The health groups have also been great ways for students to make connections with peers along with the opportunity to talk about some of the common issues they face as teens and young adults. My students have been very engaged in and motivated to participate in the clubs."
-Meaghan Norris, Transitional High School Teacher

"Swimming moved to The Beede Center in Concord, MA this year and that has been a hugely successful transition. They have been so accommodating and offer a consistent schedule for us. We have had five different rotations of classes go through for swimming and all of the students have enjoyed the opportunity to do something they don't often get to do, especially through the long winter months. It has been a fun way to get students to participate in aerobic exercise and strength training."
-Kathyn Nutile, Physical Therapist

"The field trips have been very successful this year. Students have shown a lot of growth in the way that they use and access the community to make purchases. Watching a student who was a bit shy be able to talk to community helpers independently now and seeing students master the skill of budgeting for their lunch has been pretty awesome."
-Taylor Pitari, Special Education Assistant

"Village Food Hub is a new job site this year. I like working there because it feels good to package food for people. It feels good to have a purpose and food is important, people need food."
-Aiden Russell, Student

"The reading and math curriculum in the Middle School has been a game changer for my students. In iReady students can see where they're at and the progress they are making. The immediate feedback is a huge motivator for them to see their scores go up."
-Hannah Barry, Special Education Assistant

"This year we changed up the job structure of the Bistro to expand the job opportunities for students and promote independence with job skills. With an OT on site we have been able to analyze and adapt job tasks for workers at all levels. We've also been collaborating with multi-media to create visual lunch menus as well as visuals for the students to help with their executive function on the job. This year a few of our students obtained internships at the Ninety-Nine Restaurant, where they transferred the skills they learned from working in the Bistro into real world skills and community-based employment."
-Joanna Bond, Occupational Therapist

"In the School-to-Work class we have been practicing taking the bus and train and the students have done very well with navigating the different environments, meeting the social/behavioral expectations of the community, and transitioning from one place to another on time. Travel training is such an important skill for these young adults to learn."
-Kristen Davidson, Speech Language Pathologist

"This year in the School and Vocational Training classroom we started using NextUp Transition Curriculum with great success. The lessons have tremendously benefited our students by providing foundational skills such as employability, job searching, safety, self-advocacy, financial literacy, and independent living. The content is highly relevant, with topics such as 'Buying Your First Car' and 'Preparing to Leave High School', and students are motivated to participate in the lessons because it meets them where they are currently in life."
-Lori Escolas, Transitional High School Teacher

"The knitting club has been amazing! I've made a scarf, a baby blanket, and a large blanket. I work on it at home too. It took me a whole month to make the blanket."
-Gabriella Bunni, Student

Required Action:
None

Attachments:
None

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: April 30, 2026
Re: Monthly Update - Matthew Gentile, Director of DDS and MassAbility Services

---

As the Today and Tomorrow program continues to expand and grow, it is important to recognize the three main services we provide the individuals served: Community Based Day Supports, Group Supported Employment, and Independent Employment Supports. These services are meant to transition into one another, with growth in one service leading to enhancement in the next service. Individuals use Community Based Day Supports (CBDS) to engage with their surrounding communities through recreational activities and social learning opportunities. The soft skills they develop in CBDS are then put to work, literally, in a group setting where individuals complete employment tasks with four of their peers and a Direct Support Professional in a 5:1 ratio, while also being compensated. For some individuals, this is the extent of their service plan. They have a mix of CBDS and Group Supported Employment and they focus on goals geared toward continuous personal growth and achievement. But for many individuals, the Group Supported Employment acts as a catalyst toward the individual one day working independently, with on-going support from a Valley Job Developer.

Individuals served by Valley through the Independent Employment Supports model are provided with 1:1 job development and coaching as they highlight interests, search for opportunities that align with these interests, apply for jobs, navigate the onboarding process, and then receive continuous support on the job to ensure both the individual's and employer's needs are being met. While independent employment may not be the goal for all of the individuals, Valley currently serves 50 individuals who do receive this specific service through the DDS contract. Of the 50 individuals currently in the contract, 40 of them actively hold an independent employment position. Organizations our individuals work at independently include; Jones Lang LaSalle, Market Basket, Five Guys, Consolidated Sterilizer Systems, Sodexo Catering, TJ MAXX, Tyngsboro High School, Build a Bear, Wegmans, Tyngsboro Sports Center, Stop & Shop, Knowledge Beginnings, Chelmsford High School, Walmart, O'Conner's Hardware, 3M, Billerica Access Television, Carleton-Willard Village, Bedford Public Schools, and Four Oaks Country Club.

All of the organizations listed continue to be essential community partners and play a vital role in the lives of the individuals we serve. These employment opportunities continue to display how capable the individuals served by Valley Collaborative truly are. With just a touch of support on the job site, our individuals are able to contribute to different organizations overall output while leaving a lasting and positive impact on each and every specific organizational culture. We value our relationships with these community partners and also work hard to develop new relationships in the community as well.

The adults served by Valley Collaborative continue to show how successful they can be if provided the opportunity. With reinforcement from the job development team, our individuals are able to work independently as continue to grow and hone their skills in order to unlock new employment opportunities in the future.

Required Action:
None

Attachments:
None

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

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MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director
Date: June 11, 2026
Re: Monthly Update - Matthew Gentile, Director of DDS and MassAbility Services

---

The last several months proved to be a busy time for Valley Collaborative's Adult Program. As we transitioned into the spring, seasonal volunteer sites and learning opportunities once again presented themselves to enhance the already strong daily programming options. In addition to the increased daily opportunities afforded to the individuals we serve, Valley also made important decisions in relation to our MassAbility programming. This March, MassAbility released a new RFR (request for response). Based on MassAbility's new service delivery models and payment structures, it has become more advantageous for Valley programmatically and financially to focus solely on providing individuals with employment and CBDS services through our DDS contracts. While Valley will no longer provide supports through MassAbility contracts, it will continue to focus its efforts on enrolling the large student population transitioning into adult services (ages 18-22). The individuals we support through our DDS contracts will continue to be presented with opportunities to grow as individuals, and as productive members of society. One such opportunity is the annual trip offered by Valley.

For the last 13 years Valley has led a trip for students and adults with the goal of providing them with an opportunity to see different parts of the country, and world! This year the group traveled to San Antonio, Texas for a week in the sun. With the lore of the trip growing year over year, this version saw Valley support the largest number of individuals ever with 30 adults making the journey, along with an additional three students. Joe Venskus and Lia Metrakas have been spearheading the annual trip for over a decade, providing students and individuals with the opportunity to experience the rich history different places can offer, all while lending daily support to ensure everyone has the best time possible.

Leading a trip with a combination of 30 individuals and 3 students is no small task. Joe and Lia rely on the support from a number of other staff who volunteer to go on the trip to ensure our individuals are provided safety and support. All this while being given the chance to experience different cultures and historical landmarks. When asked where he finds passion to run this annual trip, Joe Venskus responded;

"I think for me it has been about giving an experience to the individuals and students to empower or show them what they are capable of. Often times the individuals and students we support daily are looked upon differently just because they have a disability. They have dreams, goals and wants just like the rest of us. We take the lessons we teach them every day in our program from life skills, budgeting skills, having conversations, and travel training and apply them all during the trip. We have often received many complements on how our individuals behave, how nice and considerate they are etc. It is truly awesome and inspiring to watch how over the course of a week these students and individuals become a family and have experienced life to its fullest. To support that and be a part of a team of professionals that want to empower our students and individuals find their way is a blessing."

The trip to San Antonio included specific day outings to the Alamo, San Antonio Zoo, San Antonio Missions minor league baseball game, a River Cruise, Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch and Cavern tour, the Ripley's Believe it or Not museum, as well regular opportunities to enjoy the famous local San Antonio food scene (we've been told the brisket is to die for!)

The feedback from the staff and individuals is still coming in as the excitement hasn't yet worn off. Some individuals on the trip shared their feelings specifically.

"I like getting to explore new places and meet new people. It feels nice to get to connect with staff and my peers more deeply outside of the worksites we usually go to." – Ken Bonnell (7th Valley trip attended)

"The trip was awesome. It makes me want to go on more trips and explore how the food is in other places and to explore the whole wide world!" – Matt Booth (1st Valley trip attended)

"I really liked the new scenery around me. We had such a good time there and going to all the different places. I think my favorite part of the trip was going to the zoo and the cave walk." – Jess Sherman (1st Valley trip attended)

"I love going on all the trips because they are fun and it's great to go on vacation. It was my first time learning all about the Alamo and San Antonio and I would love to go back!" – Melaina Chaput (7th Valley trip attended)

Required Action:
None

Attachments:
None

Valley COLLABORATIVE

Central Administration

11 Executive Park Dr., N. Billerica MA 01862 | Tel: (978) 528-7826 | www.valleycollaborative.org

MEMORANDUM

To: Valley Collaborative Board of Directors
From: Dr. Chris Scott, Executive Director
Renato Silva, School Safety and Facilities Manager
Date: June 11, 2026
Re: Valley Collaborative School Safety Update

Valley Collaborative continues to make significant investments in school safety and emergency preparedness. Under the leadership of Mazyar Moshtaghi, Chief Technology officer, and in partnership with the Billerica Police Department, the Collaborative has enhanced its emergency response capabilities through the deployment of wearable panic buttons to administrative staff at both the middle and high schools at 40 Linnell Circle. Additionally, six emergency access boxes containing panic buttons have been installed in strategic locations throughout the schools to ensure rapid accessibility during emergencies. The system has undergone successful real-world testing, demonstrating an average response time of approximately 30 seconds from activation of a panic button to the dispatch of a uniformed police officer. This investment represents a significant advancement in the Collaborative's ongoing efforts to strengthen campus security and emergency preparedness.

Complementing these enhanced emergency response measures, Valley Collaborative conducted a comprehensive hostile intruder/ALICE training program in partnership with the Tyngsborough Police Department in late March. The training was led by Officers Matthew Koziol and Christopher Gustafson and focused on the ALICE protocol (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate), emphasizing practical, real-time response strategies in the event of a hostile intruder situation.

The following day, a live drill was conducted with the participation of all staff and students. The exercise was highly successful, with staff effectively implementing their training and students responding calmly and appropriately throughout the event. Following the drill, Officers Koziol and Gustafson engaged staff in a thoughtful question-and-answer session that explored various response options and best practices for maintaining student safety during emergency situations.

Further reinforcing Valley Collaborative's proactive approach to school safety, Renato Silva, School Safety & Facilities Manager and Elias Gioumbakis, Dean of Students attended the 2026 Northeast School Safety Summit. The two-day conference provided valuable professional development opportunities, including first-hand analyses of real-world school safety incidents, emerging threats, prevention strategies, and best practices for fostering and sustaining a safe educational environment. Insights gained from the summit will help inform future safety planning and preparedness initiatives across the Collaborative.

Required Action:
None

Attachments:
None

Special Programing

Music Therapy, Physical Education, & Outdoor Education are integral parts of our program. In **Music Therapy**, music is used as a powerful tool to support non-musical goals, helping students develop communication, social skills, and confidence while strengthening connections across learning areas. In **Physical Education**, students build healthy habits and confidence as active learners through a variety of sports and wellness activities, with an ongoing focus on overall health and well-being. Students also enjoy daily outdoor opportunities, including recess on our adaptive playground with access to bikes, basketball hoops, four-square courts, and a soccer field. Our **Outdoor Education** program further extends learning beyond the classroom, offering hands-on experiences such as hiking, fishing, swimming, biking, horseback riding, and camping. Through these activities, students develop teamwork, resilience, and a lasting appreciation for the outdoors.

Special Spaces

Our thoughtfully designed spaces support student growth, engagement, and well-being. Sensory and movement rooms are equipped with swings, slides, climbing walls, and other interactive features that promote regulation, coordination, and active exploration. Our calming "Chill-Ville" offers a quiet, supportive environment where students can decompress with dim lighting, soothing music, comfortable seating, and sensory tools. "The Beat Cave" invites students to explore rhythm and expression through hands-on musical experiences. Outdoors, our adaptive playground, fields, greenhouse, and blacktop provide ample space for active play, sports, and biking, encouraging movement, social connection, and fun.

Valley COLLABORATIVE



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Valley COLLABORATIVE

Elementary School



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Curriculum Overview

At Valley Collaborative Elementary School, our academic programming is designed to deliver meaningful, engaging, and individualized learning experiences. Our ELA curriculum is grounded in EL Education, which builds knowledge and literacy through rich, authentic texts and real-world topics. Through engaging learning modules, students deepen their vocabulary, comprehension, and social-emotional skills while developing strong habits of character.

To support foundational reading skills, we implement a daily word work block using Fundations, developed by Wilson Language Training and aligned with the science of reading. This approach strengthens phonemic awareness, phonics, word recognition, and spelling. Students further enhance their literacy skills through adaptive programs such as i-Ready Reading and ASD Reading, which provide individualized support based on each student's needs. Additional supplemental programs, including Reading Mastery Transformations, Expressive Writing, Building Writers, and PCI, enrich classroom instruction.





