

2022-2023

ANNUAL REPORT



**NORTHSHORE
EDUCATION
CONSORTIUM**

Northshore Education Consortium
112 Sohier Road, Beverly, MA 01915
Tel: 978-232-9755 | www.nsedu.org



"Our family will forever be grateful to the phenomenal team at NEC. The level of specialized instruction and therapeutic support my child has received over the past several years has far exceeded my hopes. I am grateful for where my child is today and the opportunities that lay ahead for him. It is beyond exciting to watch the positive changes in a child's life unfold, when they benefit from learning in the best possible environment for their unique needs."

- NEC Parent



**NORTHSHORE
EDUCATION
CONSORTIUM**

Member School Districts: Beverly, Danvers, Gloucester, Hamilton-Wenham Regional, Ipswich, Lynn, Lynnfield, Manchester-Essex Regional, Marblehead, Masconomet Regional, Nahant, North Reading, Peabody, Pentucket Regional, Reading, Rockport, Salem, Swampscott, Triton Regional, Tri-Town School Union (Boxford, Middleton, Topsfield)



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Message from the Executive Director

November 2023

Dear Northshore Education Consortium Members and Friends,

I am pleased to share this report highlighting the activities and accomplishments of the 2022-2023 school year.

Our core mission of providing high quality, cost-effective public programs, supports, and resources to assist member districts in meeting the needs of students who require specialized educational services is more critical, and more challenging, than ever. I am proud of the many ways in which we have mobilized to meet our goals, despite ongoing struggles with staffing shortages, behavioral acuity and financial stress.

A major focus this year has been building our infrastructure to support our program operations. Without safe, functional, and attractive buildings, state-of-the-art technology and business operations, and a strong structure for workforce development, we cannot meet our goals. This year we started to work on a multi-year, multi-million dollar project for upgrading our HVAC systems at 112 Sohier Road, implemented our new accounting and HR software, and worked to develop a more robust long-range capital plan. We also recommitted to strengthening our school safety and emergency preparation, purchasing Navigate 360/ALICE training materials, and working to update our emergency plans. In addition, we settled a three-year collective bargaining agreement with our AFT local.

477 students were educated in our day schools this year, and over 150 students in member districts received services through our Vision Services or our Connections Wraparound Program. In addition we provided training and consultation to our member districts, and ran well-attended job-alike groups for special education administrators, out of district coordinators, educational team chairpeople, and school psychologists.

In our day schools we continued to work on assuring that our services were trauma-informed and culturally proficient, and we recommitted to utilizing principles of restorative practice, differentiated instruction, and universal design for learning. Our staff PD days and our educator goals reflected these commitments.

We continue to take great pride in the wide array of vocational, enrichment and community opportunities we provide for our students and families. NEC students participate in a range of onsite and offsite vocational experiences, and enjoy educational outings to the Topsfield Fair, museums, and arts performances. Our students participated in Special Olympics, intramural sports, game nights, and prom, and they engaged with the arts through Express Yourself and Young Audiences. NEC families attended an array of family nights in each of our programs.

We were very proud that our DESE mid-cycle review went smoothly, and we were found to be in compliance with all of the criteria monitored with no findings of concern.

I am incredibly proud of the work we have done as a team over the past year. It is a privilege to work with colleagues who care so deeply about our students, and with children, young adults, and families who demonstrate great resilience every day.

With thanks for your ongoing support,



Francine H. Rosenberg, M.Ed.
Executive Director
Northshore Education Consortium

Collaborative Information

HISTORY

Founded in 1974, the Northshore Education Consortium was one of the first regional collaboratives in Massachusetts and is the largest provider of intensive special education services to children and youth with emotional, behavioral, and developmental disabilities on the North Shore.

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Northshore Education Consortium is governed by a 20-member Board of Directors, representing the 22 districts served, (Tri-Town School Union is represented by their shared Superintendent.) All districts are represented by their Superintendent. The full board meets six or seven times per year. Each board member also serves on one of four subcommittees: Finance, Facilities, Policy, and Personnel. Each subcommittee meets as needed throughout the year.

The Administrative Leadership Team meets two or three times each month, to oversee the daily operations of the Consortium and its programs.

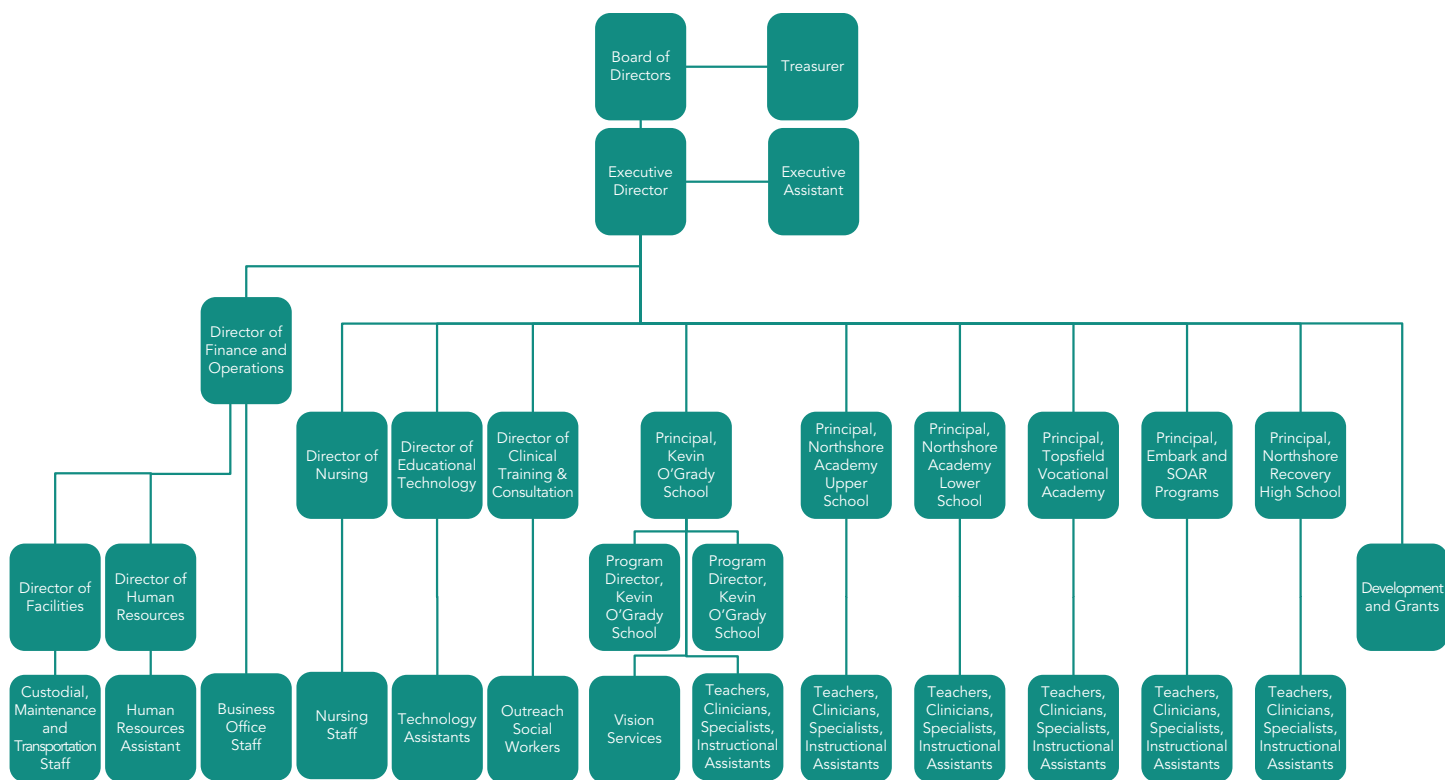
MEMBER DISTRICTS / BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2022-2023

