

CONCORD AREA SPECIAL EDUCATION (CASE) COLLABORATIVE

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



CASE collaborative

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(Celebration of Student Achievement)

Letter from Executive Director

Dear Members,

This past year, the services of Concord Area Special Education (CASE) Collaborative were based on its core values of Caring, Excellence, and Collaboration. The incredible CASE staff, whether in our classrooms, in our vans, or in our offices, demonstrated a commitment to providing high quality services to our students and families.

This Annual Report offers a review of CASE's accomplishments during the past year. We served students in our *special education programs* in a variety of settings - in public schools and in our Approved Public Day setting. CASE had the distinction of providing services at all levels, from preschool all the way through post high school. The primary disabilities of students at CASE included those with severe developmental, cognitive, and medical needs, developmental disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, and social emotional disabilities.

As part of our *transportation* service to our members, we transported students to 41 locations in towns all over the commonwealth. Our Transportation Department was required to continually adapt its services with very short notice based on the specific circumstances as a result of the pandemic. These changes were obviously challenging but the staff never wavered in their professionalism or commitment to maintaining student safety.

The CETT team played a prominent role during the past school year in *consultation, education, and training in technology*. The Mission of the CASE CETT Team is to support the use of Assistive Technology (AT) and Alternative-Augmentative Communication (AAC) for students from the CASE Collaborative communities and local school districts.

The CETT Team strives to provide guidance, support and consultation to educational teams in the selection and use of appropriate assistive technology and AAC systems, with the goal of helping students access the curriculum, meet individual educational goals, and communicate functionally and meaningfully. We made other important strides in technology, including a weekly newsletter focused primarily on sharing tech tools and resources with staff.

Despite all the challenges we faced on a regular basis, our flexibility and creativity were born out of our commitment to our students, families, and staff. As we look back on our

accomplishments, we are justifiably proud of the way we navigated the 2022-2023 school year as a collective whole.

Sincerely,

Sanchita Banerjee
Executive Director



(Preschool Graduate in LFL Program in Davis School, Bedford)



(Elementary School Graduate in Davis School, Bedford)

Nurturing and Inspiring Every Child to Learn and Grow

About Us

For 45 years, Concord Area Special Education (CASE) Collaborative has been an organization that allows school districts to plan, develop and implement programs for students with special needs. It affords school districts the opportunity to augment local services and provide a continuum of special education programs through collaboration with member school districts. It provides a mechanism for people to share ideas and resources for the purpose of meeting a common need.

CASE is an educational collaborative agency made up of 11 regional and municipal districts serving the Greater Boston metropolitan area. CASE is governed by a board of directors comprised of ten school superintendents representing each of its member school districts. CASE was formed in 1974 to meet regional needs of member school districts. The main, although not exclusive, focus of CASE Collaborative is children and young adults who require special education.



Nurturing and Inspiring Every Child to Learn and Grow

Mission of CASE Collaborative

CASE Collaborative's mission is to maximize the full potential of students with disabilities in enriched and supportive academic, social, recreational, and vocational environments.

Purpose of CASE Collaborative

CASE Collaborative is an education collaborative established in 1974 to meet the regional needs of member school districts in the areas of special education programming and transportation. Comprised of eleven regional and municipal school districts serving the Greater Boston metropolitan area, CASE is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of the superintendents of member districts. The current CASE Collaborative Agreement was approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) on November 20, 2015. As stated in the Collaborative Agreement, CASE's primary purpose is to "jointly conduct regional educational programs and services on behalf of member school committees."

Working collaboratively with CASE allows school districts to plan, develop, and implement programs for students with disabilities. CASE programs afford school districts the opportunity to provide a full continuum of special education services to meet the needs of a wide range of students. Additionally, CASE offers special education transportation services to member districts, and technology consultation. Further, parent engagement is an integral component of the Collaborative.