Curriculum Overview (cont.)

In mathematics, i-Ready Classroom Mathematics provides direct instruction in core concepts, while i-Ready Personalized Path uses diagnostic data to tailor individualized learning experiences. Students also build math fact fluency through Reflex, an adaptive program supporting addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

For science instruction, Science4Us engages younger learners with interactive, hands-on lessons, while Gizmos extends inquiry-based learning opportunities for older students. The Autism Curriculum Encyclopedia (ACE) provides individualized, structured instruction using discrete trial training to support each student's unique learning profile.

Therapeutic Services

At Valley Collaborative Elementary School, our integrated therapy model is centered on collaboration, consistency, and student success. Therapists work closely with classroom teams to develop shared goals that support each student's functional independence and overall growth. These goals are embedded throughout the school day, ensuring that learning and skill development happen across daily routines and activities.

Rather than relying solely on traditional "pull-out" sessions, therapists provide services within the classroom and during naturally occurring experiences. This approach allows students to practice and apply skills in real-world settings, increasing opportunities for peer modeling, meaningful engagement, and consistent reinforcement. Multiple therapists often collaborate within the same setting, combining their expertise to deliver comprehensive, coordinated support.

Our model also includes consultation, program monitoring, and ongoing staff training. Therapists partner with educators to extend therapeutic strategies across the school day, ensuring a cohesive and supportive learning environment. They play an active role in developing IEP goals and benchmarks, collaborating with multidisciplinary teams, and providing guidance to staff and families to promote the generalization and sustainability of student progress.

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Valley
COLLABORATIVE

Our Programming Includes:

Music and Art Therapy

Music and art are used as the means to approach and achieve goals outside of the arts, which include, but are not limited to: improved social and group skills, improved communication skills, and the practice and generalization of goals from other disciplines.

Health & Wellness

Our students work on becoming active learners and healthy individuals through a variety of sports and wellness activities. It is also one of our goals to influence our students' health and well-being beyond the physical education and classroom setting.

Outdoor Education

This program inspires all students to explore, connect, and grow through hands-on experiences in nature. We foster confidence, teamwork, and stewardship, through hiking, fishing, swimming, biking, canoeing and skiing. Activities are adapted to meet all learner's needs and ability levels. These adventures promote physical health, resilience, curiosity and a lifelong appreciation for the outdoors.

Multimedia Classes

Students practice skills such as taking photos, creating short videos, recording sound, designing graphics, and telling stories through pictures and media. This class helps students develop real-life skills in technology, teamwork, problem-solving, and self-expression, while preparing them for future learning, community participation, or entry-level career pathways in digital media.



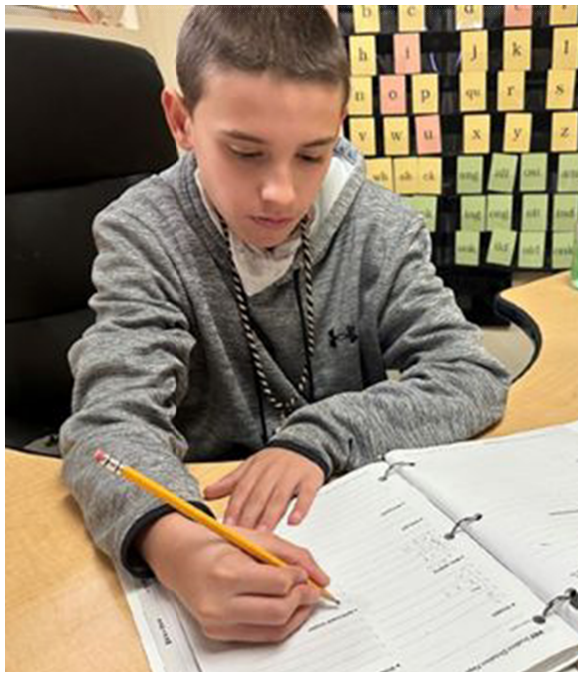
Valley COLLABORATIVE



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Valley COLLABORATIVE

Middle School
Transitional Programming



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Student Hours: 8:00am - 2:00pm

Curriculum Overview

At Valley Collaborative Transitional Middle School, our curriculum is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core Standards, with a strong emphasis on engagement, accessibility, and individualized learning. Students benefit from small class sizes, integrated technology, and differentiated, multimodal instruction tailored to their unique needs.

Our instructional approach incorporates applied behavior analysis, direct instruction, embedded therapeutic strategies, and hands-on learning experiences. Within self-contained classrooms, students receive targeted instruction in literacy, mathematics, writing, and content areas such as science and history, with a focus on applying skills in meaningful, functional ways.

To support a wide range of abilities, we utilize evidence-based programs and tools, including i-Ready, Lexia, the Circles Curriculum, and the Autism Curriculum Encyclopedia (ACE), providing individualized, structured instruction for each student.

Each self-contained classroom fosters a supportive and predictable environment through consistent routines, positive reinforcement, visual supports, and data-driven decision-making. Individualized behavior supports are implemented as needed to promote success. At Valley, we prioritize meaningful reinforcement and a therapeutic learning environment, ensuring that all students have access to the curriculum and are supported in making steady, meaningful progress.





Transitional Programming

At Valley Collaborative Middle School, Transitional Programming fosters a strong sense of belonging where students feel accepted, supported, and included within the school community. Skilled staff provide student-centered experiences that help students build on their strengths, interests, and abilities.

Our program emphasizes functional academics alongside essential life skills, including daily living, vocational readiness, social skills, and executive functioning. A key focus is helping students apply and generalize skills across real-world environments.

Integrated Therapy Model

The core of the approach, where the therapist works within the classroom environment and during natural routines throughout the school day to promote functional independence and skill generalization, avoiding a separate pull-out only model. Key aspects and the therapists' roles include:

Multidisciplinary Team:

The program includes a wealth of professionals, such as Board-Certified Behavior Analysts, Speech/Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, and Social Workers/School Adjustment Counselors.

Key Responsibilities:

Therapists are active members of the multidisciplinary team, determine service delivery recommendations, develop IEP goals, monitor programs, and provide parent consultation.

Staff Training and Consultation:

Therapists provide training to teachers and support staff, extending interventions into activities across all settings.

Benefits:

The integrated model increases opportunities for peer modeling, frequent practice of objectives, and helps students apply skills in realistic situations. Therapists may opt to co-treat when appropriate, where multiple therapists work together on shared IEP goals.

Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports

At Valley Collaborative Transitional Middle School, we use Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to create a positive, structured, and supportive learning environment. This approach teaches and reinforces expected behaviors while building students' social-emotional skills and self-regulation. Embedded throughout our school culture, PBIS uses data and consistent expectations to support student success. Through this approach, students experience a strong sense of predictability, belonging, and community.

Outdoor Education

The Outdoor Education Program's philosophy aims to expose students to diverse environments and unique experiences. Situated in New England, we have access to a rich range of landscapes, from the Mountains of Southern New Hampshire to the coast of the Atlantic ocean. The Outdoor Education Program emphasizes positive risk-taking, fostering trust, and building constructive relationships. Our experienced staff lead students in a variety of activities, including hikes, canoeing, kayaking, mountain biking, skiing, snowshoeing, and surfing.



Valley COLLABORATIVE



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Valley COLLABORATIVE

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Student Hours: 8:00am - 2:00pm

Alternative Programming

The Valley Collaborative Alternative Middle School site is a small therapeutic school that assists students with their social, emotional, behavioral, and/or academic needs. Typically, students enrolled in our Alternative Middle School have been challenged in a traditional public school setting. The program utilizes concepts that hold students responsible for their actions through natural consequences and restorative justice. The program operates by building a trusting, structured, and safe therapeutic environment that allows students to give and receive productive peer group feedback. The site also incorporates Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports to create an environment where students focus on positive reinforcement to help foster appropriate behavior. Staff and peers encourage students to make positive choices; by teaching social skills, coping strategies and modeling throughout the school day to aid with both academic and emotional issues.





Alternative Programming (cont.)

Our program has a wealth of therapists to assist our students and train our staff in the most current research-based intervention strategies. Our integrated therapy approach provides Board Certified Behavior Analysts, Speech/Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, and Social Workers that work with the classroom staff to ensure the student's range of needs are met.

Therapeutic Services

At Valley Collaborative, our integrated therapy model is centered on collaboration, consistency, and student success. Therapists work closely with classroom teams to develop shared goals that support each student's functional independence and overall growth. These goals are embedded throughout the school day, ensuring that learning and skill development happen across daily routines and activities.

Rather than relying solely on traditional "pull-out" sessions, therapists provide services within the classroom and during naturally occurring experiences. This approach allows students to practice and apply skills in real-world settings, increasing opportunities for peer modeling, meaningful engagement, and consistent reinforcement. Multiple therapists often collaborate within the same setting, combining their expertise to deliver comprehensive, coordinated support.

Our model also includes consultation, program monitoring, and ongoing staff training. Therapists partner with educators to extend therapeutic strategies across the school day, ensuring a cohesive and supportive learning environment. They play an active role in developing IEP goals and benchmarks, collaborating with multidisciplinary teams, and providing guidance to staff and families to promote the generalization and sustainability of student progress.

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Valley
COLLABORATIVE

Our Programming Includes:

Music and Art Therapy

Music and art are used as the means to approach and achieve goals outside of the arts, which include, but are not limited to: improved social and group skills, improved communication skills, and the practice and generalization of goals from other disciplines.

Health & Wellness

Our students work on becoming active learners and healthy individuals through a variety of sports and wellness activities. It is also one of our goals to influence our students' health and well-being beyond the physical education and classroom setting.

Outdoor Education

This program inspires all students to explore, connect, and grow through hands-on experiences in nature. We foster confidence, teamwork, and stewardship, through hiking, fishing, swimming, biking, canoeing and skiing. Activities are adapted to meet all learner's needs and ability levels. These adventures promote physical health, resilience, curiosity and a lifelong appreciation for the outdoors.

Multimedia Classes

Students practice skills such as taking photos, creating short videos, recording sound, designing graphics, and telling stories through pictures and media. This class helps students develop real-life skills in technology, teamwork, problem-solving, and self-expression, while preparing them for future learning, community participation, or entry-level career pathways in digital media.



Valley COLLABORATIVE



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Valley COLLABORATIVE

Transitional High School
Transitional Programming



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Office Hours 7:00am - 3:00pm
Student Hours: 8:00am - 2:00pm

Curriculum Overview

At Valley Collaborative Transitional High School, our curriculum is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core Standards, with a strong emphasis on engagement, accessibility, and individualized learning. Students benefit from small class sizes, integrated technology, and differentiated, multimodal instruction tailored to their unique needs.

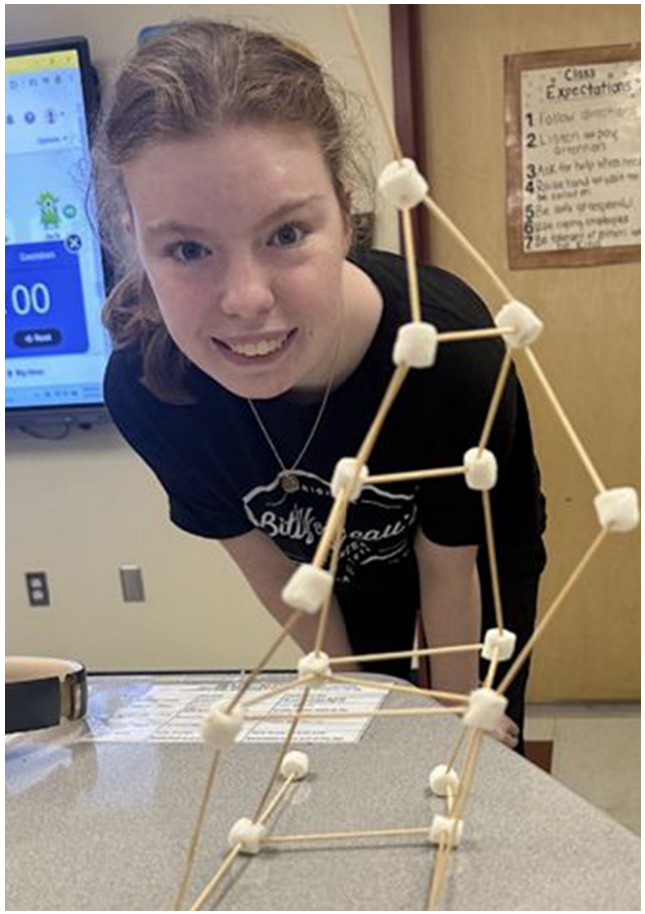
Our instructional approach incorporates applied behavior analysis, direct instruction, embedded therapeutic strategies, and hands-on learning experiences. Within self-contained classrooms, students receive targeted instruction in literacy, mathematics, writing, and content areas such as science and history, with a focus on applying skills in meaningful, functional ways.