	Beverly Public Schools - Dr. Suzanne Charochak
	Danvers Public Schools - Ms. Mary Wermers
	Gloucester Public Schools - Mr. Ben Lummis
	Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District - Mr. Eric Tracy
	Ipswich Public Schools - Dr. Brian Blake
	Lynn Public Schools - Ms. Debra Ruggiero
	Lynnfield Public Schools - Ms. Kristen Vogel
	Manchester-Essex Regional School District - Ms. Pamela Beaudoin
	Marblehead Public Schools - Dr. John Buckey
	Masconomet Regional School District - Dr. Michael Harvey
	Nahant Public Schools - Mr. Anthony Pierantozzi
	North Reading Public Schools - Dr. Patrick Daly
	Peabody Public Schools - Dr. Joshua Vadala
	Pentucket Regional School District - Dr. Justin Bartholomew
	Reading Public Schools - Dr. Thomas Milaschewski
	Rockport Public Schools - Dr. Mark Branco
	Salem Public Schools - Dr. Stephen Zrike
	Swampscott Public Schools - Ms. Pamela Angelakis
	Triton Regional School District - Mr. Brian Forget
	Tri-Town School Union - Dr. Scott Morrison



Collaborative Information

ORGANIZATION CHART



ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM, 2022-2023

Francine Rosenberg, Executive Director

Larry Fleming, Director of Finance and Operations

Rebecca Rein, Director of Nursing

Eric Aldrich, Director of Educational Technology

Windi Bowditch, Director of Clinical Training and Consultation

Martha Krol, Principal/Director, Kevin O'Grady School

David Mercier, Principal/Director, Northshore Academy Upper School

Tracy Farraher, Principal/Director, Northshore Academy Lower School

Lynsey Page, Principal/Director, Topsfield Vocational Academy

Ellen Heald, Principal/Director, Embark & SOAR Programs

Michelle Lipinski, Principal/Director, Northshore Recovery High School

Monique Bourgault, Director of Facilities

Nancy Celli, Director of Human Resources



Mission / Core Values & Beliefs / Vision

MISSION

The mission of the Northshore Education Consortium is to support member districts by offering high quality, cost-effective school programs, consultation, professional development, support services and resources to ensure that districts can provide successful learning experiences for all students, including those with complex or low-incidence special needs.

CORE VALUES

1. Individualized, Strength-Based Education
2. Compassion and Respect
3. Teamwork and Collaboration
4. Excellence and Lifelong Learning

GUIDING BELIEFS

1. Communities need a broad continuum of options for children with disabilities and other risk factors.
2. All children deserve an education that allows them to achieve their full human potential, whether that means preparation for college or career, or maximum independent functioning and quality of life.
3. All children deserve an education that is individualized, strength-based, and has high expectations for achievement.
4. People with disabilities and their families deserve to be treated with compassion and respect.
5. Best outcomes are achieved through multi-disciplinary teamwork and collaboration between families, educators, and community partners.
6. Every member of the community, regardless of age, role, or ability should be engaged in a continuous learning process with a commitment to the highest level of excellence.

LONG-RANGE VISION

Our vision is to provide a continuum of services for our region, to ensure the best possible outcomes for all students, particularly those with risk factors or disabilities. We will strive to do this by providing outstanding educational programs, but also by becoming the “go to” resource in the region for individuals looking for consultation, training, information or guidance around helping children with special needs.

We will achieve this vision by continuously developing the following:

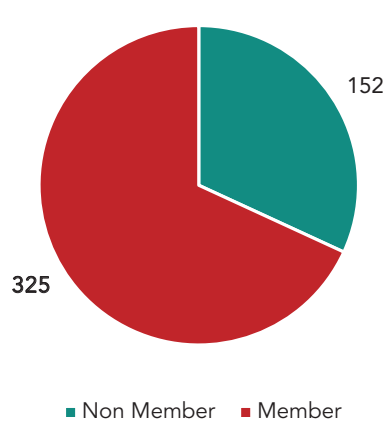
1. High quality, specialized programs for children with complex special needs, addictions, or other unique challenges. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Assuring that our programs utilize the latest evidence-based practices.
 - b. Assuring that high standards are set for all students, regardless of disability, and that we are continuously measuring our success in meeting those standards.
 - c. Assuring that we have access to current technology, adaptive equipment, and other resources necessary for preparing our students for college, career, citizenship, and maximum independent functioning.
 - d. Providing opportunities for students to experience a rich array of opportunities beyond the core curriculum, including arts, fitness and wellness, community trips and activities, service learning, internships and supported work opportunities, etc.
 - e. Maintaining strong connections to community organizations that provide medical and mental health services.
 - f. Providing supports and services for families of children with special needs.
2. State-of-the-art professional development opportunities for our own staff and those from our districts, enabling them to stay up-to-date on best practices for complex youngsters.
3. Consultation, home, and school-based services that respond to the needs of our districts.
4. Partnerships with other schools and collaboratives, colleges, state and community agencies to advocate for and promote the interests of children and young adults with complex needs and their families.
5. Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging



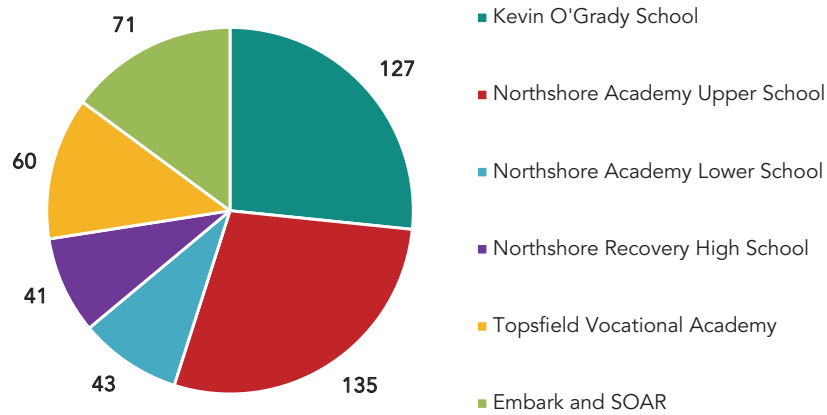
School Programs 2022-2023

During the 2022-2023 school year, Northshore Education Consortium’s approved day schools served 477 students from 20 member and 44 non-member districts.

