

Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives



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North River Collaborative Announces Renewal of Independence Academy's 45- Day, School-Based Intervention Program for Students in Southeastern Massachusetts

ROCKLAND — The North River Collaborative (NRC) is pleased to announce that NRC's Independence Academy's 45-Day Intervention Program for adolescents struggling with substance use has been renewed following the program's successful implementation last year.

[Independence Academy](#), a recovery high school based in Brockton, serves adolescents in Southeastern Massachusetts with identified needs related to substance misuse and mental health. Independence Academy's new 45-day intervention program is designed to provide students with the proper support to build healthier and safer habits around substances. A total of 76 students have completed the program to date.

Independence Academy began the 45-Day Intervention Program in the 2021-22 school year with support from a \$475,000 School-Based Day Treatment Grant from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH). In response to the program's success, Independence Academy recently was awarded an additional \$950,000 from DPH to support the program over the next two years.

Students are sent from their home district to participate in the program. During the 45 days, staff at Independence Academy work to transform students' mindsets, promote health and wellness, and cultivate personal growth and development.

"Many recovery programs focus their efforts on what works for adults. Methods that work for adults often are not the same as what works for teenagers, and are not developmentally appropriate," Independence Academy Principal Ryan Morgan said. "Our program focuses on the emerging needs of adolescents and provides them foundational tools for personal growth that they can carry with them as they get older."

The program focuses on creating recovery capital, which includes reflecting upon aspects like self-awareness, sense of identity, social relationships, family relationships, as well as emotional and mental health, and rebuilding any aspects that are lacking.

Students also reflect to see if any of these aspects may be causing them to misuse substances. The collaborative has found that students who build self-awareness in these areas are less likely to develop a clinically significant addiction or dependence on substances.

"The targeted work that we do prompts students to reflect on areas that they may need

to work on. Students leave the program armed with action steps that help them live happier and healthier lives," North River Collaborative Executive Clarice Doliber said. "We want students leaving our program with the understanding that they can have fun and enjoy themselves without relying on being under the influence."

Once the 45 days are complete, students return to their home district. Independence Academy provides the sending district with tailored recommendations to help students continue to build recovery capital.

Personalized follow-up support is provided by Independence Academy for another 30 days to aid the transition back to life at school.

Additionally, any student that participates in the program is eligible to attend any after-school, vacation, or summer programming run by Independence Academy.

"As the former Executive Director of North River Collaborative, I am proud of the staff at Independence Academy and their efforts to support students who are struggling. Their commitment to providing cutting-edge programming continues to have a positive impact on teens across the commonwealth and I commend the good work that they do daily," MOEC Executive Director Joanne Haley Sullivan said.

There are five recovery high schools in Massachusetts, of which three are administered by collaboratives. In addition to Independence Academy, these include Northshore Recovery High School in Beverly administered by the Northshore Educational Consortium and Rockdale Recovery High School in Worcester administered by the Central Massachusetts Collaborative.

About North River Collaborative

[North River Collaborative](#), based in Rockland, is a multi-purpose, educational organization formed in 1976 to serve as an extension of school districts. The member districts of Abington, Avon, Bridgewater-Raynham, East Bridgewater, Hanover, Holbrook, Rockland, Stoughton, West Bridgewater, and Whitman-Hanson work together to provide high-quality, cost-effective educational programs and services predominantly to students with disabilities from our member districts and many other surrounding communities.

To learn more about collaboratives with similar initiatives in your region, please visit

MOEC's website [here](#).

About Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives

[MOEC](#) represents the Commonwealth's 25 educational collaboratives. MOEC serves as the voice of its members and works to develop a full appreciation for and understanding of educational collaboratives at the state, regional, and local levels. MOEC is the Commonwealth's primary advocate for collaboratives and the critical role they play in the Massachusetts educational system.

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**A message from the Massachusetts Organization of
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