To support a wide range of abilities, we utilize evidence-based programs and tools, including i-Ready, Lexia, the Circles Curriculum, and the Autism Curriculum Encyclopedia (ACE), providing individualized, structured instruction for each student.

Vocational & Career Readiness

Vocational programming at Valley Collaborative Transitional High School builds pre-vocational, workplace readiness, and social communication skills. Students develop self-advocacy, problem-solving, and collaboration through structured, hands-on learning.

Through school and community-based experiences, students explore interests and build independence, supported by trained job coaches who provide guidance and supervision. As students demonstrate readiness, they may transition to more independent internships using natural supports.



Transitional Programming

At Valley Collaborative Transitional High School, Transitional Programming fosters a strong sense of belonging where students feel accepted, supported, and included within the school community. Skilled staff provide student-centered experiences that help students build on their strengths, interests, and abilities.

Our program emphasizes functional academics alongside essential life skills, including daily living, vocational readiness, social skills, and executive functioning. A key focus is helping students apply and generalize skills across real-world environments.

Integrated Therapy Model

The core of the approach, where the therapist works within the classroom environment and during natural routines throughout the school day to promote functional independence and skill generalization, avoiding a separate pull-out only model. Key aspects and the therapists' roles include:

Multidisciplinary Team:

The program includes a wealth of professionals, such as Board-Certified Behavior Analysts, Speech/Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, and Social Workers/School Adjustment Counselors.

Key Responsibilities:

Therapists are active members of the multidisciplinary team, determine service delivery recommendations, develop IEP goals, monitor programs, and provide parent consultation.

Staff Training and Consultation:

Therapists provide training to teachers and support staff, extending interventions into activities across all settings.

Benefits:

The integrated model increases opportunities for peer modeling, frequent practice of objectives, and helps students apply skills in realistic situations. Therapists may opt to co-treat when appropriate, where multiple therapists work together on shared IEP goals.

Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports

At Valley Collaborative Transitional High School, we use Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to create a positive, structured, and supportive learning environment. This approach teaches and reinforces expected behaviors while building students' social-emotional skills and self-regulation. Embedded throughout our school culture, PBIS uses data and consistent expectations to support student success. Through this approach, students experience a strong sense of predictability, belonging, and community.

Quick Glance

- Supportive, educational environment for students who struggle with social emotional and behavioral regulation
- Smaller class sizes
- Instruction to meet different learning styles,
- Interactive projects
- Differentiated instruction
- Experienced staff help to engage and motivate students.
- Electives, social skills, reading support, community based activities and educational field trips.
- Outdoor Education, Community Service, Transitional Services, Dual Enrollment, Vocational Shops and Internships.



Alternative Programming

Valley Collaborative Transitional High School Alternative Programming provides comprehensive therapeutic support to address students' academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and vocational needs. Designed for students who may not thrive in traditional settings, our programming uses diverse teaching approaches and small class sizes to foster engagement, collaboration, and self-advocacy.

Our curriculum is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core Standards, ensuring students meet their sending district's academic requirements. With individualized support and a focus on meaningful progress, students who successfully complete these requirements have the opportunity to earn a diploma from their home district.

Valley COLLABORATIVE



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Valley COLLABORATIVE

Transitional High School
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Cohorts

Psi: Underclassmen Academy develops the skills that will be necessary as upperclassmen. Students have access to rotating academic classes, vocational experiences, volunteer opportunities, social skill groups, reading support, clubs, hikes, field trips and more. The ultimate goal is for students to develop a clear post-secondary vision, which will be supported by the upperclassmen cohorts, Delta and Voc.

Delta: Students challenge their academic potential in support of a post-secondary vision that may include a 2-4 year college program, or some learning opportunity after high school. Students have access to dual enrollment opportunities at TEC Connections Academy and Middlesex Community College to challenge their academic potential. Students also explore transitional opportunities, like college tours and other unique trips that help inform post-secondary options.

Voc: Students participate in academics and vocational opportunities, both in-house and out in the community, as they work on the skills necessary to transition into the workforce after high school. The Voc currently offers four in-house shops: landscaping, multimedia, culinary and furniture restoration. Students have the opportunity to earn a motivational stipend, hold an internship at a community job site, participate in Dual Enrollment at the Peterson School, and more.

Outdoor Ed.

The Outdoor Education Program (OE) philosophy aims to expose students to diverse environments and unique experiences. The OE Program emphasizes positive risk-taking, fostering trust, and building constructive relationships. Our experienced staff lead students in a variety of activities, including hikes, canoeing, kayaking, mountain biking, white-water rafting, skiing, snowshoeing, and overnight adventures



Community Service

On average, the program completes around 2,000 hours of community service per school year, gaining exposure to a diverse array of life circumstances that foster empathy and respect.

Dual Enrollment

Valley currently partners with:

- Middlesex Community College
- The Peterson School
- TEC Connections Academy
- Northern Essex Community College

Transitional Services

Transitional High School Alternative Programming helps students build skills for college or the workforce. Through collaboration, students explore post-graduation options, complete interest inventories, and attend job and college tours. They also receive support with job searches, learner's permits, and college applications.

Internship Opportunities

Students gain real-world experience through internships that connect schools, businesses, and the community. These opportunities build trade skills, life management abilities, and show how academics relate to future careers.

Vocational Shops

Students can acquire hands-on skills in:

- Culinary Arts
- Multimedia Communications
- Landscaping/Home Improvement
- Furniture Restoration



Overview

Valley Collaborative has been providing employment and community-based supports to adults with disabilities for more than 30 years. Valley Collaborative's mission is to empower individuals to navigate confidently, and with optimal independence in their community, by promoting lifelong learning and self-direction of services. Our longstanding and diverse employer and community-based partnerships allow individuals to pursue a variety of interests while building relationships and developing new skills. For those seeking employment, Valley Collaborative's job development team has more than 60 years of experience in helping individuals find and maintain jobs. Services are available in English, Spanish, and Khmer.



Valley COLLABORATIVE



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Valley COLLABORATIVE

DDS Services Adult Programming



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Program Hours: 8:00am - 2:00pm

Today & Tomorrow Program

Group Supported Employment

Valley Collaborative partners with local organizations to provide meaningful employment opportunities for individuals in fully integrated, small group settings. Participants are supported by trained Valley Collaborative Direct Support Professionals while developing real-world job skills and workplace independence.

Through our group-supported model, individuals engage in worksite-based tasks as worker trainees, earning a stipend equivalent to the Massachusetts minimum wage. These hands-on experiences allow participants to build confidence, strengthen job readiness, and explore their interests in authentic work environments.

Valley Collaborative partners with a variety of community organizations, offering diverse employment experiences in areas such as manufacturing, food services, packing and assembly, mail processing, and building maintenance. These opportunities help individuals develop valuable skills while contributing to their communities and preparing for greater independence.





Today & Tomorrow Program

Community-Based Day Services

Valley Collaborative's Community-Based Day Services (CBDS) are guided by the six quality-of-life areas identified by the Department of Developmental Services: respect and dignity, individual control, community membership, relationships, personal growth and accomplishment, and personal well-being.

Through CBDS programming, individuals are empowered with daily choices and meaningful opportunities to explore and connect with their surrounding communities. Participants engage in a variety of activities that promote independence, self-determination, and active community involvement.

Volunteer opportunities are a key component of our model, allowing individuals to build skills, develop confidence, and contribute in meaningful ways. Valley's CBDS programming also emphasizes helping individuals understand and access community resources, strengthening their independence and awareness.

Through these experiences, individuals enhance their interpersonal skills, deepen their community connections, and enrich their overall quality of life.

Today & Tomorrow Program

Individual Supported Employment Services

At Valley Collaborative, many individuals in our Adult Programming pursue competitive, independent employment within their communities. Our Individual Supported Employment services provide personalized, one-to-one support to help individuals identify career interests, explore opportunities, and secure meaningful employment with the guidance of a dedicated Job Developer.

This individualized approach is instrumental in helping participants achieve and sustain competitive employment while building confidence and independence. Individuals receive ongoing training and support focused on developing essential workplace skills and fostering long-term career growth.

Job Developers maintain regular communication with supervisors, co-workers, and employers to ensure each individual is supported while remaining fully integrated in their work environment. Through this collaborative approach, individuals are empowered to succeed in the workplace and achieve greater independence in their daily lives.



Valley COLLABORATIVE

By partnering with Valley Collaborative, your organization can play an important role in fostering inclusion, strengthening the local workforce, and making a lasting impact in the community. In addition to supporting individuals as they build valuable skills and confidence, your business benefits from dedicated, motivated participants who contribute in meaningful ways. Our team provides ongoing support, guidance, and coordination to ensure a positive and successful experience for both your organization and the individuals we serve. Together, we can create inclusive opportunities that enrich your workplace culture while helping individuals achieve greater independence and long-term success.

We partner with local businesses and organizations to create mutually beneficial experiences, where individuals can build confidence, explore their interests, and develop job readiness skills with the support of trained professionals. Opportunities may include both paid work experiences and volunteer placements across a variety of industries.



Valley COLLABORATIVE

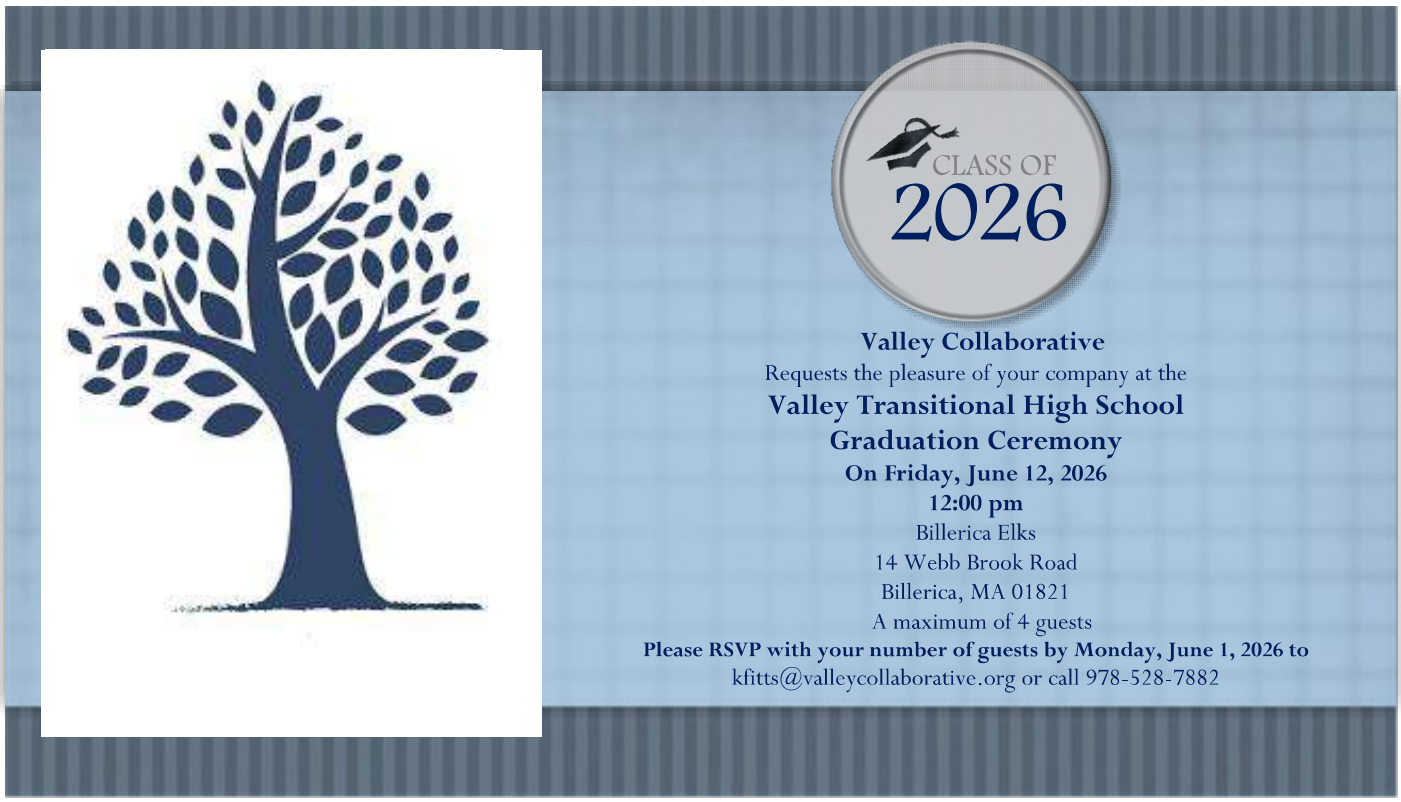
Adult Programming Community Partners

Valley Collaborative Adult Programming is seeking community partners to support meaningful employment and volunteer opportunities for the individuals we serve. Through our supported employment and Community-Based Day Services (CBDS), participants develop valuable workplace, social, and independent living skills while contributing in authentic, real-world settings.