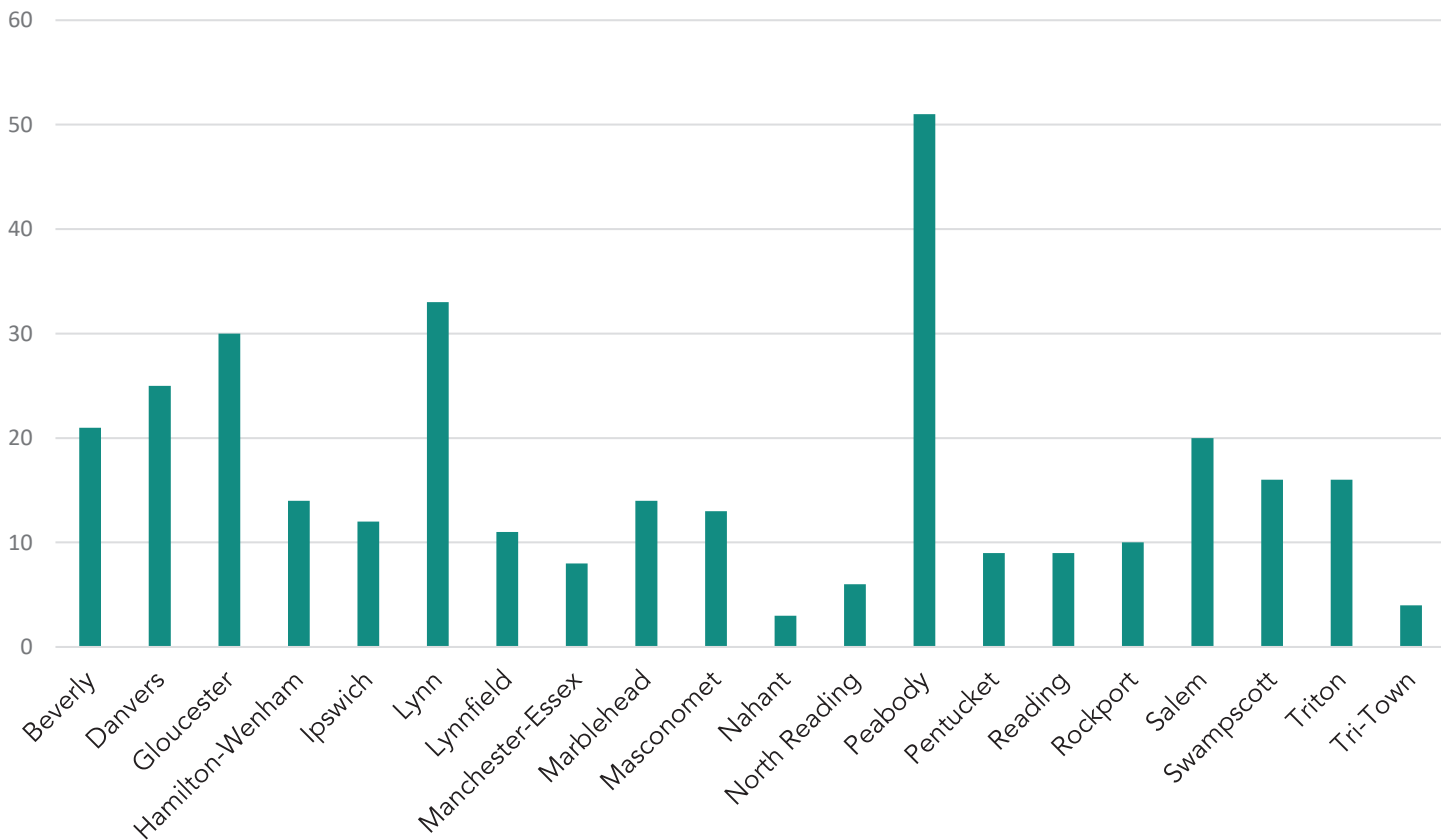
STUDENTS FROM MEMBER & NON-MEMBER DISTRICTS



STUDENTS BY PROGRAM



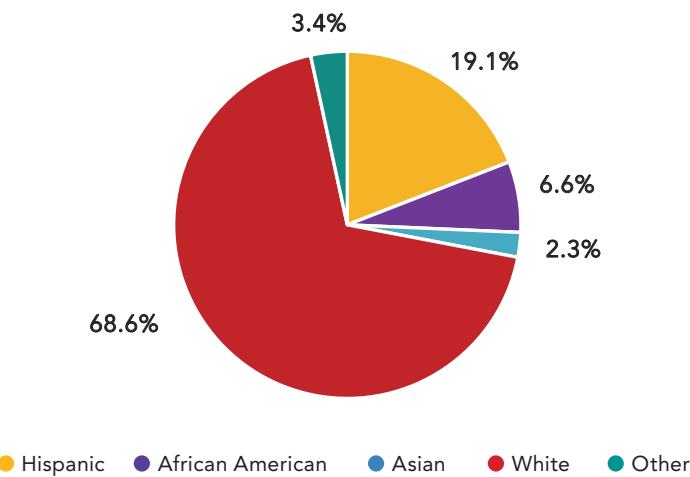
STUDENTS SERVED BY MEMBER DISTRICTS



Demographics 2022-2023

The following information is based on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education School and District Profile Data.

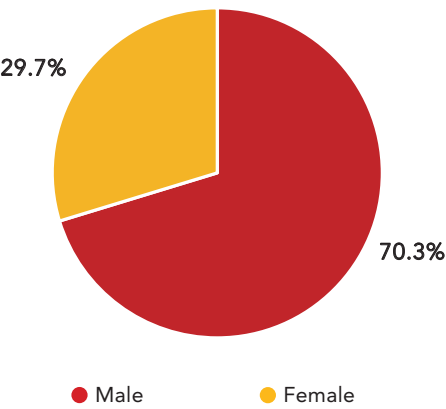
RACE & ETHNICITY



“When people ask him about school, he often says, ‘I don’t like it – I LOVE it!’”

- NEC Parent

GENDER



ADDITIONAL DATA

First Language not English	8.9%
English Learner	1.1%
Low-Income	64.6%

Kevin O'Grady School

112 SOHIER ROAD | BEVERLY, MA

The **Kevin O'Grady School (KOG)** serves students ages 3-22 with significant developmental disabilities including:

- Intellectual impairments
- Autism
- Multiple disabilities
- Physical disabilities
- Complex medical needs
- Sensory impairments
- Visual impairments

The staff of the Kevin O'Grady School believes that team collaboration is essential to maximize each student's level of independence, development of functional life skills, and academic achievement. Various services and therapies are integrated within the classroom setting, offering a more intensive model of support and intervention. The school focuses on developing academic and life skills to maximize students' educational potential and increase opportunities for meaningful participation in home and community activities.