(Individualized Learning in the LFL Program at Colebrook School)

CASE Board of Directors for 2022-2023

MEMBER DISTRICTS	SUPERINTENDENT
Acton – Boxborough	Peter Light
Bedford	Philip Conrad
Carlisle	James O’Shea
Concord	Laurie Hunter (Chair)
Concord-Carlisle	Laurie Hunter (Chair)
Harvard	Linda Dwight
Lincoln	Rebecca McFall
Lincoln-Sudbury	Bella Wong
Littleton	Kelly Clenchy
Maynard	Brian Haas
Sudbury	Brad Crozier (Vice-Chair)



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Key Management and Program Staff

NAME	ROLE
Sanchita Banerjee	Executive Director
Melissa Devine	Assistant Director
George McCormack	Directors of Finance and Operations
Kim Munroe	Principal/Program Administrator
Martin Finnegan	Transportation Administrator
Regina Erickson	Coordinator of Projects
Ian Rhames	Treasurer

CASE Collaborative Address



120 Meriam Rd. Concord, MA 01742

978-318-1534

caseinfo@casecollaborative.org

Web Address for CASE Collaborative



The screenshot shows the top portion of the CASE Collaborative website. At the top center is the logo for CASE Collaborative, with the tagline "Nurturing and inspiring every child to learn and grow". To the right of the logo is a language selection dropdown menu showing "Eng". Below the logo is a horizontal navigation bar with buttons for "Home", "About Us", "Special Education Programs", "CETT", "Transportation", "For Families", "For Staff", "Careers", and "Governance Archive 2021-2022". Below the navigation bar is a dark blue banner with the text "Concord Area Special Education (CASE) Collaborative" and a link to "Case Collaborative Store". The main content area features a large photograph of a male teacher in a green jacket reading a colorful children's book to a young child in a blue shirt. The child is seated in a specialized chair. The book has a yellow cover with a blue cat character and the text "BUT WHO?". Below the photo is a dark blue footer containing the CASE Collaborative logo, the address "120 Meriam Rd. Concord, MA 01742", the phone number "978-318-1534", and the email "caseinfo@casecollaborative.org". At the bottom of the footer is the copyright notice: "© Copyright 2020 by Case Collaborative. Proudly created with Wix.com".

<https://www.casecollaborative.org/>

Nurturing and Inspiring Every Child to Learn and Grow

SERVICE TO COMMUNITIES

Special Education Programming

All CASE programs are staffed with licensed teachers, teaching assistants, Registered Behavior Technicians, Board Certified Behavior Analysts, Counselors, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Pathologists, Physical Therapists, and other related service therapists, including reading specialist, teachers of the visually impaired, orientation and mobility therapists, assistive technology and AAC specialists. The specific mix of professionals and services is dictated by the individual student's IEP.

Programs are available as school year programs, supplemented by an Extended School Year program during the summer. Academic, behavioral, and diagnostic assessments are provided.

Be it in public schools or DESE approved public day setting, our programs offer inclusion opportunities and appropriate school activities that promote a full spectrum of meaningful experiences. Our programs allow students to benefit from the richness of a highly specialized and diverse team of faculty and staff.

Empower Program



Empower (EMP) is a specialized program that meets the needs of students with complex language and learning challenges. Students with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, developmental disabilities, neurological disabilities, and intellectual disabilities are served in this program. Instruction is provided in whole class and small group formats based on grade and age level. This program offers curriculum based on curriculum standards set by DESE, and based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis, when appropriate. The curriculum is a blend of functional academics, social skills instruction, daily living skills, and intensive support from related service providers.

Empower utilizes a multi-sensory approach and provides lessons that integrate language, sensory, and social skills. A total communication approach is used to facilitate language development in the context of direct teaching and the natural environment. Staff address individual student needs with a focus on enhancing independence, self-reliance, responsibility, and social maturity. Assistive technology is integrated throughout the curriculum.