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Community Engagement Specialist
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CLASS OF
2026
Valley Collaborative
Requests the pleasure of your company at the
Valley Transitional High School
Graduation Ceremony
On Friday, June 12, 2026
12:00 pm
Billerica Elks
14 Webb Brook Road
Billerica, MA 01821
A maximum of 4 guests
Please RSVP with your number of guests by Monday, June 1, 2026 to
kfitts@valleycollaborative.org or call 978-528-7882

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Volume 14, Issue 3 News for the extended Valley Collaborative community Spring 2026

New Beginnings at Valley Collaborative



DR. CHRIS A. SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; MATTHEW GENTILE, DIRECTOR OF DDS & MASSABILITY SERVICES; **MATT BOOTH OF CHELMSFORD, VALLEY'S DDS INDIVIDUAL OF THE MONTH**; AND DR. JAY LANG, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER, AND SUPERINTENDENT OF CHELMSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Dear Students, Staff, and Families:

As we move further into the school year, I am filled with pride and gratitude for the incredible work happening across Valley. It has truly been a successful and inspiring year, and I want to take a moment to recognize the many ways our students, staff, and families contribute to the vibrant community that makes Valley so special.

One of the highlights of this year has been the exciting experiential trips our students have had the opportunity to participate in. These experiences extend learning beyond the classroom walls and provide meaningful opportunities for students to grow socially and emotionally. Whether exploring new environments, participating in hands-on activities, or simply sharing time together outside of the typical school day, these trips help strengthen the connections that make our community thrive.

At Valley, one of the most important factors influencing the positive impact we have on the youth and DDS participants we serve is the relationships we build with one another.

»continued on page 7



Hitting Our Stride

■ Page 2: Valley Elementary students are head over heels for cross country skiing.



Making Big Gains

■ Page 3: Students in the Transitional Programming at Valley Middle/High School are making big gains in reading, thanks to a new focus on literacy.

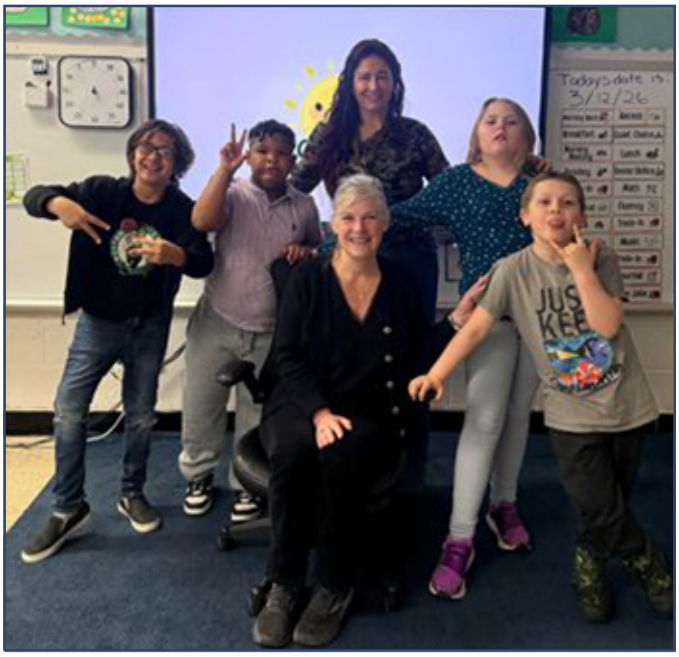


Working Independently

■ Page 6: Individuals in Valley's Adult Services programs work independently at dozens of area organizations.

Elementary School: An Action Packed Year

From out-door activities including cross-country skiing and horseback riding, to a revamped cooking program, and a celebration of reading, the school year at Valley Elementary has been action packed! Here's a look at some of the highlights of the school year so far.



READ ACROSS AMERICA COMES TO VALLEY ELEMENTARY LEFT TO RIGHT: KURTIS LEDOUX, OMARO CAPERS, JAZMYNA CATALANOTTI AND ETHAN BARRY. CENTER: DR. CHRIS A. SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; REAR: HEATHER MACKAY, PRINCIPAL.

Hitting the trails

Students were invited to experience cross country skiing and snow shoeing at Northfield Mountain this winter free of charge. "There were a lot of falls and perseverance," says teacher Matt McCarthy, who led the outdoor adventures. In fact, students enjoyed their new winter activity so much that they made two more trips to Great Brook Farm in Carlisle, which generously gave the Valley skiers a discount. Says Matt: "We are hoping for another snowy winter next year for more cross-country skiing!"

Cooking up skills and independence

When elementary students take part in a weekly cooking program led by our occupational therapists, they're learning to do more than follow a recipe. They're also building independence, practicing motor skills, and enjoying hands-on learning. Each classroom follows the same simple recipe each week, with the occupational therapists guiding students through the steps of preparing each recipe, encouraging communication, problem-solving, and teamwork. Students also participate in brief community shopping trips to purchase ingredients—an important opportunity to practice real-world skills such as planning, navigating stores, and interacting with community members.

A celebration of reading

Valley Elementary celebrated reading throughout the month of March, with a reading-themed spirit week, guest readers, including Dr. Scott and the Tyngsboro Fire Department, a guest author assembly and a door decorating contest. This year's Scholastic Book Fair was a huge success, says administrative assistant Karen Blackburn, who oversaw the fair. "We earned $808 dollars of scholastic money for our classrooms, doubling what we earned in the previous two years. Thanks to all who participated!"

In the saddle

Valley Collaborative Elementary School is now partnering with Ironstone Farm to offer a therapeutic horseback riding program for our students. "This unique experience gives students the opportunity to build strength, confidence, communication skills, and emotional well-being while working with trained therapeutic riding instructors and the wonderful horses at the farm," explains occupational therapist Madison Pesa. During visits to the farm, students work together to complete obstacle courses and relay activities on horseback, as well as spending time with the farm's friendly donkey, Spud. "The program has been a fantastic way for students to connect with animals, enjoy time outdoors, and grow both socially and emotionally in a supportive and fun environment," says Madison.



TOMMY O'MELIA DURING A VISIT TO IRONSTONE FARM.

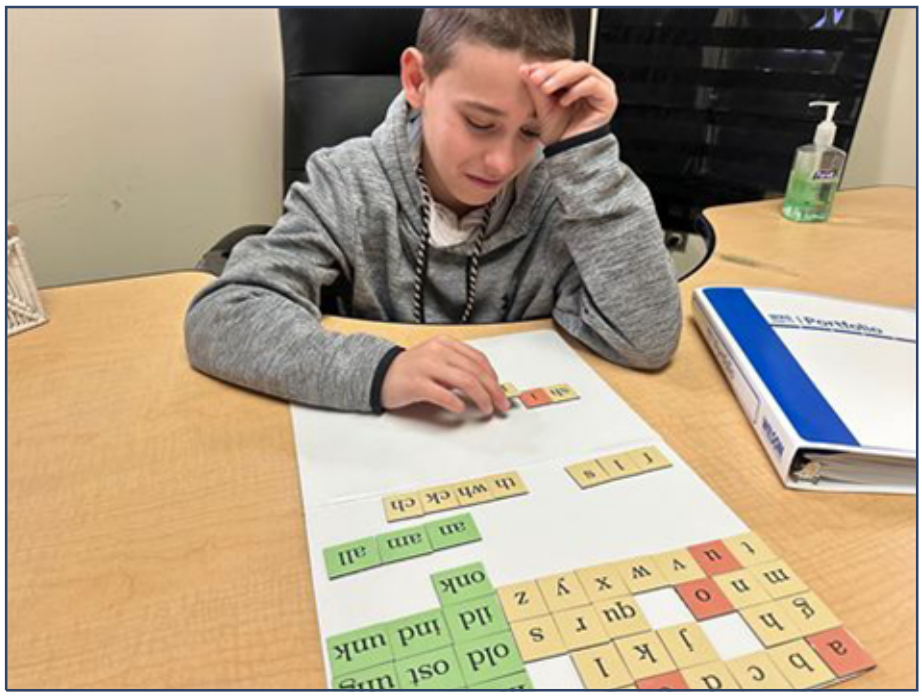
Transitional Programming at Valley Middle/ High School: Celebrating Student Progress

When Shana Cheevers received the results of students' mid-year reading tests, she could barely believe her eyes. The kind of progress teachers might hope to see by June was already showing up halfway through the year. "We have students who have jumped up two grade levels," says Shana, the reading specialist at the Transitional Middle/High School. "Teachers are really encouraged by this level of improvement."

The progress reflects an increased emphasis on literacy at Valley, starting with recognizing the varied needs of students. While some students needed help with the fundamentals, things like letter sounds and decoding words, others could read the words but struggled to make meaning from them. Shana says that a big part of her focus has been on giving teachers everything they need to assist students. "Teachers now have a whole toolbox to use, including a set curriculum, lessons and activities," says Shana, who spent 10 years as a middle school classroom teacher before transitioning to her current role.

Middle school teacher Kali Rowe says that the new tools are working exactly as intended. "The implementation of our new curriculum and programs have greatly helped to streamline my classroom and teaching to better meet student needs."

While teachers can see the results of their hard work in their students' data, it is the individual stories of student success that stand out the most. One Valley high schooler who started out the year insisting that he didn't like reading has since made two grade levels worth of progress in just a few months. "Now he's committed to working on his reading because he knows that he'll need those skills in the future and he can see for himself that he's getting better," says Shana.



LOUIS LORINO WORKS ON HIS LETTERS IN AN EFFORT TO BECOME A STRONGER READER. AN INCREASED EMPHASIS ON LITERACY HAS PRODUCED BIG GAINS FOR VALLEY STUDENTS.

Another post-grad student who began the year reading at a first-grade level has seen her skill level jump up to that of a third-grade reader. "That's a huge difference," says Karen Rowe, Team Chairperson. "Especially when you consider how much information for the general public is written at a 6th grade level." For older students, these literacy gains will translate into greater independence. "They can use these skills functionally when they're reading directions or filling out job applications," says Karen.

Perhaps most impressively, the hard work of Valley staffers is creating a culture of reading among middle and high school students– not an easy task. When asked what they think of all of the emphasis on reading, these students had only rave reviews. Louis Lorino was eager to show off what he's been working on. "This year I learned about suffixes and buddy letters!" Abram Brittsan once found reading dull, but no longer. "Reading can be boring if you don't have the right book, but if you do have the right book it can be interesting." For Javian Pettengil, books are transporting. "Reading gives me another form of imagination."

Shana says that she expects to see continued progress when students' reading skills are tested at the end of the year, further evidence that their teachers' efforts are paying off. "Our teachers can see that the hard work they put in with these kids is paying off," says Shana. "It's right there in the data."

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Alternative Programming at Valley Middle/ High School: Hitting the Slopes

By Jennifer C. Berkshire, newspaper editor, with help from student Cam Greene.

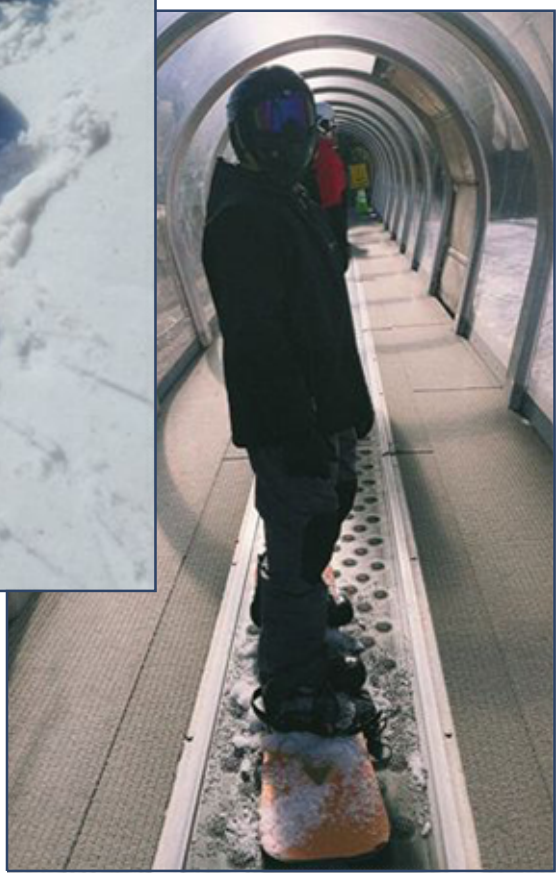
During a frigid stretch of March, Valley students piled into the vans. The destination: Mount Wachusett, the 2,000 foot ski resort in central Massachusetts. Over two different trips, 30 students in Valley's middle and high school alternative programming would hit the slopes.

Student Cam Greene was one of them. "I've been snowboarding since I was eight, so it was fun to be able to go with my friends and stuff and just have a good time out on the mountain," says Cam.