During the 2022-2023 school year, KOG served 127 students from 33 districts.

MCAS-Alt portfolios were submitted for all eligible students in grades 3-10.

APPROACH

At the Kevin O'Grady School, each student's program focuses on developing these core skills:

- Communication (including augmentative and assistive technology)
- Functional academics
- Activities of daily living
- Social and leisure skills
- Pre-vocational and vocational skills
- Movement and functional mobility
- Adaptive behavioral skills

SPECIALIZED SERVICES

- Vision, orientation and mobility and deafblind services
- Support groups and workshops for families
- Augmentative and assistive technology assessments
- Adaptive equipment and wheelchair clinic

PROGRAMS

Foundations Program

The Foundations Preschool classroom provides intensive services for children ages 3-6 with special needs. The program follows the Massachusetts Department of Education Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences. Within an integrated classroom with peer models, students acquire the communication, social/emotional, and self-help skills they need to successfully transition back to schools within their community or other specialized programs. All services are provided within the classroom to assure comprehensive integration and carryover of learning objectives. In addition to their bright, cheerful classroom, children enjoy playing on the school's beautiful, accessible playground for young students. A glider, swings, climbing structure and sensory stations provide outside fun for children of all abilities.

Access Program

The Access Program provides intensive services for students ages 6-22 with multiple impairments, including students with complex medical needs. Students actively engage in daily routines, activities, and experiences that provide optimal levels of stimulation required to explore their environment and increase quality of life. For some students, complex medical issues require frequent care from qualified personnel. Nursing services and therapies are integrated into the classroom with the emphasis on teaming with classroom staff to meet the objectives of each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Families are provided with support to complete the guardianship process and transition planning becomes an important focus of the IEP. Behavioral interventions are developed as a team and coordinated by Board Certified Behavior Analysts.



Kevin O'Grady School

Reach Program

Reach provides intensive services for children ages 6-13 on the Autism Spectrum or who have developmental or intellectual impairments. Students acquire the academic, communication, social/emotional and self-help skills they need to reach their full potential. Teachers use research-based teaching methodologies. The emphasis is on learning through systematic instruction, including structured teaching and applied behavior analysis. Adaptations, including sensory diets, augmentative communication systems, adaptive equipment, and environmental supports, enable students to engage actively in learning. Behavioral interventions are developed as a team and coordinated by Board Certified Behavior Analysts.

Strive Program

Strive classrooms provide intensive services for students with intellectual and multiple impairments, including students with autism and complex medical needs, 7-22 years of age. Students acquire the ability to access the curriculum through varied targeted developmental communication and/or motor skills. Adaptations include: sensory diets, augmentative communication systems, adaptive equipment, and environmental supports that enable students to actively engage in learning. Families are provided with support to complete the guardianship process and transition planning becomes an important focus of the IEP. Behavioral interventions are developed as a team and coordinated by Board Certified Behavior Analysts.

Target Program

Target provides intensive services for adolescents and young adults ages 11-22 who are on the Autism Spectrum or have intellectual impairments. Students focus on the academic, communication, social/emotional, self-help, pre-vocational, vocational, and life skills needed for them to become active members of the community. Students begin by practicing skills within our structured, in-house vocational centers including: Training Center, Recycle, Supply & Delivery, Clerical, and Prime Products. Job skills include: recycling paper, cans and bottles, stocking shelves, making items to sell, and preparing mailings. They also work on developing independence and responsibility by participating in community outings and vocational internships. Students undergo a comprehensive vocational assessment to identify their skills, strengths, and vocational interests. Families are provided with support to complete the guardianship process and transition planning becomes an important focus of the IEP. Behavioral interventions are developed as a team and coordinated by Board Certified Behavior Analysts.



Northshore Academy Upper School

126 SOHIER ROAD | BEVERLY, MA

Located in Beverly, **Northshore Academy Upper School (NSAU)** serves students in grades 7-12 who struggle with a variety of social, emotional, and psychological challenges. Students may also have learning disabilities, be diagnosed with Autism Spectrum disorders or be dealing with several of these challenges simultaneously. NSAU served 135 students from 40 districts during the 2022-2023 school year. 15 students participated in work opportunities to learn job skills within the school and three students participated in dual enrollment classes through North Shore Community College. 16 students graduated. Two of these students went on to college, five entered the workforce, three entered a trade school, and five continued to receive special education or other additional services. At NSAU, social/emotional learning is fully integrated into the students' day with a multi-tiered system of support enabling them to focus on academic progress while also enhancing the core social/emotional competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.

NSAU's programs and services have been designed to help students enhance their academic and social skills to prepare them for return to their school district, college, and/or job placement. This is accomplished through assigning each student to a multi-disciplinary team of professionals which includes an academic advisor, clinician, and behavior specialists. This team and the students' parents/guardians work together to meet the individual student's needs using innovative educational programming. Core academics take place during the first half of the day along with skill focus strands and vocational opportunities through its Media, Art, Cosmetology, and Culinary programs. Various social/emotional enrichment opportunities are provided in the afternoon in the form of Outdoor Adventure classes, Health and Wellness classes, Leadership groups, and student-interest clubs. All students have an Individual Educational Plan and are referred through the Special Education Department of the student's sending school district.

ACADEMICS

- An integrated curriculum, which includes multi-sensory learning, art, drama, and music education, project-based learning, and opportunities for physical and recreational development, including a dynamic outdoor adventure program
- Small classroom size, which provides a more intensive and focused learning environment for students
- Enhanced computer and technology programming exposing students to a broader educational experience
- Academic testing to accurately assess the educational strengths and needs of each student
- Vocational programming and work study opportunities presenting college and/or employment options to students



CLINICAL SERVICES

- Psychosocial assessment to accurately determine social, emotional, and behavioral interventions needed to support student success in the classroom
- Case management coordinating school-based services and/or facilitating referrals to outside agencies for substance abuse treatment, psychiatric assessment, and individual and/or family therapy
- Family supports and communication
- School-based counseling
- Psycho-Social Educational Groups (i.e., life skills, anger management, transition to young adulthood, teen health, social skills, college and career preparation, social thinking curriculum-based groups, etc.)
- Art/expressive therapy
- Speech and language, occupational therapy, or physical therapy if needed
- Positive Behavior Interventions Systems



Northshore Academy Upper School

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- Social skill development specific to classroom and community interaction (anger management, decision making, critical thinking)
- Crisis management
- Positive Behavior Intervention plans and emotional support targeted at keeping the student in their classroom
- Restorative practices to create a positive culture, develop personal insight, improve social dynamics