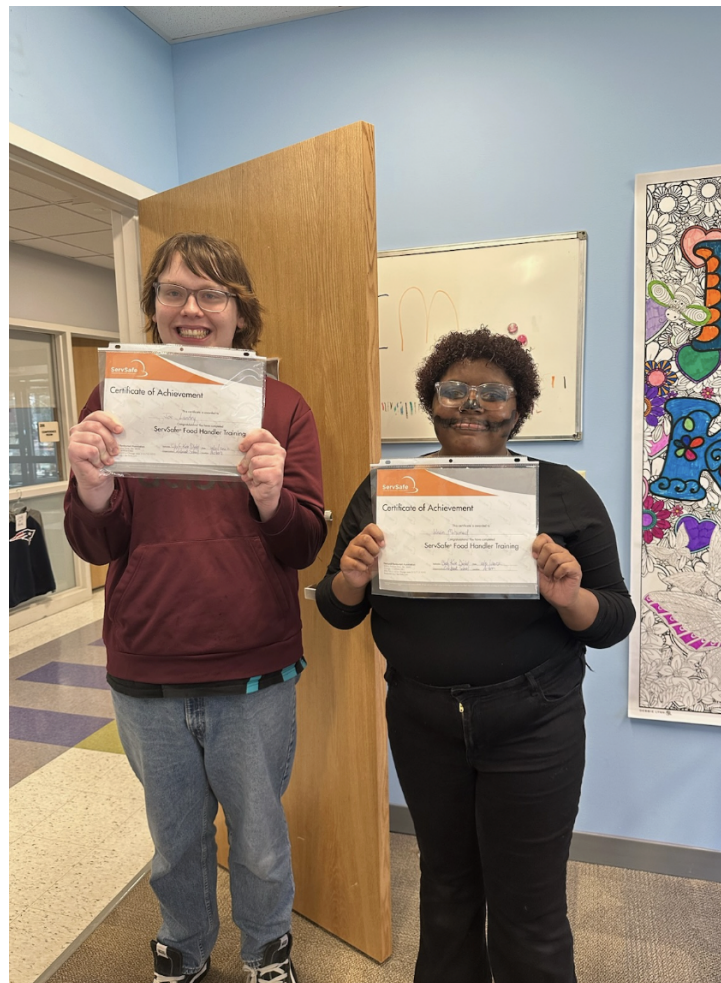
Learning for Life Program



Learning for Life (LFL) is a specialized program that addresses the many different cognitive, physical, medical, communication, and social needs of students. Instruction is individualized to address each student's unique needs. As appropriate, physical, visual, and verbal prompts, technology, and assistive devices are incorporated into each

student's program. The curriculum helps build independence and includes functional academics and daily living skills. Activities, materials, and instructional strategies are age and cognitively appropriate. LFL staff provide immediate feedback and provide numerous opportunities to maintain and generalize academic and life skills. Students in this program are provided extensive opportunities to demonstrate independence and self-advocacy skills, engage in social interactions, access community resources, and beginning at age 14, acquire and practice vocational skills in a multitude of community settings.

Therapeutic Intervention Program



The Therapeutic Intervention Program (TIP) is a specialized program that meets the needs of students experiencing mental health issues, school adjustment issues, trauma history, behavioral and social challenges, and other issues interfering with accessing grade-level curriculum and making substantial progress.

TIP offers a supportive environment to students with average to above-average cognitive profiles. Programs are developed based on students' grade and skill levels utilizing engaging curriculum to meet the specific needs of the students, who are held to

high academic standards. The rigorous curriculum outlines clear learning outcomes with matching assessments. Clinical support is provided in both individual and group modalities. All related services are available as necessary for all students; vocational and transition services are provided to students age 14 and older.

Extended School Year Services



(A Productive and Engaging ESY Program Based in Concord Public School)

A five-week summer option was available for students whose IEPs called for an extended year program. The CASE Extended Year Program typically addresses the students' IEP goals and benchmarks over the summer in much the same manner as the regular school year program. All district classrooms were programmed at the Thoreau School in Concord and the programs at Colebrook School remained in Acton. Students participated in academic instruction, community trips, and social skills activities. The Thoreau Club welcomed CASE back for a weekly swim trip.

Staffing and Services in CASE Programs

- Special Education Teachers
- Teaching Assistants
- ABA Tutors
- Board Certified Behavior Analysts
- School Counselors
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Physical Therapists
- Teacher of the Visually Impaired
- Deaf/Blind Services
- Orientation & Mobility Services
- Consulting Teacher of the Deaf
- Nursing
- Reading Specialist
- EL Services
- CETT (Assistive Technology/AAC Services)
-

ADMISSION PROCESS FOR CASE PROGRAMS

CASE Collaborative works with partner school districts to accept students referred to our programs. Students typically have a current Individualized Education Program (IEP). CASE can provide an Extended Evaluation in programs. The admissions process is comprehensive in order to ensure that each child's program is designed to maximize potential.

Referral

We request that parents work with their school district to begin the referral process. This allows us to make the visit as productive as possible by guiding families to appropriate classrooms and services that are best for their child. It's helpful to have a complete referral packet in advance of a visit. However, there are some circumstances where the sending district may make a special request for a family to visit before all the paperwork has been shared with CASE Collaborative. To make a referral, CASE is contacted at caseinfo@case.org or 978-318-1534.