For students without Cam's experience, the day started with lessons at the base of the mountain–an introduction to equipment, technique and the skiing basics, including how to stop. Outdoor educator Pete Loring says that thanks to the warmth and flexibility of the Mt. Wachusett team, Valley's new skiers did great. "We've been going there for a few years now and the group services folks are just great to work with," says Pete. "That's definitely a big part of what makes these trips so special."

With skis and helmets on, and some essential new skills under the belts, it was time to head to the summit in one of the resort's high-speed chairlifts–something one student in particular couldn't wait to try out, says Pete. "He just couldn't wait to get on the lift, and even though this was his first time on the mountain he did great, and he made it down safely."





HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT MICHAEL "MJ" JEAN (LEFT) TAKES A BREAK FROM SNOWBOARDING; MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT ANTHONY "TONY" ESTRADA TAKES A SNOWBOARDING LESSON ON MT. WACHUSETTS' NEW SHORTY CARPET LIFT.

Speech pathologist Christine Brennick, who led the trip along with Pete, says that adventures like this one allow the students to try out an activity that they might never do on their own. Even students who might have found skiing intimidating or scary didn't want to miss out on something their friends were doing. "I think there's a group mentality that works in our favor. When everybody you know is going, you want to go too, and you want to try to be good at it even if you're scared."

For Cam, that meant helping his friends who'd never skied before get over their fear of falling. "I was falling, though not as bad as some of the other kids. It's not that big of a deal. You just get up and try it again."

Skiing activities aren't new at Valley. This was the fourth year that Pete and Christine have run a ski trip together. Valley staff also previously worked with a small group of students who were passionate about skiing, taking them to the Nashoba Valley Ski Area. What's different about the current trips, says Pete, is that they include students who are brand new to skiing. "This is an activity that lets students take risks, but in a way that's respectful of others and is about making good choices," says Pete.

»continued on next page

Hitting the Slopes

»continued from previous page

Some of the students' favorite memories of the trips involved the opportunity to interact with other skiers on the mountain. Cam says that he especially enjoyed getting to meet new people. "I met some really nice people on the hill, a bunch of nice people. We'd meet in the lift or coming down the hill. It was just a fun experience to be out there and be with everybody."

Cam says that other students on the trip had experiences that were just as positive. When he interviewed three fellow adventurers, they all said that they'd had a great time skiing, even if it was their very first time.

Cam: "What'd you think about the ski trip?"

Nathaniel Goodwin, "I think it was amazing. It was good bonding time with friends, and helping people out, and a good environment."

Isaiah Deans, "It was a good experience. This was my second time skiing and I like going to Mt. Wachusett. It's a nice place."

Gavin Correia, "It was fun. I liked that it was a new experience for me. I did a lesson by myself, then went down the bunny hill, but I didn't even really need to do that."

For Christine and Pete, the rave reviews from these students are confirmation that these ski trips are a worthwhile investment. They're also an opportunity for Christine and Pete, both seasoned skiers, to share their experience on the slopes with Valley students. "We feel really fortunate to have the skills to be able to do this," says Christine. "Having these opportunities in our lives has been really important, so being able to share that with our students is really meaningful to both of us."



TEACHER COLLEEN MCANESPIE AND STUDENT SKYLAR MOLOY-PILGRIM PREPARE TO SKI MOUNT WACHUSETT, THE SITE OF TWO RECENT VALLEY FIELD TRIPS.

"Skiing field trips provide students with the opportunity to engage in outdoor learning, build confidence, and try a sport they might not otherwise have access to. Several staff members fondly remember learning to ski as students themselves and understand firsthand how meaningful it is to overcome challenges and celebrate progress on the mountain."
Dr. Chris A. Scott, Executive Director, Valley Collaborative

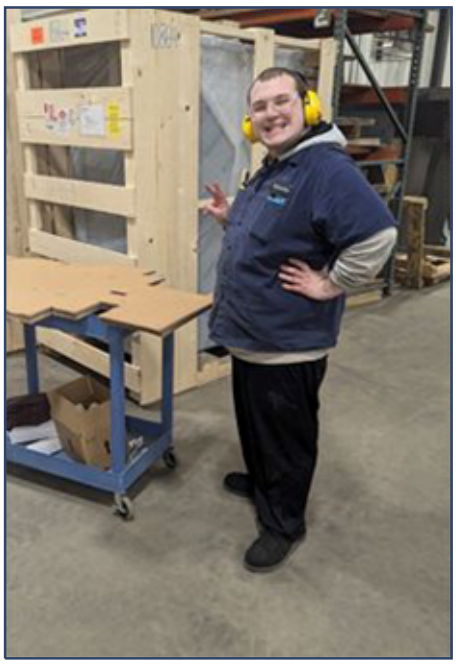
Dr. Chris A. Scott, Valley Collaborative executive director, says that she's thrilled that Valley is able to offer an opportunity to students that they might not otherwise have. "Skiing field trips provide students with the opportunity to engage in outdoor learning, build confidence, and try a sport they might not otherwise have access to. Several staff members fondly remember learning to ski as students themselves and understand firsthand how meaningful it is to overcome challenges and celebrate progress on the mountain," says Dr. Scott. "With Valley's support, we are able to offer this experience to our students—an opportunity that might otherwise be out of reach for many due to cost, access, or limited exposure."

While skiing season may be done for this year, these Valley adventurers are just getting started. On the agenda: a hiking trip to New Hampshire's Lonesome Lake, where students are hoping to complete their most ambitious hike to date, 4,000 feet up Cannon Mountain. Says Christine: "The momentum's not stopping."

Adult Services: Expanding Opportunity, One Community Connection at a Time

As the Today and Tomorrow program continues to expand and grow, it is important to recognize the three main services we provide the individuals served: Community Based Day Supports, Group Supported Employment, and Independent Employment Supports. These services are meant to transition into one another, with growth in one service leading to enhancement in the next service. Individuals use Community Based Day Supports (CBDS) to engage with their surrounding communities through recreational activities and social learning opportunities.

The soft skills individuals develop in CBDS are then put to work, literally, in a group setting where they complete employment tasks with four of their peers and a Direct Support Professional in a 5:1 ratio, while also being compensated.

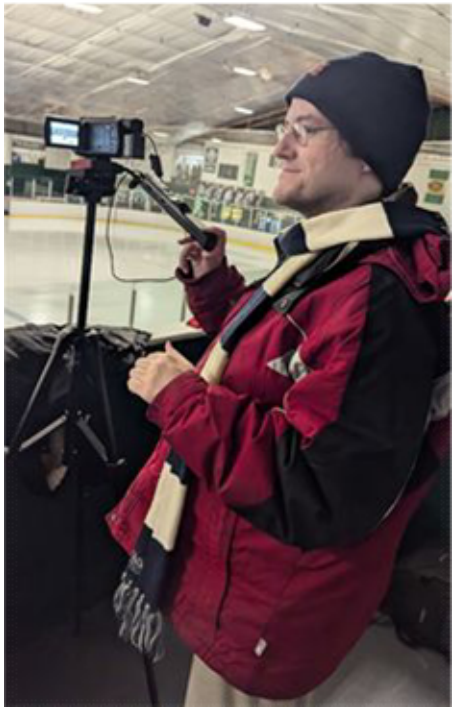


TONY BERRY AT CONSOLIDATED STERILIZER SYSTEMS.

For some individuals, this is the extent of their service plan. They have a mix of CBDS and Group Supported Employment and they focus on goals geared toward continuous personal growth and achievement. But for many individuals, the Group Supported Employment acts as a catalyst toward the individual one-day working independently, with on-going support from a Valley Job Developer.

Independent employment can be difficult for any person to manage on their own. The individuals served by Valley through the Independent Employment Supports model are provided with 1:1 job development and coaching as they highlight interests, search for opportunities that align with these interests, apply for jobs, navigate the onboarding process, and then receive continuous support on the job to ensure both the individual's and employer's needs are being met. While independent employment may not be the goal for all of the individuals, Valley currently serves 50 individuals who do receive this specific service through the DDS contract. Of the 50 individuals currently in the contract, 40 of them actively hold an independent employment position.

Organizations our individuals work at independently include; Jones Lang LaSalle, Market Basket, Five Guys, Consolidated Sterilizer Systems, Sodexo Catering, TJ MAXX, Tyngsboro High School, Build a Bear, Wegmans, Tyngsboro Sports Center, Stop & Shop, Knowledge Beginnings, Chelmsford High School, Walmart, O'Conner's Hardware, 3M, Billerica Access Television, Carleton-Willard Village, Bedford Public Schools, and Four Oaks Country Club.



LEO VAHEY FILMING A HIGH SCHOOL-HOCKEY GAME FOR BATV.

All of these organizations listed on the next page continue to be essential community partners and play a vital role in the lives of the individuals we serve. These employment opportunities continue to display how capable the individuals served by Valley Collaborative truly are. With just a touch of support on the job site, our individuals are able to contribute to different organizations overall output while leaving a lasting and positive impact on each and every specific organizational culture. The adults served by Valley Collaborative continue to show how successful they can be if provided the opportunity. With reinforcement from the job development team, our individuals are able to work independently as they continue to grow and hone their skills in order to unlock new employment opportunities in the future.

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

New Beginnings at Valley Collaborative

»continued from cover

The bonds that develop between our students, DDS individuals, and our dedicated staff are at the heart of everything we do. These relationships create trust, foster growth, and ensure that every individual feels supported and valued.

When you walk through our schools or visit our DDS headquarters, it becomes immediately clear that Valley is a place where people genuinely care about one another. You can feel it in the conversations in the hallways, the encouragement offered in classrooms and programs, and the way our community celebrates each person's successes. Our students, DDS individuals, and staff share a profound sense of belonging, and that sense of connection is what makes Valley such a powerful place for learning and growth.

As we welcome the arrival of spring, we are reminded of the beauty of new beginnings and growth. Just as we see the world around us coming back to life, we also see tremendous growth in our students—academically, socially, and emotionally. It is a privilege to witness the progress they make each day and the confidence they build along the way.

Thank you to our remarkable staff for your dedication and compassion, to our families for your continued partnership, and to our students and DDS participants for bringing energy, curiosity, and joy to our community. I look forward to all that the remainder of the school year will bring. Please reach out if I can ever be of assistance. We are here to serve. My door is always open.

My best to you always,

Chris A. Scott
Executive Director
Valley Collaborative





TOP: JILLIAN WENDLER, SLP; ERIN FRAZIER, BCBA; DR. JAY LANG VALLEY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER, SUPERINTENDENT OF CHELMSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS; BRYAN THOMAS, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL; HEATHER MACKAY, PRINCIPAL; **OLIVIA BUONAMANO, VALLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT OF THE MONTH**.

BOTTOM: DR. CHRIS A. SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; DR. KERRY CLERY, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE, SUPERINTENDENT, BILLERICA PUBLIC SCHOOLS; NICOLE NOSKA, PRINCIPAL, MIDDLE SCHOOL, TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMS, TRANSITIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMS; AND **LOUIS LORINO, GRADE 7 BILLERICA, VALLEY TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMMING MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT OF THE MONTH**.

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Superintendent
Westford Public Schools

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Volume 14, Issue 4 News for the extended Valley Collaborative community Summer 2026

Let the Good Times Roll



DR. ANTHONY J. BENT, EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONSULTANT; DR. CHRIS A. SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; LINDA A. BALFOUR, ACADEMY FACILITATOR, OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Dear Students, Staff, and Families:

As we close out another successful school year at Valley Collaborative, it is the perfect time to reflect on all that our students, staff, and families have accomplished together. This year has been filled with growth, resilience, learning, laughter, and countless moments that remind us why Valley is such a special place. Our students and DDS clients have continued to inspire us every day with their determination, creativity, and willingness to embrace new opportunities. From achievements in the classroom to social and emotional growth, we have watched our students and DDS clients thrive in ways both big and small. None of this would be possible without the unwavering dedication of our incredible staff and the continued partnership and support from our families.

As we turn the page into summer school, the excitement continues. This summer promises to be filled with adventure, exploration, and hands-on learning experiences for our students and DDS clients. They will have opportunities to visit beautiful state parks, explore mountains and hiking trails, spend time on farms, and engage in enriching community-based activities that bring learning to life beyond the classroom walls.

»continued on page 5



Gaining Momentum

■ Page 2: Bikes, skateboards, scooters, Valley Elementary students are wild for wheels!



Trying New Things

■ Page 3: From field trips to clubs, this year saw lots of new offerings at the Transitional Programming at Valley Middle/High School.



Hitting the Road

■ Page 6: 30 Individuals in Valley's Adult Services programs and three students recently traveled to San Antonio, TX to see the sites and visit lots of attractions.

Elementary School: Wheel's Up!

With the arrival of warmer weather, our students have been making the most of the sunshine. During recess, gym class, and any chance they can, students get outside to ride bikes, scooters, and skateboards. They are full of smiles and laughter while developing balance, coordination, and confidence in a fun and engaging way. It is especially exciting when a student learns to ride without training wheels for the first time. A few students have hit this milestone already this year! Whether cruising around, practicing new skills, or enjoying the fresh air with peers, it's clear that the good times are rolling at Valley Collaborative Elementary School!