TRANSITION PLANNING AND COLLEGE PREPARATION SERVICES

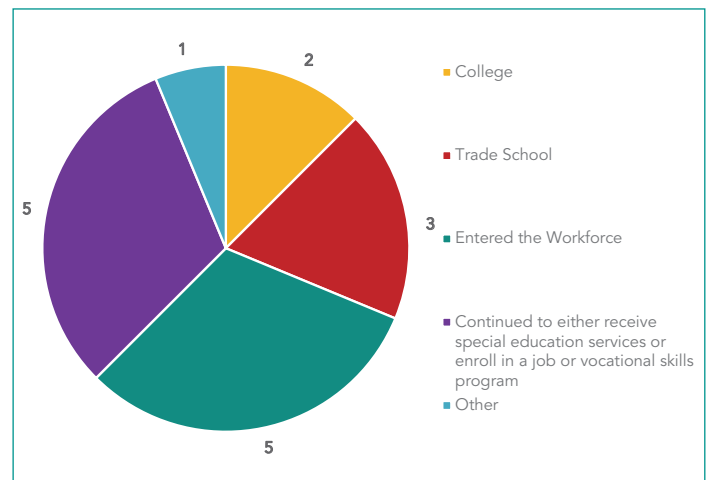
- Career awareness and exploration activities (job shadows, class sessions, and workshops)
- Career center workshop
- College planning and preparation throughout the year
- Internships
- Classes on employment and career development skills
- Numerous college and trade school tours and information sessions
- Transition Planning Night for parents to provide information about college exploration, career preparation, digital portfolio use, the IEP process and transition planning, and how to use community resources and supports to prepare students for life after high school
- Close collaboration with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
- Onsite PSAT and SAT
- Dual enrollment

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

- Intramural basketball and soccer teams
- Saturday and school vacation hiking trips
- Drivers Education provided on site in collaboration with Triad Driving Academy
- After-school “LAN” parties (Local Area Network) which give students an opportunity to come together and develop social skills while engaging in a variety of gaming activities
- Electives, including digital media and technology, culinary arts, fine arts, cosmetology, music, drama, and rock climbing



POST-GRADUATION PLANS



NSAU served 135 students from 40 districts during the 2022-2023 school year. 16 students graduated. Two of these students went on to college, five entered the workforce, three entered a trade school, and five continued to receive special education or other additional services.

Northshore Academy Lower School

83 PINE STREET | PEABODY, MA

The **Northshore Academy Lower School (NSAL)** is located in West Peabody and serves students in grades K-6 who struggle with a variety of social, emotional, and psychological challenges. Students may also have learning disabilities, be diagnosed with Autism Spectrum disorders, or be dealing with several of these challenges simultaneously. NSAL served 43 students from 26 districts during the 2022-2023 school year.

NSAL features small self-contained classrooms with a great deal of individual support. Clinical and behavioral support staff work closely with each classroom team, creating a closely connected multi-disciplinary team working with each student and their family.

In recent years, Northshore Academy Lower School has worked to embrace a Trauma-Informed approach. Eight staff members have completed a certificate program in trauma & learning through Lesley University. All staff have completed Level 1 training through MGH's THINK:KIDS program, and five program leaders received intensive coaching on the implementation of their Collaborative Problem Solving approach. We are proud that these efforts have resulted in a decreased need for time-out or physical intervention.

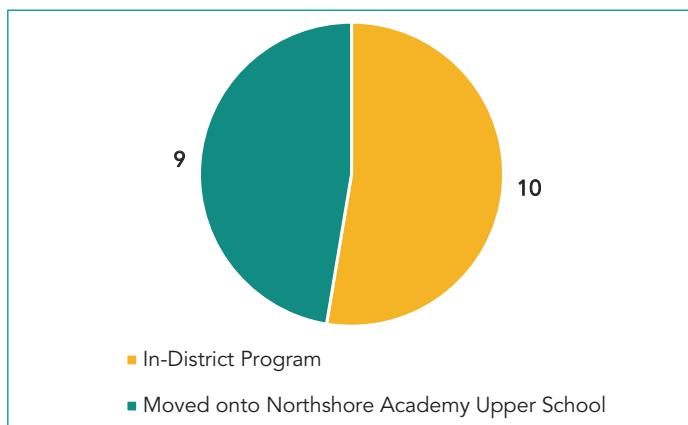
NSAL has filled a need for districts to provide comprehensive, short-term assessment for young children in crisis. These students receive a comprehensive multi-disciplinary assessment and the district receives concrete recommendations on what the child will need to make educational progress and/or return to a less restrictive placement.

Many students who attend Northshore Academy Lower School, whether for a short- or a longer-term placement, are able to return to a less restrictive environment.

During the 2022-2023 school year, 19 students “graduated” from NSAL; either because they were ready to return to a less restrictive environment or because they completed 6th grade. Ten of these students returned to an in-district setting, while nine moved onto Northshore Academy Upper School.



SCHOOL PLACEMENT POST GRADUATION



During the 2022-2023 school year, 19 students “graduated” from NSAL; either because they were ready to return to a less restrictive environment, or because they completed 6th grade. Ten of these students returned to an in-district setting, while nine moved onto Northshore Academy Upper School.



Topsfield Vocational Academy

248 BOSTON STREET | TOPSFIELD, MA

Topsfield Vocational Academy (TVA) is located in Topsfield and serves students in grades 9-12 with a range of learning, social-emotional, and behavioral health challenges.

During the 2022-2023 school year Topsfield, Vocational Academy educated 60 students from 26 districts. 10 students graduated in 2023 and all of them have an interest in working in the community. One student received an \$84,000 scholarship to Montserrat College of Art.

In addition to academic and clinical programming, TVA features onsite vocational shops in the areas of culinary arts, print design, and carpentry. Students also participate in independent offsite jobs, as well as supervised, small group offsite vocational opportunities.

TVA offers a wide variety of community-based vocational internships. TVA maintains a partnership with the Essex Shipbuilding Museum, giving students the opportunity to participate in building boats and learning about the maritime history of the region.

TVA supports diverse learners. We educate the whole child and teach them, not only the academic content they need to graduate from high school, but also the life skills, training, and global perspective they need to be successful in a changing world.

Last year we integrated community-based trips into our curriculum to expose our students to a variety of environments and to build capacity with social expectations. In addition to fun community-based trips, students also give back to the community through a variety of community service opportunities and service learning projects.

TVA embraces connections and we have started planning events with our families and local community members. We started a Spring Festival last year that celebrates the diverse cultures of our community and brings people together for food and celebration. We are hoping to continue this tradition and many more.

TVA provides a unique learning environment with supportive staff where students are able to build confidence and capacity.



