



The Board of Directors of the Central MA Special Education Collaborative will meet  
**Wednesday, May 9, 2018 at 8:30 AM** at the Lobby Conference Room at  
**14 New Bond St., Worcester, MA 01606**  
**Meeting Agenda**

Board Members Present: Ms. Maureen Binienda, Chair  
Ms. Ruthann Goguen

Others Present: Mr. Michael Tempesta, Executive Director  
Ms. Beverly Tefft, Finance Director  
Ms. Ann Ortiz, Ms. MaryEllen McGorry, Ms. Jessica Pitsillides, Mr.  
Michael Kelly, Mr. Dan Smachetti, Ms. Evelyn Marrone, Ms. Lisa  
Roberts, Ms. Teresa O'Neill, Ms. Elizabeth Pinzino  
Ms. Kathy Baris, Webster Public Schools, Rob Pezzella, Safety Officer  
Worcester Public Schools., Ms. Kay Seale, Worcester Public schools

- **CMC Program Budget Presentations (Budget Concerns; Budget Priorities)**

- **8:30 - 9:00 AM Central Mass Prep**
  - Dan Smachetti, Program Director, Central Massachusetts Prep, makes welcoming remarks and understands there are budgetary concerns and understands that difficult decisions have to be made.
  - Primary concern, additional administrative support. Approaching 80 students and projecting a 10% increase in enrollment.
    - Attending over 100 iep meetings, 30 parent/guardian meetings, 15 intake meetings. Feels administration should be present but that is not always possible.
    - Day-to-day behavioral management. Since the first day of school, they have recorded over 1,000 ODRs. Addressing concerns and situations can be time sensitive.
    - Maintaining high standards for teachers and other staff. Additional support with evaluations and programming.
  - Feels staffing levels otherwise are where they need to be. Teacher/IA ratio to students. Many of this year's referrals require some 1:1 attention, despite it not being officially on the IEP.
    - Sixth grade is really expanding. This is the first year with sixth graders, last year they were at Hartwell Learning Center.
    - Dan wants ratios to stay at 10:2, as they are currently.
    - Profile of students - students with a lot of social emotional learning issues, fragile learners. There are a lot of kids in the middle who aren't appropriate for the program.
      - 23 students have individual daily plans.

- 30 students have a picture taken and communication sent home DAILY to parents.
- Current staffing ration is: 77 Students, 8 Teachers, 10 Instructional Assistants, 3 Clinicians
- The BOD asks, how are you going to build capacity?
  - 9 teachers, 12 instructional assistants, 4 clinicians are budgeted for next year
    - If we had an additional administrator, could you function without the additional clinician? It would depend on the clinical needs of the students. Currently our clinicians are on the schedule teaching group sessions up to twice a week.
    - A cost-effective solution would be to create a lead teacher position. The lead teacher could be spelled by a teacher from another program (RGA) to take a couple of sections so that they hoping that she can teach half the day and assist Dan half the day.
- **9:00 - 9:30 AM                      Rockdale Recovery High School**
  - Mary Ellen has addressed staff concerns about returning to 20 Rockdale and being upstairs (15 students/ 8,000 sf) vs. downstairs which will be occupied by WDS (50 students/ 12,000 sf).
  - MaryEllen feels we are getting good dually certified candidates for the restructuring of RRHS with WDS at 20 Rockdale next year. Specifically, shared will be shared with both programs with RRHS targeting a combined HUmanities/ STEM approach similar to Independence Academy in Brockton.
    - Cutting staff so that we have STEM, Humanities, Special Ed, PE. (Dually certified staff). She feels that there is a pool of teachers who will work well with her students out there.
    - Currently have 15 students & 4 teachers, 1 clinician, .3 guidance counselor and one Principal.
    - Posted two ads, one for STEM, one for Humanities.
    - CMA has offered to give up some itinerants (PE/ART) so that the Higgins Campus and Rockdale campus can share resources as they are so close geographically.
    - Students know they are going back to the Rockdale site but that they are going upstairs. Students feel that they are being punished and that the long-term suspended students at Woodward Day are getting the “better” downstairs location.
    - Adding a PE & SPED teacher, .5 FTE. (Sharing with Woodward Day in the same building.)
    - Recovery High Schools governance is shifting from DPH over to DESE.
      - The BOD asks, “Will the grant from DPH go away at some point? (\$500k) Mr. Tempesta and Ms. McGorry both answer that although that is unconfirmed at this time, with the state of the current opioid crisis that it seems unlikely.
    - RRHS is currently sharing a guidance counselor between CMA, RGA, & RHS.
    - The recovery counselor is already there. The adjustment counselor is currently in the Woodward Day budget.
      - Ruthanne wants the recovery counselor to continue being paid from the grant. That position is currently slated to be moved to the regular budget. Mr. Tempesta explains that all of the salaried

positions are absorbed by the grant funds, but the program still loses hundreds of thousands of dollars each year due to the other overhead costs (mostly rent at 20 Rockdale)

- Worcester Public Schools has a 1 art credit requirement for graduation.
- Ms. Binienda proposes considering Spanish for language requirements if the budget will allow it.
- MaryEllen feels the programmatic changes and restructuring will ultimately beef up her program and increase enrollments.