Intake Assessment Review

The process usually is completed within 72 hours of receipt of a packet.

Tours

Parents and students will meet with CASE staff and have an opportunity to meet with staff and students in the program. Parents tour the school building and observe classrooms in action. The visit lasts approximately one hour and concludes with an opportunity to ask follow up questions. Students are then invited back for a visit day that may be scheduled for an hour or a full day.

Suitability

Once the intake, parent tours and student visit days are complete, CASE Collaborative determines whether our program is a good fit and can address the unique learning, behavioral, and social/emotional needs of the student. A determination is sent to the sending district.

CARING

It starts the minute a student gets on the bus and it's the foundation of everything we do as a community. Caring means supporting, challenging and persevering. It means taking the time to identify and connect with each individual's unique qualities.

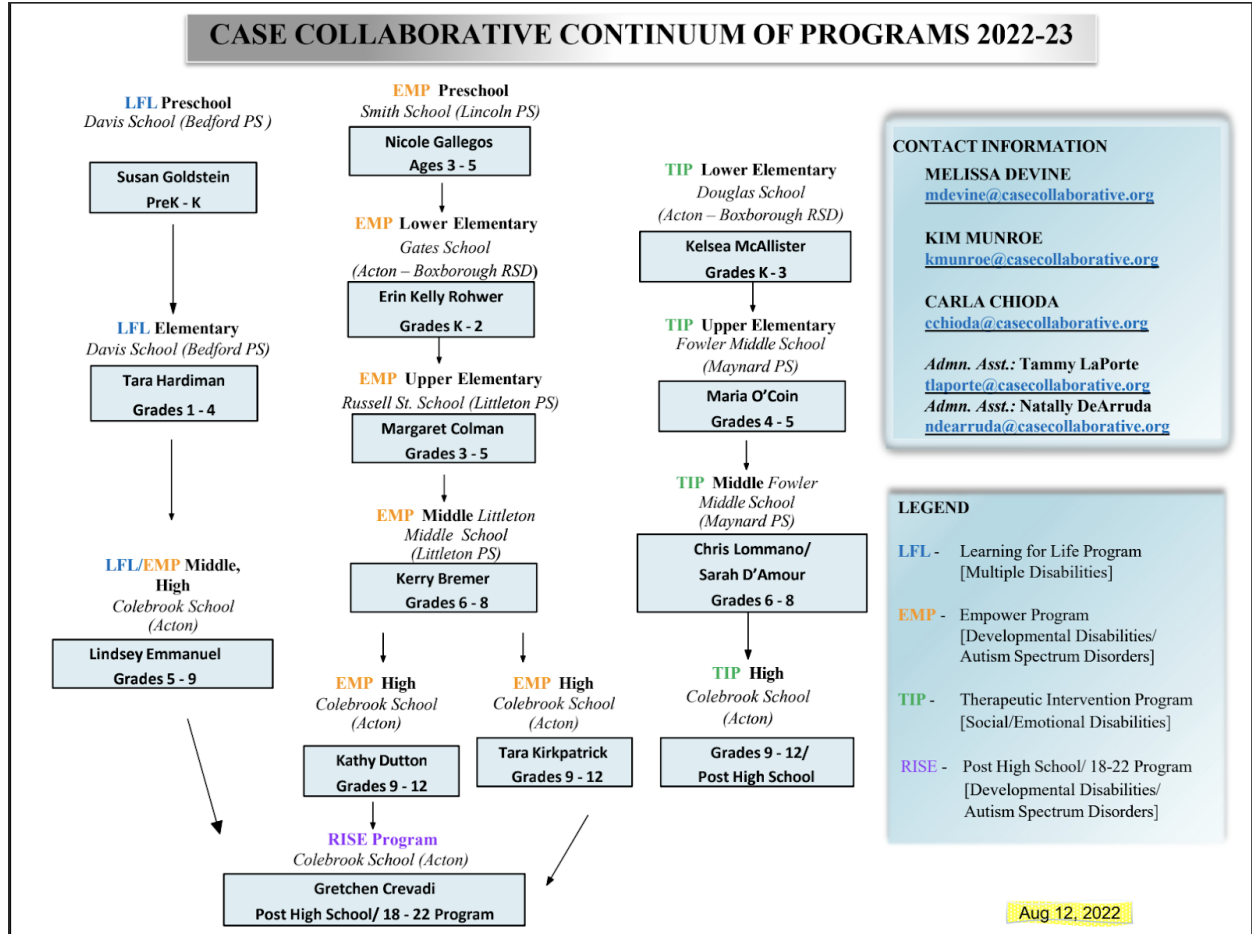
EXCELLENCE

We have high standards and set high expectations for our teachers and our students. There are always challenges. But we are resourceful and find new ways to support our student's growth.

COLLABORATION

Growth, learning and successful transitions flourish in a connected environment. Collaboration and communication are essential across our network: students and their families, drivers, teachers, therapists, administrators, host schools and the broader community.

Locations of CASE Collaborative Programs (2022-2023)



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Cost Effectiveness: CASE Collaborative Programs

Once again, CASE undertook a market survey to ensure tuition rates for 2022-2023 were in line with similar programs offered by other educational services providers. By maintaining competitive rates, we are able to attract students without sacrificing the quality of our programs.

Cost Effectiveness:

Empower Program (EMP)

CASE Collaborative	\$75,000
Non-CASE Programs - "Equalized" average total tuition - 180 days	\$98,896