Northshore Recovery High School

112 SOHIER ROAD | BEVERLY, MA

Northshore Recovery High School (NRHS), located in Beverly, is designed to meet the complex needs of high school students who struggle with substance use and co-occurring mental health/academic needs. Since we are aware that this journey is not linear, especially for young people who struggle with substances, we continue to work with students who are still working towards their individual recovery goals. We will continue to provide a harm reduction approach to working with students and their families.

Unlike other NEC programs, students can be referred to NRHS by schools, parents, courts/state agencies, mental health providers, and other youth-serving agencies.

Funded by the State Department of Education and local school districts, NRHS provides students a trauma-informed high school environment with specialized clinical and intervention support needed by students who are struggling with issues related to substance use, trauma, mental health, and learning challenges.

During the 2022-2023 school year, NRHS served 41 students from 23 communities. Seven students graduated in June 2023. Most of them are gainfully employed and working towards developing strategies to continue to address their substance use and stabilization needs.

PROGRAM DETAILS

- NRHS' competency-based curriculum aligns with Massachusetts Frameworks, MCAS testing protocols, and course requirements of the districts we serve.
- While not a special education placement, staff at NRHS are able to meet the needs of students with IEPs who require accommodations and/or specially designed instruction.
- Students are eligible for graduation from their sending school district. The NRHS Guidance Director is responsible for coordinating requirements and credits needed for graduation with sending districts.
- Guidance staff work closely with districts, treatment providers, and other residential placements to provide an accurate transcript for enrolled students.
- NRHS provides wrap around case management for students who have complex histories with court, the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, and other community adolescent and adult serving agencies.
- Recovery Counselors and Social Workers develop wraparound recovery plans for all students. The plan includes academics, substance use, stabilization supports, transitional services, employment, and mental health needs.
- Staff works closely with parents/guardians and collaborating partners to provide clinical and behavioral support and find ways to support our students and their families.
- All students participate in clinical groups and drug testing as part of the program.
- NRHS Counselors will be available for onsite support and referral recommendation and facilitation as needed.



Transition Programs

SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY | 121 LORING AVENUE | SALEM, MA

NEC's **Transition Programs (SOAR & Embark)** prepare young adults ages 18-22 with moderate learning, psychiatric or intellectual disabilities for successful independence and employment, and in some cases, continuing education.

Fifteen students graduated from Embark and SOAR in 2023. 8 received diplomas, and 7 received certificates of completion. 3 of these students went on to paid employment and college. 2 students went on to supported employment. 10 went on to adult day programs, although 4 of these students also had paid employment with varying levels of support. All students completed travel training and learned to use public transportation, and two received their driver's licenses. 12 of the students completed certificates in CPR, First Aid, Serve Safe, or OSHA. At the time of graduation, 10 students were receiving ongoing support from DDS, 2 from DMH, and 13 from MRC.

Embark Program

The **Embark Program** is located at the Enterprise Center at Salem State University and is geared toward students with learning delays and intellectual disabilities. Students use the college campus resources (such as the library, bookstore, wellness center, and food court) to enhance their academic, vocational, and physical education. In 2022-2023, Embark served 36 students.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The Embark experience has two major components: independent life and occupational development. The components are integrated and together contribute to the successful transition of each student from home and school to independent life.

Independent Life

The Independent Life component focuses on foundation skills:

- Using resources within the community
- Public transportation training
- Consumer skills
- Social skill training and application
- Leisure options
- Oral and written communication; computer literacy
- Current events and issues
- Health issues and other issues pertaining to adult sexuality
- Occupational Development

Occupational Development

The Occupational Development component includes foundation skills, vocational/career preparation and placement, occupational assessment and advisement; internship opportunities. Students must attend Embark for a minimum of two years, up to a maximum of four years. The program sequence is individualized and includes the following:

- Vocational assessment
- Internship and/or job placement
- Residential living preparation
- Transition-related issues
- Maintaining employment



Transition Programs

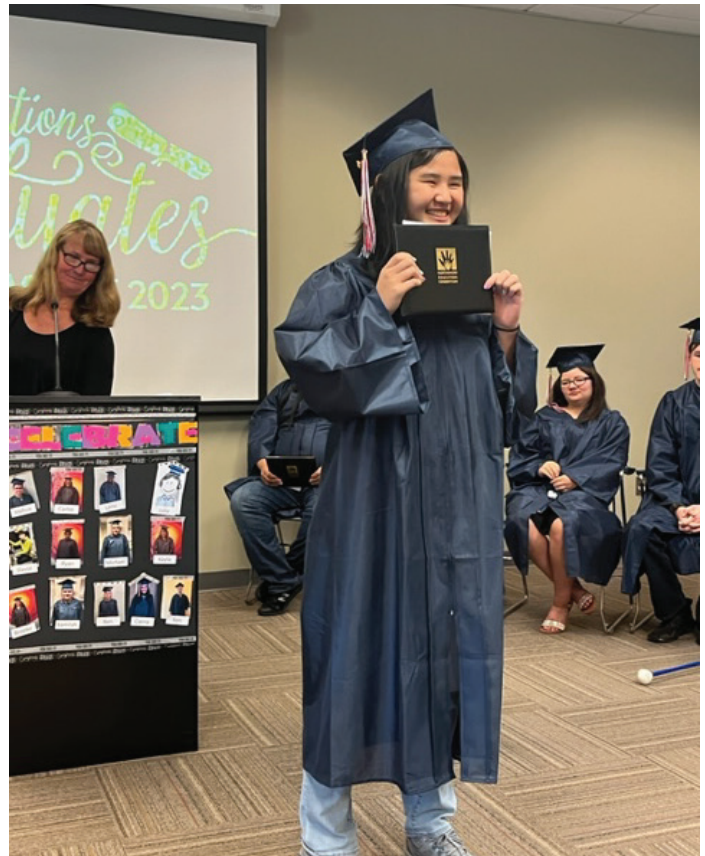
SOAR Program

SOAR is a specially designed transition program for students ages 18-22 with Autism Spectrum disorders, anxiety disorders and related diagnoses. The goal of the program is to assist students in transitioning to college and the world of work and to support students in becoming confident contributing members of society.

The SOAR program is located at the Enterprise Center at Salem State University. Students will experience the benefits of campus life while learning life and career skills such as travel training, organization, study skills, and social functioning. The program is geared toward students motivated to prepare for the next level of independence on a college campus or in the work force. During the 2022-2023 school year, 35 students attended the program.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- Self advocacy curriculum (self-awareness, self-disclosure)
- Time management
- Physical education (self-calming, self-regulation, yoga, wellness activities)
- Study skills (test preparation)
- Class etiquette
- Executive functioning supports/skills training
- Negotiating
- Weekly community trips
- Transportation options (travel training, rideshare options)
- Leisure activities
- Social skills
- Vocational training through paid and unpaid community based internships
- Use of a variety of technology options



Consultation, Contract Services & Regional Collaboration

During the 2022-2023 school year, Northshore Education Consortium provided vision, orientation, and mobility services to 89 students from 23 districts, and mental health consultation or wraparound services to 60 students from 11 districts.