- **9:30 - 10:00 AM Woodward Day School**

- A Powerpoint Presentation with historical data was handed out to audience members by Woodward Day Site administrators Teresa O'Neill, WDS Fremont; Evelyn Marrone WDS Hartwell/ Rockdale, and Lisa Roberts, WDS McKeon Road .
  - Woodward Day Hartwell - 35 students, 4 content Teachers, part-time art, and one IA
    - They go outside for gym, but they currently do not have a PE teacher.
  - Woodward Day Fremont - 51 students, , 5 Teachers, 1 IA, 1 campus tech, shared stipended PE teacher
  - Woodward Day McKeon - 53 students, 5 Teachers, 1 IA, 1 campus tech, shared stipended PE teacher
  - In order to maintain the safety/quality of the program that has existed for over 40 years, they each need 5 or 6 content teachers. The best way to avoid the behavior issues that exist in these students is to keep class sizes small ( 5 students per class) as students need to be focused.
  - Students clinical needs are increasing and they do not have the resources to service them. WPS currently pushes in services as they students actually belong to sending schools because they are long-term excluded for a variety of reasons.
  - They currently have a point system. Student earn points to achieve incentives.
  - Superintendent Goguen asks, "Can the WDS program can be absorbed back into the Worcester Public Schools." Mr. Pezzella answers that it has always been a CMC program and will remain that way.

- **10:00 - 10:30 AM Robert Goddard Academy**

- Michael Kelly, Program Director for Robert Goddard Academy, opens with a brief overview of RGA as well as his own history with the CMASS Collaborative.
  - Currently, RGA has 102 Students. 16% are out of district students. Currently, there are 3 intake packets on his desk. Two are from Worcester, and one is out of district.
  - Graduation at RGA has increased over 100% in the past two years.
  - Concern: Losing one of the assistant director roles (Rich Cameron is slated to be transferred to WDS McKeon, as Lisa Roberts (who is a Worcester Public Schools employee) retires. This transfer avoids hiring a new WDS site director (approximately 90,000) will put a lot of strain on the RGA program. There are many MCAS Appeals, IEP meetings, EPPs, and a myriad of student management issues every day.
  - There has been an increase of students type of students with severe mental illness/violence issues.

- RGA will run with students in 3 cohorts and will also have space (since RRHS is returning to 20 Rockdale) to offer a life skills track for student within RGA.
    - Academic focus: Honors level, college level, standard level
  - Not requesting additional personnel. They currently have 12 teachers and 5 clinicians, as well as elective teachers (Art, PE, Music, VOKE) and 17 IA's.
  - The BOD asks, "How do students going to transition INTO RGA from CMP?
    - Meeting with teachers, clinicians to discuss the needs of students moving up from CMP.
  - The BOD asks, what is the percentage of students taking MCAS?
    - Only two students are taking MCAS-ALT.
  - RGA partners also partners with the Genesis program in Worcester for mentorships and employment opportunities for students..
  - Vocational program - There was a shuffling of staff mid year to cover the expansion of the Woodward Day at 100 Hartwell which caused instability in programming. Superintendent Goguen asks, "what do we do the students that were suddenly displaced?" Mr. Kelly answers, " IAs covered classrooms and filled in."
  - The student staff ratios at RGA are: 8:2
    - There are no 1:1 IAs. Last year a couple of students had 1:1 IAs, but they were phased out due to the structure of the program. Students no longer need them.
  - The curriculum follows DESE standards with integrated PBIS, MAPS and other software programs. Students have Chromebooks and all curriculum and assessment is data driven.
- **10:30 - 11:00 AM Central Mass Academy**
  - Ann Ortiz, Program Director for the Central Massachusetts Academy, begins by speaking of her three concerns within her program
    - The #1 concern is Safety and numbers of students in the school.
    - Currently have 9 teachers on staff. 4 middle school, 5 high school and there are over 100 students in the building presently. (20,000 sf) CMA also has four clinicians, 10 IAs and a campus technology instructor.
    - Grade 8 and grade 9 have the largest population currently.
    - They've had instances where police response to the building has taken over 45 minutes. The last instance they had responded in 27 minutes. so staff must desist and intervene with explosive student situations on a regular basis. with classrooms that have 10 or 12 students in them.
    - The #2 concern is CMA continuing to be responsible for their own transportation. The routes are taking too long. Transportation should return to Worcester. Some teachers are getting their 7D license, but having to go out on multiple runs is taking too much time..
      - Kay Seale, Special Education Director for Worcester Public Schools, states that Worcester has committed to bussing up to 90 students next year, but CMA may still have to use some existing vans for additional students over that initial 90 students.
    - #3 Art & PE teacher... Ann does not feel that they need an art teacher and would prefer to have additional PE that helps with self regulation for her students. Many of her students, particularly middle school students, have problems attending and regulating themselves during the current art period.