ABOVE: THIRD GRADER MATT TOBIN TAKES A SPIN OUTSIDE VALLEY ELEMENTARY; RIGHT: BRIAN BOLCOME, FIFTH GRADE, SHOWS OFF HIS SKATEBOARD SKILLS.

Appreciating Valley Elementary Staff

During the first week of May, we celebrated Staff Appreciation Week with the generous support of our Parent Advisory Group. Throughout the week, staff enjoyed a variety of sweets, treats, and thoughtful gestures of appreciation.

One particularly meaningful moment came on May 4th, when parent Cassie Dzerkacz surprised our staff with an incredible display of over 100 homemade, professional-quality cupcakes. Along with her sweet contribution, Cassie shared a powerful and heartfelt story.

Her son, Jimmy, had just begun attending Valley the week before. Cassie described his first week as the first full week of school he has attended since October—without disruptions, crisis calls, or the need for her to support his online-learning at home. For the first time in months, she found space to focus on her own well-being, returning to the gym and engaging in her passion for baking. In gratitude, she wanted to give back to the staff who made that possible by sharing her talent with us.

Cassie also shared how she discovered Valley. Her sister-in-law, Katie Novak of Novak Educational Consulting, visited our school to present during a professional development day. After seeing our classrooms, meeting staff, and learning about our programming, Katie immediately encouraged Cassie to consider Valley for Jimmy. Following a referral from the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District and a tour of our program, Jimmy quickly became a part of our school community.

Today, Jimmy is a valued Valley student, and Cassie is a valued member of our parent community. We are grateful for their trust—and for the reminder of the meaningful impact our work has on students and families every day.



PARENT CASSIE DZERKACZ RECENTLY SURPRISED VALLEY ELEMENTARY STAFF WITH AN INCREDIBLE DISPLAY OF OVER 100 HOMEMADE, PROFESSIONAL-QUALITY CUPCAKES.

Transitional Programming at Valley Middle/ High School: We're On a Roll

This year saw the addition of a number of initiatives at Valley Transitional Middle/High School. When we asked staff to talk about what they thought went well this past year, they had lots to say, but everyone agreed, when it comes to helping our students grow, we're on a roll!

Meaghan Norris, Transitional High School Teacher: new clubs

"This year we offered a variety of clubs for students to explore their interests and develop their leisure skills. Students have enjoyed opportunities to try something new such as craft, multi-media, and knitting clubs and have had meaningful discussions in the book club. The boy's and girl's groups have also been great ways for students to make connections with peers along with the opportunity to talk about some of the common issues they face as teens and young adults. My students have been very engaged in and motivated to participate in the clubs."

Kathryn Nutile, Physical Therapist: expanded swimming program

"Swimming moved to The Beede Center this year and that has been a hugely successful transition. They have been so accommodating and offer a consistent schedule for us. We have had five different rotations of classes go through for swimming and all of the students have enjoyed the opportunity to do something they don't often get to do, especially through the long winter months. It has been a fun way to get students to participate in aerobic exercise and strength training."

Taylor Pitari, Special Education Assistant: field trips

"The field trips have been very successful this year. Students have shown a lot of growth in the way they use and access the community to make purchases. Watching a student who was a bit shy be able to talk to community helpers independently now and seeing students master the skill of budgeting for their lunch has been pretty awesome."



STUDENTS NORA BAILEY, BRITTANY DORNEY, AND AIDEN RUSSELL POSE IN FRONT OF BOSTON HARBOR ALONGSIDE TEACHER LESLIE AYERS AFTER A SUCCESSFUL TRAVEL TRAINING SESSION ON THE MBTA.

Joanna Bond, Occupational Therapist: expanded job opportunities

"This year we changed up the job structure of the Bistro to expand the job opportunities for students and promote independence with job skills. With an OT on site we have been able to analyze and adapt job tasks for workers at all levels. We've also been collaborating with multimedia to create visual lunch menus as well as visuals for the students to help with their executive function on the job. This year a few of our students obtained internships at the Ninety-Nine Restaurant, where they transferred the skills they learned from working in the Bistro into real world skills and community-based employment."

Aiden Russell, Student: new job sites

"Village Food Hub is a new job site this year. I like working there because it feels good to package food for people. It feels good to have a purpose and food is important. People need food."

Hannah Barry, Special Education Assistant: new curriculum

"The reading and math curriculum has been a game changer for my students. In iReady they can see where they're at and the progress they are making. The immediate feedback is a huge motivator for them to see their scores go up."

»continued on page 5

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Alternative Programming at Valley Middle/ High School: Moving Up, Moving On

The end of the school year is a time of transition as students prepare for what's next. At Valley Alternative Middle/High School, eight middle schoolers will be moving up to high school, while 17 graduates are headed off to post-secondary opportunities.

Elijah Pong-Rousseau is one of the incoming freshmen. He admits that he was feeling a little nervous about the transition. Then he had a chance to visit the high school. "Now I'm not that nervous," says Elijah. He says he's excited to attend a bigger school where students have more freedom and more access to technology. "The math class looked nice," says Elijah, noting that he's especially looking forward to taking algebra.

Assistant Principal Kathleen Berry says that she couldn't feel more proud of Elijah. "Since he came here in sixth grade he's made incredible progress and is increasingly independent." At the start of the school year, Elijah shared with Kathleen that he wanted to attend the Alternative High School. "He had that goal and he's crushing it," says Kathleen.

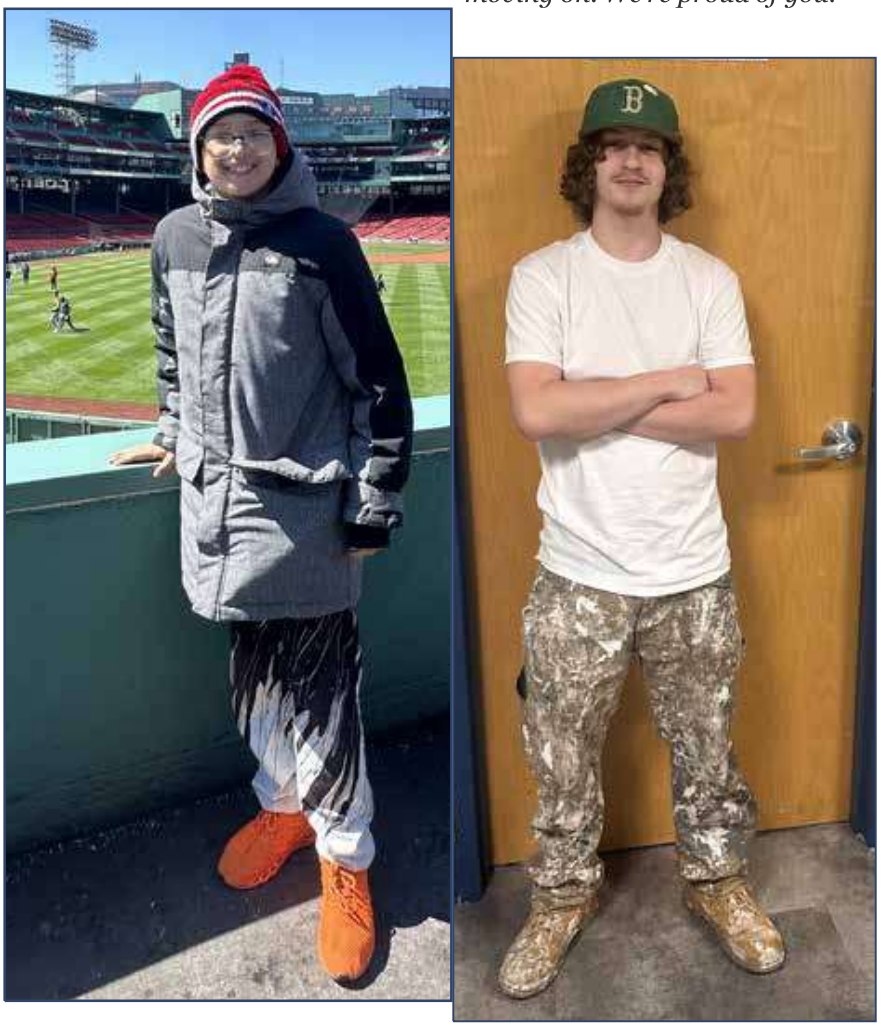
While Elijah hasn't decided upon an academic focus vs. a vocational one, for graduating senior Tyler Marchand, the choice was clear since he arrived at Valley two years ago. "I've always been interested in working with my hands," says Tyler, who took advantage of Valley's extensive vocational programming to learn new skills, including furniture restoration in the Wood Shop.

"Tyler is one of our all-star vocational students," says Brittney Hynes, Lead Social Worker at the Alternative High School. "He really takes advantage of the programming and is interested in trying different things."

When a painting company approached Valley about the opportunity for an outside internship, Principal Nick LeClair says that Tyler was the obvious choice. "Since the moment we met him, Tyler has been driven to find success after graduation. He has a terrific work ethic, an easy going personality, and a talent for hands-on-projects." Concludes Nick: We know Tyler will be successful because he is willing to learn, and has the ability to make genuine connections with those around him. We are very proud of the work he put in over his time with the Alternative High School."

Now that his time at Valley is at an end, Tyler plans to keep working for Heron Painting on interior and exterior projects. "Even though the work gets messy sometimes, I really like it," says Tyler.

Congratulations to all Valley students who are moving up or moving on. We're proud of you!



LEFT: EIGHTH GRADER ELIJAH PONG-ROUSSEAU AT FENWAY. HE'LL BE MOVING ON TO VALLEY ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL NEXT YEAR; RIGHT: TYLER MARCHAND IS GRADUATING THIS YEAR AND ALREADY HAS A JOB LINED UP WITH A LOCAL PAINTING CONTRACTOR.

Let the Good Times Roll

»continued from cover

These experiences create lasting memories while helping students and DDS clients build confidence, independence, and connections with the world around them.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to every member of Valley Collaborative's Board of Directors for their continued dedication, leadership, and support throughout the year. In particular, I would like to recognize Board Chair, Dr. Jay Lang, for his steadfast guidance, unwavering support, and deep commitment to the Valley community and its mission.

This year also marks an important transition for two highly respected members of the Valley Board of Directors. We extend our sincere gratitude to Dr. Michael Flanagan and Ms. Brenda Theriault-Reagan as they retire from the Valley Collaborative Board of Directors. Their years of dedicated service, thoughtful leadership, and commitment to our mission have played a significant role in shaping and strengthening our organization. Their impact on our students, DDS clients, staff, and families will be lasting, and their presence will be deeply missed. We thank them for all they have contributed to Valley and wish them continued happiness and success in their retirement.

I want to personally thank every member of the Valley community for the support you have shown throughout the year. Your commitment, trust, and partnership are what make our programs so successful. Whether you are a staff member who goes above and beyond each day or a family member who supports our mission at home, please know how deeply appreciated you are.

As we head into summer, I hope everyone finds time to relax, recharge, and enjoy the many adventures ahead.

Let the good times roll!

My best to you,



Chris A. Scott, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Valley Collaborative

Special thanks to the generous donors who support our Student/ Adult Services Activity Fund:

$5,000.00 - Rockland Trust Bank
$500.00 - Fritz Deguglielmo, LLC
$500.00 - Jonathan and Celeste Marston
$300.00 - Sun Specialties INC.
$300.00 - Barrow Lent, LLP
$100.00 - J.P. O'Connor Hardware Inc.
$100.00 - Anthony J. Bent
$100.00 – Pro Electrical Services Inc.

In Kind Donations:
Altitude Merrimack, NH 60-minute Pass (4)
Market Basket $50.00 Gift Card

We're on a Roll!

»continued from page 3

Lori Escolas, Transitional High School Teacher: foundational skills

"This year in the School and Vocational Training classroom we started using NextUp Transition Curriculum with great success. The lessons have tremendously benefited our students by providing foundational skills such as employability, self-management, job searching, safety, self-advocacy, interviewing, financial literacy, and independent living. The content is highly relevant, with topics such as 'Buying Your First Car' and 'Preparing to Leave High School,' and they are motivated to participate in the lessons because it meets them where they are currently in life."

Kristen Davidson, Speech Language Pathologist: training for life

"In the School-to-Work class we have been practicing taking the bus and train and the students have done very well with navigating the different environments, meeting the social/behavioral expectations of the community, and transitioning from one place to another on time."



TRANSITIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LUKE MURPHY PREPARES PIZZA WHILE WORKING IN THE BISTRO.

VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Adult Services Annual Trip, 2026 Destination: San Antonio, Texas

For the last 13 years Valley has led a trip for students and adults with the goal of providing them with an opportunity to see different parts of the country, and world! This year the group traveled to San Antonio, Texas for a week in the sun. With the lore of the trip growing year over year, this version saw Valley support the largest number of individuals ever with 30 adults making the journey, along with an additional three students. Joe Venskus and Lia Metrakas have been spearheading the annual trip for over a decade, providing students and individuals with the opportunity to experience the rich history different places can offer, all while lending daily support to ensure everyone has the best time possible.

Leading a trip with a combination of 30 individuals and 3 students is no small task. Joe and Lia rely on the support from a number of other staff who volunteer to go on the trip to ensure our individuals are provided safety and support. All this while being given the chance to experience different cultures and historical landmarks. When asked where he finds passion to run this annual trip, Joe Venskus responded:

"I think for me it has been about giving an experience to the individuals and students to empower or show them what they are capable of. Often times, the individuals and students we support daily are looked upon differently just because they have a disability. They have dreams, goals and wants just like the rest of us. We take the lessons we teach them every day in our program from life skills, budgeting skills, having conversations, and travel training and apply them all during the trip. We have often received many compliments on how our individuals behave, how nice and considerate they are etc. It is truly awesome and inspiring to watch how over the course of a week these students and individuals become a family and have experienced life to its fullest. To support that and be a part of a team of professionals that want to empower our students and individuals find their way is a blessing."



MIKE KOCZAN, JOE SEPE, KYLE COSTAIN, MARCUS MENGISTAB AND LUCAS COSTAIN AT THE SAN ANTONIO ZOO, A HIGHLIGHT OF THIS YEAR'S ADULT SERVICES TRIP.

On this year's trip to San Antonio, the group had a full schedule of tours and events. (See list at right.) Beyond these planned activities, the group also had plenty of time to shop for souvenirs and enjoy the local, and legendary, San Antonio cuisine. Apparently, the brisket is excellent!

»continued on next page

2026 Valley School Trip to San Antonio Tours and Events

Tour of the Alamo

San Antonio Zoo

San Antonio Missions minor league baseball game

River cruise

Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch and Cavern tour

Ripley's Believe it or Not Museum

Annual Trip: San Antonio, Texas

*continued from previous page

This year's trip to San Antonio earned rave reviews from the Valley travelers. Here's a sample:

Ken Bonnell, 7th trip: "I like getting to explore new places and meet new people. It feels nice to get to connect with staff and my peers and to connect more deeply outside of the worksites we usually go to."

Matt Booth, 1st trip: "The trip was awesome. It makes me want to go on more trips and explore how the food is in other places and to explore the whole wide world."

Jess Sherman, 1st trip: "I really liked the new scenery around me. We had such a good time in San Antonio and going to all the different places. I think my favorite part of the trip was going to the zoo and a cave walk."

Melaina Chaput, 7th trip: "I love going on all the trips because they are fun and it's great to go on vacation. It was my first time learning all about the Alamo and San Antonio and I would love to go back!"











CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JAYSON PRESTIA AND ARUN MAUDGAL AT THE SAN ANTONIO ZOO; JAYSON PRESTIA, ANDREW BLAIS AND ARUN MAUDGAL FEEDING THE BIRDS; SHARIFAH NAMIGADDE, MATT MURGO, KEN BONNELL, MELAINA CHAPUT AND ALYSSA LAWLER VISIT THE ALAMO; MIKE KOCZAN NEARLY LOSING HIS HEAD AT THE ZOO; MATT BOOTH ABOUT TO ENJOY SOME BBQ AT THE MISSIONS GAME.

Valley Collaborative Leadership Team



Chris A. Scott, PhD

Executive Director, Finance and Operations

cscott@valleycollaborative.org



Mazyar Moshtaghi

Chief Technology Officer

mmoshtaghi@valleycollaborative org



Matthew Gentile

Director of DDS & Mass Ability

mgentile@valleycollaborative.org



James George

Business Manager/Accountant

jgeorge@valleycollaborative.org



Heather Mackay

Principal, Valley Elementary School

hmackay@valleycollaborative.org



Jessica Marcotte

Lead Nurse

jscalzi@valleycollaborative.org



Joia Mercurio

Deputy Director

jmercurio@valleycollaborative.org



Nick LeClair

Principal, Valley Middle School & Transitional High School: Alternative Programming

nleclair@valleycollaborative.org



Renato Silva

School Safety & Facilities Manager

rsilva@valleycollaborative.org



Kari Morrin

Director of HR, Title IX and 504 Coordinator

kmorrin@valleycollaborative.org



Nicole Noska

Principal, Valley Middle School & Transitional High School: Transitional Programming

nnoska@valleycollaborative.org

Valley Collaborative Board of Directors



Dr. Jay Lang, Chair

Chairman of the Board, Executive Committee Member

Superintendent
Chelmsford Public Schools



Dr. Kerry Clery

Superintendent
Billerica Public Schools



Mr. Steven Stone

Superintendent
Dracut Public Schools



Dr. Geoff Bruno

Superintendent
Groton-Dunstable Regional School District



Dr. Denise Pigeon

Executive Committee Member

Superintendent
Nashoba Valley Technical School District



Mr. Brad Morgan

Superintendent
North Middlesex Regional School District



Ms. Brenda Theriault-Regan

Executive Committee Member

Superintendent
Tewksbury Public Schools



Dr. Michael Flanagan

Executive Committee Member

Superintendent
Tyngsborough Public Schools



Dr. Christopher Chew

Superintendent
Westford Public Schools

From: Renato Silva <rsilva@valleycollaborative.org>
Date: February 25, 2026 at 11:58:38 AM EST
To: Chris Scott <cscott@valleycollaborative.org>
Subject: Re: Facilities Update

Thank you so much for the kind words, Dr. Scott. I've shared them with the team and we even printed it out and hung it up in the Facilities Room!

Regards,

Renato Silva
School Safety and Facilities Manager
Valley Collaborative
40 Linnell Circle
Billerica, MA 01821
978-528-7832 (office)

From: Chris Scott <cscott@valleycollaborative.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 10:32 AM
To: All Valley Collaborative Staff <staff@valleycollaborative.org>
Subject: FW: Facilities Update

Good morning Team,

Welcome back after a very long school break. I hope everyone is enjoying the winter weather.

Please see below all of the amazing work that the facilities team accomplished over the break. Our facilities look amazing because of their expertise and care. When you see a facilities worker/custodian today, please thank them for going the extra mile to make Valley sparkle.

Thanks for all you do,
Chris

Chris A. Scott, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Valley
COLLABORATIVE

11 Executive Park Drive
N. Billerica, MA 01862
978-528-7826

From: Renato Silva <rsilva@valleycollaborative.org>
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 1:18 PM
To: Chris Scott <cscott@valleycollaborative.org>
Cc: Donna Driscoll <ddriscoll@valleycollaborative.org>
Subject: Facilities Update

Hello Dr. Scott,

Below is a breakdown of what the Facilities crew has completed this past week.
Thank you and please let me know if you have any questions.

Tyngsboro

1. Completed copy machine room project (photos attached)
2. Denommee repaired 2 sinks, a toilet, a urinal, and capped the copy room/closet sink
3. Deep cleaned all rugs throughout building including classrooms and hallways
4. Deep cleaned upholstery throughout building
5. Deep cleaned bathrooms
6. Deep cleaned classrooms
7. Painted breakroom doors
8. Installed kickplates on main entrance doors
9. Patched and painted where needed throughout

11 Executive Park

1. Stripped and waxed all milieus and hallways
2. Stripped and waxed conference room and kitchen
3. Applied final polishing pad to buff out and smooth waxed floors throughout the building
4. Abdinoor Flooring leveled Joia's office and installed tile in bathroom next to Shower Room
5. Deep cleaned all upholstery/fabric chairs throughout building
6. Deep cleaned washer and dryer inside and out
7. Deep cleaned all baseboards and walls throughout building
8. Deep cleaned all refrigerators inside and out

40 Linnell Circle

1. Stripped and waxed all milieus, common areas, hallways, and the Bistro
2. Completed new room signage project
3. Replaced ceiling tiles where needed
4. Patched and painted where needed
5. Painted new woodshop inside and out thus completing that project
6. Painted wall in Room #231
7. Deep cleaned:
    a. The Gym and Music Rooms
    b. Every table, desk, and chair throughout building
    c. Every trash and recycle bucket
    d. Every rug
    e. Every upholstered/fabric chair
    f. Both stairwells using ice melt residue remover
    g. all glass and mirrors throughout building
    h. All bathrooms using "Doodle Scrubber" floor machine
    i. Every refrigerator throughout building
    j. All high-traffic "Touch" areas; door knobs, hand rails, etc.
    k. All custodial carts

Regards,

Renato Silva
School Safety and Facilities Manager
Valley Collaborative
40 Linnell Circle
Billerica, MA 01821
978-528-7832 (office)

From: Linda Balfour <lbalfour@valleycollaborative.org>
Date: February 25, 2026 at 11:44:35 AM EST
To: Chris Scott <cscott@valleycollaborative.org>
Subject: Re: Facilities Update

Hi, Chris!
Wow! I think that sometimes the word "amazing" is overused or applied to events or situations that don't really earn that high praise. In THIS case, however, you need a word beyond amazing to describe what the facilities crew accomplished!! I'll settle for *uber-amazing!* Congrats to the team for all that they did and to YOU for placing the upkeep and upgrading of facilities as such a high priority! As we concur, having a clean, bright and up-to-date learning environment sets the tone for great learning and teaching! You did just at Norfolk as well and we ALL appreciated it!
Kudos all around!

Warm regards,
Linda

P.S. I hope you were able to take some time away from school over the past week!

Linda A. Balfour
Academy Facilitator
Office of Professional Learning
Valley Collaborative

From: Chris Scott <cscott@valleycollaborative.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 10:32 AM
To: All Valley Collaborative Staff <staff@valleycollaborative.org>
Subject: FW: Facilities Update

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Welcome back after a very long school break. I hope everyone is enjoying the winter weather.

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Thanks for all you do,
Chris

Chris A. Scott, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Valley
COLLABORATIVE

11 Executive Park Drive
N. Billerica, MA 01862
978-528-7826

From: Renato Silva <rsilva@valleycollaborative.org>
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 1:18 PM
To: Chris Scott <cscott@valleycollaborative.org>
Cc: Donna Driscoll <ddriscoll@valleycollaborative.org>
Subject: Facilities Update

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f. Both stairwells using ice melt residue remover
g. all glass and mirrors throughout building
h. All bathrooms using "Doodle Scrubber" floor machine
i. Every refrigerator throughout building
j. All high-traffic "Touch" areas; door knobs, hand rails, etc.
k. All custodial carts

Regards,

Renato Silva
School Safety and Facilities Manager
Valley Collaborative
40 Linnell Circle
Billerica, MA 01821
978-528-7832 (office)

From: Chuck Melanson <cmelanson@tyngsboroughma.gov>
Date: March 27, 2026 at 1:10:44 PM ADT
To: Heather Mackay <hmackay@valleycollaborative.org>
Cc: swoods@tyngsboroghma.gov, Chris Scott <cscott@valleycollaborative.org>, Renato Silva <rsilva@valleycollaborative.org>
Subject: Re: [EXT**] RE: ALICE Drill**

CAUTION: This email came from someone outside Valley Collaborative. Please use caution when clicking on any links or images in this message.

Hi Heather,

Good afternoon. I am glad everything worked out well during the drill. Please feel free to reach out if you need anything additional.

Best regards,

Sgt. Melanson

On Fri, Mar 27, 2026 at 12:03 PM Heather Mackay <hmackay@valleycollaborative.org> wrote:

Good Afternoon Sgt. Melanson and Chief Woods,

I wanted to send a thank you for the support in our ALICE drill yesterday.
Both Officer Koziol and Officer Gustafson were professional, kind and patient walking us through the drill.

We appreciate the collaboration! Have a nice weekend.

Thanks,

Heather Mackay, M.Ed
Principal/Special Education Administrator
Valley Collaborative
Elementary School
135 Coburn Rd
Tyngsborough, MA 01879
(978) 528-7843

From: Renato Silva <rsilva@valleycollaborative.org>
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2026 10:59 AM
To: Heather Mackay <hmackay@valleycollaborative.org>; Amy Murphy <amurphy@valleycollaborative.org>; Bryan Thomas <bthomas@valleycollaborative.org>; Karen Blackburn <kblackburn@valleycollaborative.org>; Mazyar Moshtaghi <mmoshtaghi@valleycollaborative.org>; Chuck Melanson <cmelanson@tyngsboroughma.gov>
Cc: Chris Scott <cscott@valleycollaborative.org>
Subject: ALICE Drill

Hello Heather,

I just got off the phone with Sgt. Melanson of the Tyngsborough Police Department. He confirmed that he will be onsite at the elementary school this coming Wednesday 03/25 at 12:30pm to conduct your ALICE training and drill.

Maz, I've copied you on this email because, as in years past, they will need to project their PowerPoint presentation to the staff in the gymnasium.