Comparable Programs include: Community Therapeutic, Protestant Guild, Cardinal Cushing

Cost Effectiveness:

Learning for Life - INTENSIVE Program (LFL)

CASE Collaborative	\$80,000
Non-CASE Programs - "Equalized" average total tuition - 180 days	\$109,314

Comparable Programs include: BC Campus Crotched Mountain (NH) Franciscan's Hospital, Perkins Multi-Impaired, Perkins Severely Impaired

Cost Effectiveness:

Therapeutic Intervention Program (K - 8) (TIP)

CASE Collaborative	\$62,000
Non-CASE Programs - "Equalized" average total tuition - 180 days	\$84,282

Comparable Programs include: Walker School, Community Therapeutic, Dearborn, Italian Home, Judge Baker

Cost Effectiveness:

Colebrook TIP High School - Approved Public Day Social Emotional Program

CASE Collaborative	\$62,000
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Non-CASE Programs - "Equalized" average total tuition - 180 days \$73,497

Comparable Programs include: McLean Hospital, Arlington; Milestones, Walker, Beacon High, James Farr Academy, New England Academy, JRI, Victor School

Cost Comparison to Private Schools Offering Similar Programming

	Cotting School	Franciscan Children's Hospital	May Institute	Nashoba Learning Group	New England Center for Children	League School of Boston	Schools For Children	Private Schools Average	Mem % Savings From Avg.
CASE LFL (DD-INT) \$444.44	536.58	\$491.20						\$513.89	14%
CASE Empower (ASD/DD) \$416.66			\$545.72	\$429.20	\$567.21			\$514.04	19%
CASE TIP (SE) \$344.44						\$425.16	\$418.51	\$421.83	19%



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CASE COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT (SY 2022-2023)

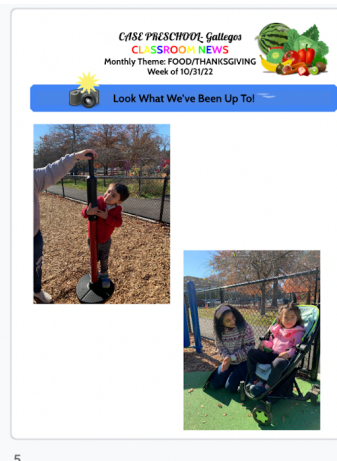
School District	Enrollment (10/1/2022)	Mid-Year Admissions	Mid-Year Terminations	Enrollment (6/30/2023)
Acton/Boxborough	11	2	1	12
Bedford	2		1	1
Carlisle	1		0	1
Concord	2	1	0	3
Concord/Carlisle	2		0	2
Harvard	10	2	1	11
Lincoln & Linc/Hanscom	12	2	1	13
Lincoln/Sudbury	4	2	1	5
Littleton	3	2	2	3
Maynard	2	3	0	5
Sudbury	1	0	0	1
Non-Member Districts	50	14	13	51
TOTAL	100	28	20	108