- Ann currently has 7 confirmed gang members in the program. Varied gangs. They cannot be separated, there is no room to separate them.
  - 10-12 students in one classroom.
  - CMA has students coming from DSS, DYS and a host of other programs and life situations, The philosophy of the program and in the building is “how do we build a relationship with all of these kids to make them successful?”
  - There are currently 3 referrals in the pipeline that they do not have room space nor transportation to take these students right now. Next year they will have an additional 10,00 sf and can take dozens of new students at the facility at 121 Higgins St.
  
- **11:00 - 11:30 AM      THRIVE**
  - Elizabeth Pinzino, THRIVE Program Director, presents and overview of the program and staffing. THRIVE is a Vocational (ABA-Based) Autism Program that uses NECC’s ACE curriculum and programming and currently serves the needs of 53 students from the ages of 5 -22 in the following distribution:
    - 16 Elementary (up to sixth grade)
    - 10 Middle School
    - 11 High School
    - 12 18-22
  - Currently, due to capacity, there are two teachers managing two classrooms each. (4 classrooms total) 15 students and 13 students respectively.
  - At the start of this year THRIVE’s enrollment was: 42 Students, 6 teachers, 26 IAs (19 are 1:1)
  - Now at: 53 students, 6 teachers (8 classrooms), 26 IAs
  - The program coordinator position has remained vacant since Leigh Blanchard left to take a position with the Worcester Public Schools.
  - The program has one BCBA.
  - We have 6 staff in a BCBA program within the THRIVE program and we are working on structuring a BCBA stipend in the FY20 budget to keep them in the THRIVE Program.
  
  - There is currently no assigned clinical support (Clinicians) for THRIVE.
  - Ideally, THRIVE would like to start the year with two teachers, but they absolutely need one teacher asap for compliance.
  - Elementary and middle school programs are full.
  - Are you looking to shift any THRIVE students to RGA/CMP?
    - 4 students that no longer require this intensive programming and need the things that RGA/CMP offer.
  - What do you use for curriculum?
    - NECC’s ACE Program
    - For higher functioning students, they mirror RGA curriculum.
  
- **11:30 - 12:00 PM      Hartwell Learning Center**
  - Jessica Pitsillides, Program Director for WDS, begins with a brief overview of her history with HLC. Many of the people that Jess originally hired are still here with her at HLC (20 + years). HLC benefits from having people with experience within the program. HLC has historically been configured as: K-6, K-12, K-8, and are currently K-5.
  - HLC currently has 74 students. There are 8 Classrooms and the Assessment Center. There are 43 staff, 9 teachers, Director, Asst Director, Admin Assistant, 4 clinicians, BCBA (sharing with CMP), 26 IAs (19 classroom and 4 are ABA 1:1, 3 are 1:1).

- Historically, they've had one teacher and 2 IAs in a classroom of 6-8 students.
  - HLC staff reached out to the superintendents of Webster and Worcester with some concerns about safety and budget inadequacies and the BOD reads the letter of concern.
  - Jess feels that currently HLC is safe, but is worried about expansion in the future.
  - This year, HLC started the year with enrollments in the mid 40's and expanded to 74 students, so she wants to be sure they can expand if this pattern continues next year. It was the first year HLC did not have a 6th grade.
- **Dr. Jean Lindquist-Grady, CMC Clinical Director**
    - Asked for a full-time additional ELL person, collaborative wide
    - Full-time SLPA (speech and language pathology assistant)
    - Full-time clinician for Woodward Day & Recovery High School
    - Currently has 18.6 clinicians, including Webster - FTE 1.6. Additionally, one long term sub for HLC is for Sarah Incutto..
    - Dr. Grady meets with clinicians daily. They meet as a group once a week.