CONNECTIONS WRAPAROUND PROGRAM

The Connections Wraparound Program added yet another clinician to the team this year, thanks to grant funding and increased district interest. Grant funding enabled us to keep the costs low. Connections served 60 students from 11 districts, provided wraparound supports to students from the regional PASS program, and provided training and consultation to participating districts on topics such as school refusal, mental health disorders, trauma, and family challenges.

In addition, we provided in-district clinical supervision to four member districts, and continued to provide grant-subsidized Youth Mental Health First Aid training.

REGIONAL JOB-ALIKE GROUPS

Northshore Education Consortium continues to host the expanded job-alike groups for Special Education Administrators, team chairpeople, and school psychologists, providing much-needed collegial support.

We have over 100 people in the email groups for Team Chairs and Out of District Coordinators, and an average of 33 attendees at each meeting, representing 12 districts.

Our School Psychologist Group has 70 members, with an average of 25 attending each meeting.

We provide these groups free of cost to our members.

REGIONAL COLLABORATION

We are pleased to collaborate with the YMCA of the North Shore and Children's Friend and Family Services/JRI to run the very successful Positive Alternatives to Student Support Program, providing alternatives to long-term suspension for youth experiencing behavioral health challenges.

In addition, we are proud that several members of our leadership team have presented at the Youth at Risk Conference and through Massachusetts Partnerships for Youth.

NORTHSHORE EDUCATION CONSORTIUM FAMILY CENTER

The Northshore Education Consortium Family Center runs several parent support groups and maintains a comprehensive resource library filled with books, pamphlets, and other materials on a wide range of disabilities and special education, mental health, and substance abuse issues. These resources are available for parents and professionals throughout the region.

"I just wanted to thank you and your school/staff for all of their dedication, kindness and genuine investment in their students. It is the best feeling to send my child to a place that celebrates his every little victory as much as I do. The staff make me feel like my child is seen and important. I leave everyday knowing he was challenged, loved and supported all day."

- NEC Parent



Cost Effectiveness of Programs & Services

Northshore Education Consortium's approved day programs are both cost effective based on a clear financial analysis of rates, but also enable districts to save on transportation costs by keeping students closer to home, and they are able to provide a higher quality service to students by pooling specialized expertise within one central location.

The simplest way to discuss the cost effectiveness of NEC-approved public day programs is to compare them to private special education placements that serve similar populations. (See chart on page 21.)

Based on an analysis of private schools serving similar populations, member districts can save over \$300 per day (over \$50,000 per year, not including transportation costs) by sending a student to an NEC program. NEC tuition rates include all therapy and nursing services.

COST EFFECTIVENESS OF NORTSHORE RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOL

It is difficult to articulate the cost-effectiveness of Northshore Recovery High School based on financial analysis. There are only five Recovery High Schools in Massachusetts, and there are not a lot of similar programs or schools to compare them to. By providing a regionalized Recovery High School, we are able to offer highly specialized services to a targeted group of high risk teenagers and enable these students to receive the needed supports to earn their diplomas. Most districts would be unable to provide these services within districts, as the cohort of students who need the services would be too small.

Districts were charged tuition of \$83 to \$133 per day depending on special education needs and member status.

The full cost of providing clinical and recovery services is subsidized by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health grant.

Many of the students, prior to enrollment at Northshore Recovery High School, were utilizing extensive mental health services within their public schools or were enrolled in public or private day or residential schools with tuitions ranging from \$260 (Northshore Academy Upper School) to over \$700 per day.

COST EFFECTIVENESS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We continue to provide a range of job-alike groups for special education and clinical staff from our member districts at no cost. Over 150 professionals participate in these groups. We have been successful in seeking philanthropic grants to offset the cost of most of our training and consultation services. We charge member districts \$150 per hour for professional consultation whereas, when we have needed to hire consultants to work with our staff, we have paid upwards of \$250.

SUBSIDIZING THROUGH PHILANTHROPY

Given our desire to keep tuition rates affordable and to provide the highest quality programs and services for our students, we have expanded our capacity to seek private philanthropic dollars to supplement and enhance what we are able to provide without increasing tuition rates. During the 2022-2023 school year, Friends of Northshore Education Consortium raised \$500,000 through grants and private donations. This enabled us to provide low-cost training, purchase new technology and communication devices, as well as to support a wide range of extracurricular and enrichment activities. The Friends of Northshore Education Consortium is an established 501(c)(3) non-profit that exists for the sole purpose of supporting NEC programs through fundraising efforts including events, grant proposals and major gift donations (EIN# 61-1479553).



Friends of NEC's annual road race, Festivus 5K for Autism 2022, raised over \$35,000 to support NEC students.



We are the grateful recipient of a \$275,000 Cummings Grant to support capital needs over the next three years.

Cost Effectiveness of Programs & Services

Severe Disabilities

School	Daily Rate FY 24
NEC - Kevin O'Grady School: Member	\$475
NEC - Kevin O'Grady School: Non-Member	\$588
BC Campus School	\$577
Beverly School for the Deaf: Children's Communication Center	\$583
Melmark	\$605
Nashoba Learning Group	\$609
Kennedy Day School	\$616
NE Center for Children	\$663
Hopeful Journeys	\$684
Perkins School for the Blind: Intermediate	\$1,033

Emotional Disability (Grades K-12)

School	Daily Rate FY 24
NEC - Northshore Academy, Topsfield Vocational: Member	\$263
NEC - Northshore Academy, Topsfield Vocational: Non-Member	\$324
St. Ann's	\$374
New England Academy	\$403
Arlington School (McLean)	\$451
Walker	\$521
Community Therapeutic Day School	\$542
Dearborn Academy / School for Children	\$593
Lighthouse School	\$699
Manville / Judge Baker	\$730

Intellectual Disability / Autism (Ages 18-22)

School	Daily Rate FY 24
NEC - Embark/SOAR: Member	\$226
NEC - Embark/SOAR: Non-Member	\$263
Riverview School	\$428

Progress toward Achieving Purpose & Objectives

The purpose and objectives of Northshore Education Consortium are stated in the Collaborative Agreement as:

PURPOSE

The Consortium exists to provide education and related services as requested by its member districts, including, but not limited to programs and services for children with low-incidence disabilities and professional development for teachers and other related service professionals. These programs and services will also be available for non-member districts.

The collaborative Board of Directors (herein, “the Board”) has the authority to decide that the Consortium should provide services, programs, and/or assistance for its member districts in addition to those outlined in the first paragraph, consistent with applicable laws and regulations related to educational collaboratives.

