



**Quarterly Update**  
**Central MA Special Education Collaborative**  
**June 30, 2014**

The Central MA Special Education Collaborative ended FY14 on target with budget expectations, including the servicing of 36 out of district students. The leadership team welcomed the new Director of Finance and Operations, Ms. Beverly Tefft, who has worked diligently with the program directors to ensure consistent financial procedures and protocols. As we prepare for the 2014 - 2015 school year, the leadership team is embarking on the development of a shared vision for our collaborative to guide and frame a comprehensive three to five year strategic plan.

**Collaborative Improvements**

- **THRIVE (formerly BASICS)**  
A joint decision of CMSEC and our member districts to assume overall responsibility for students in our former BASICS program was based on specific qualitative and quantitative factors, including an overall reduction in the cost of running the program. A presentation of the changes, with discussion, was provided to constituents by CMSEC and member district special education directors. All new staff are expected to be hired and trained prior to the start of the new school year and an open house for families is planned for August.
- **Woodward Day School Reconfiguration**  
Using the opportunity to fill two open health teaching positions and the restructuring the third health position, WDS administration has reconfigured programming in FY15 that will provide health to middle school students at all three sites; meet the needs of special education and ELL students through academic support and co-teaching, as well as offer foreign language and STEM electives. These electives were chosen based on the MassCore recommended programs of study, standards-based assessment results and the desire to more fully engage students with hands-on-learning opportunities where discovery and exploration, problem solving, experiential learning and creativity are regularly embedded. In addition, the technology teacher who currently services the three WDS sites teaching computer applications independent of other subjects, will now work collaboratively with both core and elective educators to develop projects and activities that allow students to acquire needed technology literacy skills as they are exposed to and engage in the curriculum.



- **Implementation of Student Information System**  
CMSEC staff worked diligently to implement a new student information system. This included entering student data, developing a comprehensive course catalog, importing health records, staff information, etc. As specific modules were updated within the iPass system, targeted training for key personnel was conducted. The iPass system, when fully deployed in FY15 will allow the accurate collection of data, provide staff with timely and easy access while ensuring that state-mandated reporting requirements are met.
- **Technology Enhancements**  
Completed network/infrastructure design upgrade which included the deployment of 4 servers, the development of a new Active Directory structure, and the integration of a new firewall. This enhancement has already proven effective as it has made CMSEC's technology more reliable, useful and user-friendly thereby increasing productivity, efficiency and instructional effectiveness for students and staff.
- **Professional Development**  
Increased challenges related to changes in student profiles with escalated numbers of children with autism and trauma history, particularly at the elementary school level, has led to a rise in intensive behaviors. As such, Harwell Learning Center and Central MA Academy has selected PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) as the framework to pilot in FY15. Staff have attended high-quality conferences to understand best research-based practices, and in turn have begun the development of PBIS leadership teams within each school.
- **Educator Evaluation System**  
CMSEC completed its pilot year of the educator evaluation system with summative evaluation ratings for staff. In planning for the upcoming school year, the administrative team has identified 8 focus elements and has begun to outline an evaluation protocol with specific timelines and requirements for each educator plan type.

### **FINANCIAL UPDATES**

CMSEC wrapped up fiscal year 2014 on a positive note. FY14's operating budget projected a use of Collaborative surplus funds of slightly over \$1 million. Unaudited figures indicate having to use roughly 50% of these funds.

The FY15 operating budget was approved by the Board of Directors in late June. CMSEC's FY15 budget totals \$13.2 million, a 5.9% increase over FY14.