CASE COLLABORATIVE STUDENTS BY GRADE LEVEL (SY 2022-2023)

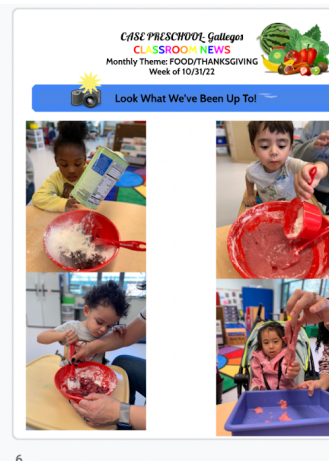
School District	Pre-School	Elementary	Middle School	High School	Post High School
Acton/Boxborough	4	3	2	4	1
Bedford		1	1		
Carlisle			1		
Concord		1	2	1	
Concord/Carlisle				2	
Harvard		2	1	9	
Lincoln & Linc/Hanscom	6	5	2		
Lincoln/Sudbury				4	1
Littleton		2	1	1	
Maynard	1	1	1	2	
Sudbury			1		
Non-Member Districts	3	14	12	17	1
TOTALS	14	29	24	40	3



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(Student Centered Programming)

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SERVICE TO MEMBER DISTRICTS

Transportation



In any given year, CASE Transportation typically provides special education transportation services to public and private special education programs from our member districts, covering over one million miles a year. We were transporting approximately 350 students during this school year. During this time of a critical driver shortage, we have long known of the strength of this department and commitment of its members, but this year was yet another example of going above and beyond. Creative thinking, flexibility, and adaptability are just a few areas in which the department shone. The willingness of the Transportation Department staff to do what needed to be done, allowed us to maintain the employment of all of our drivers even though the number of students being transported varied from day to day.

The financial assessment is based upon transporting a student to and/or from school on a set schedule. Every effort is made to contain costs while providing safe transportation for students. The Transportation office consolidates runs within the constraints of a student's IEP. District requests that could impact costs include factors such as: the need for wheelchair/lift vans, requirements for time in transport to be less than required by regulation, additional wait time on pick up or drop off, multiple pick-up and drop off schedules to the same location, monitors, accommodating service animals, medical support personnel accompanying the student, and requests for additional vans to separate students, as well as other unique requirements. CASE Transportation works closely with districts and the school program the student attends to define and implement positive behavioral supports for students as needed and to provide maximum efficiency in consolidated routes, as appropriate. In many cases, this is unavoidable as a necessary component of the student's IEP; however, adjustments are considered and implemented on a regular basis.

Transportation Cost Effectiveness

CASE Transportation provides special education transportation services only to students living in CASE member communities; currently CASE provides such services to nine districts. In addition to its commitment to providing safe, efficient, and courteous transportation for students with disabilities, CASE Transportation maximizes efficiency

and minimizes cost by effective routing which enhances vehicle capacity. One of the largest cost factors for special education transportation is the specialized nature of the service. When a district sends only one or two students to a particular destination, the fee reflects the entire cost of the vehicle and labor. CASE Transportation reduces costs to its districts by combining students from various CASE communities on a single vehicle, even if the students are going to multiple destinations.

**Transportation Enrollment
2022-2023 - Annual Summary**

Students Transported	354
Programs Students Transported To	85
Number of Destinations (Towns)	41
Total Number of Routes	57
Routes with more than one student	56
Routes with students from more than one CASE district	53

SERVICE TO COMMUNITIES

Consultation, Education and Training for Technology (CETT)



Mission

The Mission of the CASE CETT Team is to support the use of Assistive Technology for students from the CASE Collaborative communities and local school districts. The CETT Team strives to provide guidance, support and consultation to educational teams in the selection and use of appropriate assistive technology that will help students access the curriculum and/or meet individual educational goals.

AT Assessments/Coaching

The CETT team provides assistive technology assessments on a timeline, assessments with trials and hourly coaching for individual students and classroom programs. The CETT Team's AT services address needs in many areas, including reading, written expression, and physical access to curriculum. Assessments include: observations, meeting with the special education Team to discuss possible assistive technology tools, training when necessary, field testing with a student and a written report summarizing recommendations. Coaching sessions are guided by the assistive technology needs of the student and the team. They often include observation of the student, a loan from our lending library if needed, training and brief notes of each meeting.