Focus

The focus of the Consortium is to provide innovative, high quality, cost-effective educational services for students with complex or low-incidence disabilities, to provide resources for member districts, and to serve as a regional center for planning and problem solving for member districts.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives of the Consortium are:

1. To play a leading role in defining the future role of collaboratives in the Commonwealth.
2. To strengthen and expand the Consortium programs and services in a cost-effective manner that meets the needs of students and faculty in member districts and the region.
3. To develop new programs for students, particularly those with special needs, allowing them to meet the highest academic, social, and life-skill objectives in accordance with emerging evidence-based practices.
4. To provide high quality, highly relevant professional development for the employees of the Consortium & member districts.

In terms of Objective 1, the Executive Director continues to be a regular participant in Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaborative (MOEC) state-wide and regional meetings, is a regional representative to the MOEC Board, and will become President of the MOEC Board next year. In addition, she convenes regular meetings of regional SPED administrators and maintains connections to the region’s universities and child-serving state agencies.

Progress toward meeting Objectives 2-4 is generally assessed in an ongoing way by looking at utilization of programs and services, gathering both formal and informal data about student outcomes, and gathering both formal and informal feedback from consumers including school district personnel and parents. In the spring of 2023, the Executive Director invited special education administrators from member districts to participate in focus groups held on Zoom to give feedback on existing programs and share thoughts and ideas about anticipated future needs. Information about utilization, outcomes, and cost effectiveness is contained in each of the program descriptions in earlier sections of this report.

Strategic Goals

We have continued to be guided by our three strategic goals:

Goal 1: Continue to Strengthen Quality of Programs and Services

Goal 2: Maintain Financial and Leadership Stability for Long-Range Sustainability

Goal 3: Expand capacity to meet Regional Needs around Special Education and Youth at Risk and participate in larger scale efforts

Specific accomplishments:

Goal 1: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Curriculum goals were incorporated into educator evaluation goals in a more comprehensive manner, and program development continued in all areas. Our PD days focused on the goals of DEI, Universal Design, and Restorative Justice. A team consisting of three principals and our HR coordinator attended the 7-part DESE PLC on Educator Diversification and developed an action plan for recruitment and retention of diverse employees. Our committee continued to meet regularly, and during our DESE mid-cycle visit, the reviewers noted the visibility of our DEI efforts.

We welcomed a new Principal at Topsfield Vocational Academy who implemented a variety of new initiatives to strengthen the quality of academic, vocational, and clinical programming.

Goal 2: Throughout the year, we continued to implement the Infinite Visions software to upgrade our accounting and HR procedures. We completed negotiations and implemented a new Collective Bargaining agreement. A new Director of Finance was hired. The year ended with a slight operating surplus, thus maintaining fiscal stability despite ongoing fluctuations in enrollment, a high level of student acuity, and ongoing workforce challenges.

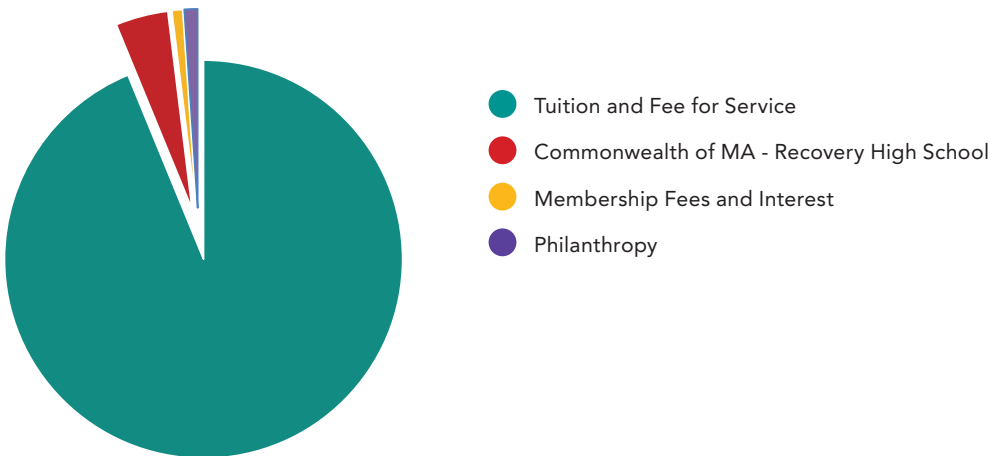
Goal 3: NEC played an important role throughout the year in supporting our region by offering well-attended job-alike groups, offering training on stress, trauma, and mental health, and expanding our wraparound programming. Senior staff continued to be active in state-wide coalitions and committees, as well as to provide training and consultation to member districts as well as to the broader community.

Financial Summary FY 2023

A snapshot of Northshore Education Consortium’s financial performance is included below. For more detailed information, please see the Audited Financial Statements and Uniform Financial Report.

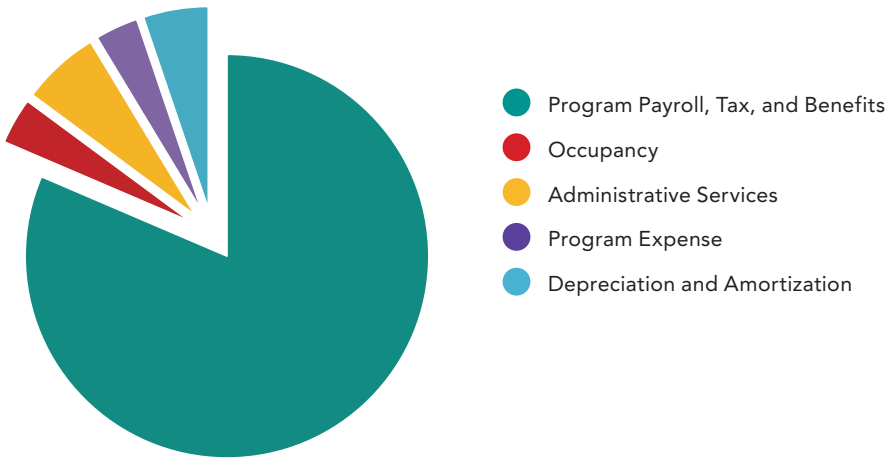
FY 2023 REVENUE SOURCES

Source	Dollars	Percentages
Tuition and Fee for Service	\$26,571,610	93.80%
Commonwealth of MA - Recovery High School	\$1,206,744	4.26%
Membership Fees and Interest	\$245,890	0.87%
Philanthropy	\$305,000	1.08%
Total Revenue	\$28,329,244	100%



FY 2023 EXPENSE CATEGORIES

Category	Dollars	Percentages
Program Payroll, Tax, and Benefits	\$22,611,295	81.44%
Occupancy	\$1,025,559	3.69%
Administrative Services	\$1,727,470	6.22%
Program Expense	\$956,252	3.44%
Depreciation and Amortization	\$1,444,579	5.20%
Total Expenses	\$27,765,155	100%





NORTHSHORE
EDUCATION
CONSORTIUM

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