Thank you and please let me know if you have any questions or need anything further.

Regards,

Renato Silva
School Safety and Facilities Manager
Valley Collaborative
40 Linnell Circle
Billerica, MA 01821

978-528-7832 (office)

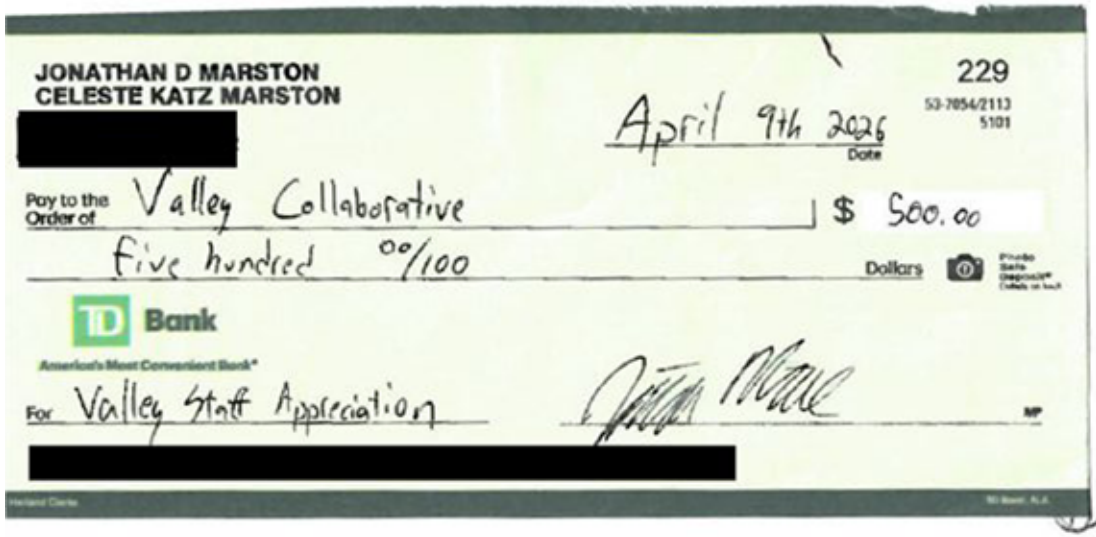
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small organizations from malicious activity, human error and technology failure; and to lead the movement toward building a more resilient world. To find out more, visit our website.



JONATHAN D MARSTON
CELESTE KATZ MARSTON
[redacted]

229
53-7054/2113
5101

April 9th 2026
Date

Pay to the Order of Valley Collaborative $ 500.00

five hundred 00/100 Dollars

TD Bank
America's Most Convenient Bank®

For Valley Staff Appreciation

[redacted]

March/2026
april

Dear Nick and Staff,

Its not what we have or life, but who we have in our lives that matter. We are glad to have the staff at Valley!

Enjoy your event.

Best
Alex, Sheila
and Jon Marston

We hope this helps you organize a wonderful staff appreciation day! We are especially grateful to you and the middle and high school transitional people who have taught and guided Alex.

From: Chris Scott
To: All Valley Collaborative Staff
Subject: My Thanks To You: Staff Appreciation
Date: Thursday, May 7, 2026 10:44:05 AM

Dear Valley Staff,

During Educator Appreciation Week, I want to take a moment to recognize and thank each of you for the extraordinary work you do every day for our students, DDS participants, families, and community.

This year, I have been reflecting on the ideas in Adam Grant's book *Think Again*, which reminds us that growth begins when we stay curious, remain open to learning, and have the courage to rethink what we know. No profession embodies those qualities more fully than education.

Every day, you adapt to new challenges, refine your practice, reconsider approaches, and meet students where they are. You model resilience, creativity, empathy, and lifelong learning in ways that shape not only academic and vocational outcomes, but the confidence and character of the people we serve.

Great staff are not defined by having all the answers. They are defined by their willingness to keep learning, to listen, to collaborate, and to evolve for the benefit of the people we serve. That spirit of reflection and growth is alive across our Collaborative, and it is one of the greatest strengths of our district.

Thank you for the care you show, the relationships you build, and the countless ways you inspire people we serve to think critically, ask questions, and believe in themselves. Your work matters deeply, and its impact extends far beyond the Collaborative walls.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and district leadership, thank you for your dedication, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to the people we serve and one another.

We appreciate you this week and every week and hope you enjoy this week's festivities.

With gratitude,

-Chris

Chris A. Scott, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Valley
COLLABORATIVE

11 Executive Park Drive
N. Billerica, MA 01862
978-528-7826

Dear Dr Scott

Thank You So Much for the Beautiful Sympathy Card with your Lovely Words that you wrote!! My whole Family & I more than Appreciated your Kindness, Caring, and Very Thoughtful Gesture.

As we All Know, Valley is not only the Greatest Job there is, but it is also a Huge Loving Family. That is Directly Attributed to you & your Entire Staff, Dr Scott. I Am Both Humbled & Proud to Be a Part of This Great Family!

Please Know that my wife Now is watching over not only our Family, but the Entire Valley Collaborative Family, Guiding & Protecting Each & Every One of us from up Above!

Thank You Again
John Restecchini

From: Sue Donato
To: Chris Scott
Cc: Kari Morrin; Heather Mackay
Subject: retirement
Date: Thursday, May 21, 2026 7:30:09 AM

Dr Scott,

I am writing to formally notify you of my intention to retire from my position as an Occupational Therapist with Valley Collaborative, effective December 31, 2026.

After more than 20 years in this role, it is difficult to fully express how grateful I am for a career that has been so meaningful. It has been a privilege to work with so many remarkable students and families over the years. I cherish the relationships and experiences that have shaped my time here.

I have also been incredibly fortunate to work alongside such compassionate, talented, and dedicated colleagues. The collaboration and friendships I have found at Valley Collaborative have meant more to me than words can adequately convey. I will miss the daily connections, as well as the strong sense of community that made this such a special place to work.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to both the building administration team, and central administration teams for their leadership, and commitment to student success. The dedication to students and staff alike fostered an environment where both are valued, and where meaningful work could thrive. I appreciate the endless opportunities extended to me over the years.

As I prepare for this next chapter, I do so with immense gratitude. Thank you for the many professional opportunities and a culture of continuous learning that have made my years at Valley Collaborative so rewarding.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Sue

Sue Donato, OT
Occupational Therapist
Valley Collaborative

sdonato@valleycollaborative.org

From: Brian Mihalek
To: Chris Scott; "a.bent@comcast.net"
Cc: Kari Morrin; Joia Mercurio; Nicole Noska
Subject: Thank You
Date: Thursday, May 7, 2026 8:00:29 AM

Dear Chris and Tony,

Yesterday was emotional. I'm still trying to process what receiving this award truly means. It is difficult to put into words how humbled I am by being nominated for the Tony Bent Award. My only regret is that in the moment I wasn't able to express to the team how much it meant to me.

While this may be one of the highest honors at the Collaborative, to me, being considered someone who has made a significant, positive impact on the climate and culture at Valley, represents something even greater to me. It is the most meaningful accolade I have ever received because it embodies the values I strive to live by and foster in others.

I take pride in creating a positive school culture and supportive environment where students, staff, and families feel safe, connected and valued. I have prioritized a sense of belonging, strong relationships, collaboration and open communication. I always try to lead with honesty, accountability, compassion, and integrity. At Valley, I have been able to do this while working with the most exceptional team in the world. The support we show one another, the honesty and integrity within our leadership team and the passion everyone brings to this work speaks directly to what makes this organization truly special.

The work we do gives me tremendous purpose, joy, and fulfillment. I never take this responsibility for granted. There is a special culture at Valley and I take pride in the opportunity to help cultivate and protect it.

Dr. Scott, I appreciate your unwavering faith in me more than I can express. Thank you for believing in me. Thank you for your leadership, for trusting me to lead, and for continually supporting my growth.

Tony, everyone knows, the leadership sessions we have are the highlight of my month. Every session elevates the group. The impact you've had on our team and the Collaborative over the years has been extraordinary. Your guidance has helped us grow,

strengthen our team and challenge us to reach our potential. Thank you for your exceptional leadership.

I will accept this recognition with tremendous gratitude, humility, and responsibility. I will take is as a renewed commitment to leading in a way that reflects the mission, vision, and values that Valley stands for every day. To be recognized in an organization that values integrity, growth, respect, and service means more to me than words can describe.

Thank you again for this incredible honor. I am proud to be part of a community that believes leadership begins with character and that culture is created on a foundation of love, respect, and integrity.

With sincere gratitude,

Brian

Brian Mihalek, M.Ed.
Assistant Principal
Valley Transitional Middle and High School
40 Linnell Circle, Billerica, MA 01821
978-528-7841
978-528-7810 (fax)
bmihalek@valleycollaborative.org

Bachelors

Lowest Step

District	Rank	Salary
Chelmsford	1	$ 61,142
North Middlesex	2	$ 60,426
Billerica	3	$ 59,664
Tewksbury	4	$ 58,062
Dracut	5	$ 57,238
Westford	6	$ 56,869
Nashoba Valley	7	$ 56,745
Valley Collaborative	8	$ 56,389
Tyngsborough	9	$ 56,283
Groton-Dunstable	10	$ 55,842

Step 5

District	Rank	Salary
Tewksbury	1	$ 75,048
Chelmsford	2	$ 74,760
Billerica	3	$ 71,150
North Middlesex	4	$ 70,967
Tyngsborough	5	$ 69,799
Nashoba Valley	6	$ 69,589
Dracut	7	$ 69,501
Groton- Dunstable	8	$ 68,486
Westford	9	$ 67,803
Valley Collaborative	10	$ 65,967

Highest Step

District	Rank	Salary
Nashoba Valley	1	$ 98,488
Westford	2	$ 95,661
Tyngsborough	3	$ 94,710
Chelmsford	4	$ 94,469
Billerica	5	$ 93,099
Dracut	6	$ 91,534
Tewksbury	7	$ 88,372
Groton-Dunstable	8	$ 87,494
Valley Collaborative	9	$ 86,808
North Middlesex	10	$ 85,098

* Assumes Dracut & Westford w/ 2.5% COLA Increase in FY27

Masters

Lowest Step

District	Rank	Salary
Chelmsford	1	$ 67,674
Tyngsborough	2	$ 63,747
Westford	3	$ 63,180
Dracut	4	$ 62,835
North Middlesex	5	$ 62,832
Tewksbury	6	$ 62,732
Billerica	7	$ 62,646
Groton-Dunstable	8	$ 62,453
Valley Collaborative	9	$ 61,887
Nashoba Valley	10	$ 61,229

Step 5

District	Rank	Salary
Chelmsford	1	$ 81,513
Tewksbury	2	$ 81,022
Groton-Dunstable	3	$ 76,594
Dracut	4	$ 75,241
Tyngsborough	5	$ 75,137
Billerica	6	$ 74,707
Westford	7	$ 74,618
Nashoba Valley	8	$ 74,072
North Middlesex	9	$ 73,505
Valley Collaborative	10	$ 72,399

Highest Step

District	Rank	Salary
Billerica	1	$ 103,130
Westford	2	$ 105,384
Nashoba Valley	3	$ 102,970
Chelmsford	4	$ 102,786
Tewksbury	5	$ 100,833
North Middlesex	6	$ 100,527
Tyngsborough	7	$ 100,039
Dracut	8	$ 98,727
Groton-Dunstable	9	$ 97,852
Valley Collaborative	10	$ 95,272

* Assumes Dracut & Westford w/ 2.5% COLA Increase in FY27

Masters + 30

Lowest Step

District	Rank	Salary
Chelmsford	1	$ 72,246
Tyngsborough	2	$ 70,572
Westford	3	$ 68,226
Groton-Dunstable	4	$ 67,337
Dracut	5	$ 67,323
Tewksbury	6	$ 66,754
Billerica	7	$ 65,779
Valley Collaborative	8	$ 65,576
North Middlesex	9	$ 65,023
Nashoba Valley	10	$ 64,217

Step 5

District	Rank	Salary
Chelmsford	1	$ 86,518
Tewksbury	2	$ 85,046
Groton-Dunstable	3	$ 82,584
Tyngsborough	4	$ 81,958
Westford	5	$ 79,882
Dracut	6	$ 79,722
Billerica	7	$ 78,443
Nashoba Valley	8	$ 77,060
Valley Collaborative	9	$ 76,715
North Middlesex	10	$ 76,070

Highest Step

District	Rank	Salary
Groton-Dunstable	1	$ 109,900
Westford	2	$ 113,605
Chelmsford	3	$ 108,471
Billerica	4	$ 108,287
Tyngsborough	5	$ 106,641
Nashoba Valley	6	$ 105,958
Tewksbury	7	$ 105,484
North Middlesex	8	$ 103,567
Dracut	9	$ 103,357
Valley Collaborative	10	$ 100,951

* Assumes Dracut & Westford w/ 2.5% COLA Increase in FY27