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[AAC Assessments/Coaching](#)

The CETT Team provides assessments on a timeline as well as assessments with trials to support special educators and therapists in determining the most appropriate alternative-augmentative communication (AAC) system for their students. Hourly coaching sessions offer support and training to teams, aiding in assessing the effectiveness of devices and providing guidance and assistance with programming. Mid- and high-tech devices, ranging from single message switches to dynamic display devices, are available for loan through the CETT Team. Upon request, our team facilitates device rentals for trial periods, and helps families obtain private funding for the purchase of devices.

[CASE Classroom Consultations](#)

The CETT Team offers assistive technology support across all CASE classrooms. CETT aids special educators and therapists in choosing and training on assistive technology tools while serving as a knowledge hub for sharing resources. Personalized AAC/AT support is designed to meet the distinct needs of each student or classroom. Previous instances have encompassed strategies such as integrating AT and AAC systems to meet IEP goals, aiding students with device-related technical support including programming, layout adjustments, and organizational considerations, as well as training on Clicker Apps and Speech Recognition. Assistance may take place in a single brainstorming session or ongoing monthly meetings to discuss assistive technology solutions. The CASE CETT Team is available to all CASE classrooms.

[Lending Library](#)

The CETT Team has an assortment of both low- and high-tech Assistive Technology tools in their lending library. The library has a range of software and hardware, including AAC devices that are available on a short-term loan basis. The purpose of this lending library is to provide educators and students with the opportunity to try products prior to purchasing them. The CETT Team is continuously reviewing new equipment on the market and making purchases, as appropriate, to ensure that current assistive technology and AAC tools are available for loan.

Assistive Technology Training

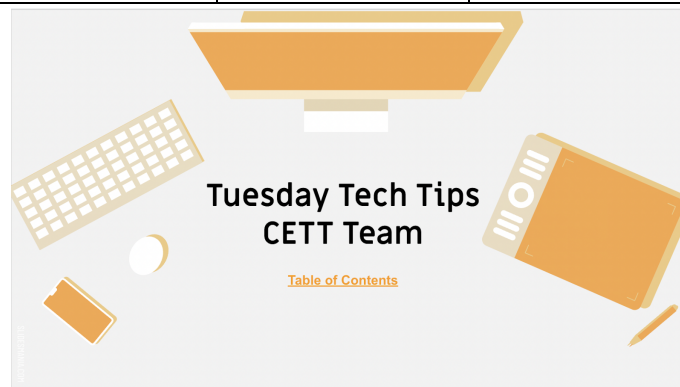
The CASE CETT Team provides workshops for staff and parents of students in CASE Collaborative classrooms who are interested in learning more about Assistive Technology. Staff workshops are scheduled yearly through the CASE Professional Development office and are open to educators in CASE community member districts and local school districts. Examples of recent workshops include "Executive Functioning Toolkit: Putting the Pieces Together", "iPad Apps for Early Learner", "Chrome as Assistive Technology", "Boardmaker and Beyond" and "Let's Get Talking: Adventures in AAC".

CASE CETT Team Professional Development

The CASE CETT Team pursue continuing professional development in the area of assistive technology and AAC by attending national conferences, including Closing The Gap and Assistive Technology Industry Association. In addition, they participate in list serves such as QIAT (Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology), and are members of ASHA Special Interest Groups.

CASE Collaborative - CETT Consults (SY 2022-2023)

2022-23	Assistive Technology	AAC
Member Towns	16	16
Non-Member Towns	0	3
TOTAL	16	19



ADDITIONAL SERVICES

CASE is fortunate that, once again this year, we have received a grant from Kate's Voice, a non-profit organization providing **music therapy** services to students with special needs. CASE students enjoy the opportunity to participate in this program while enhancing their social, self-expression, communication, and gross and fine motor skills.

CASE provided **home services** to students. This was a result of arrangements with host districts regarding special education services being provided in the home setting. CASE works closely with member districts and families to ensure such services are provided in the most effective and appropriate manner.



(A Holistic Approach to Education)

Fiscal Year 2023 Audit Report

The CASE Board of Directors commissioned an independent auditors' report for the year ending June 30, 2023 from Melanson Heath Accountants & Auditors. The findings are presented to the Board of Directors at their December 8, 2023 meeting. The full report is included as part of this report via electronic link.