

**Massachusetts
Organization of
Educational
Collaboratives**



Joanne Haley Sullivan,
Executive Director

**CAPS Education
Collaborative**



Jennifer Gates,
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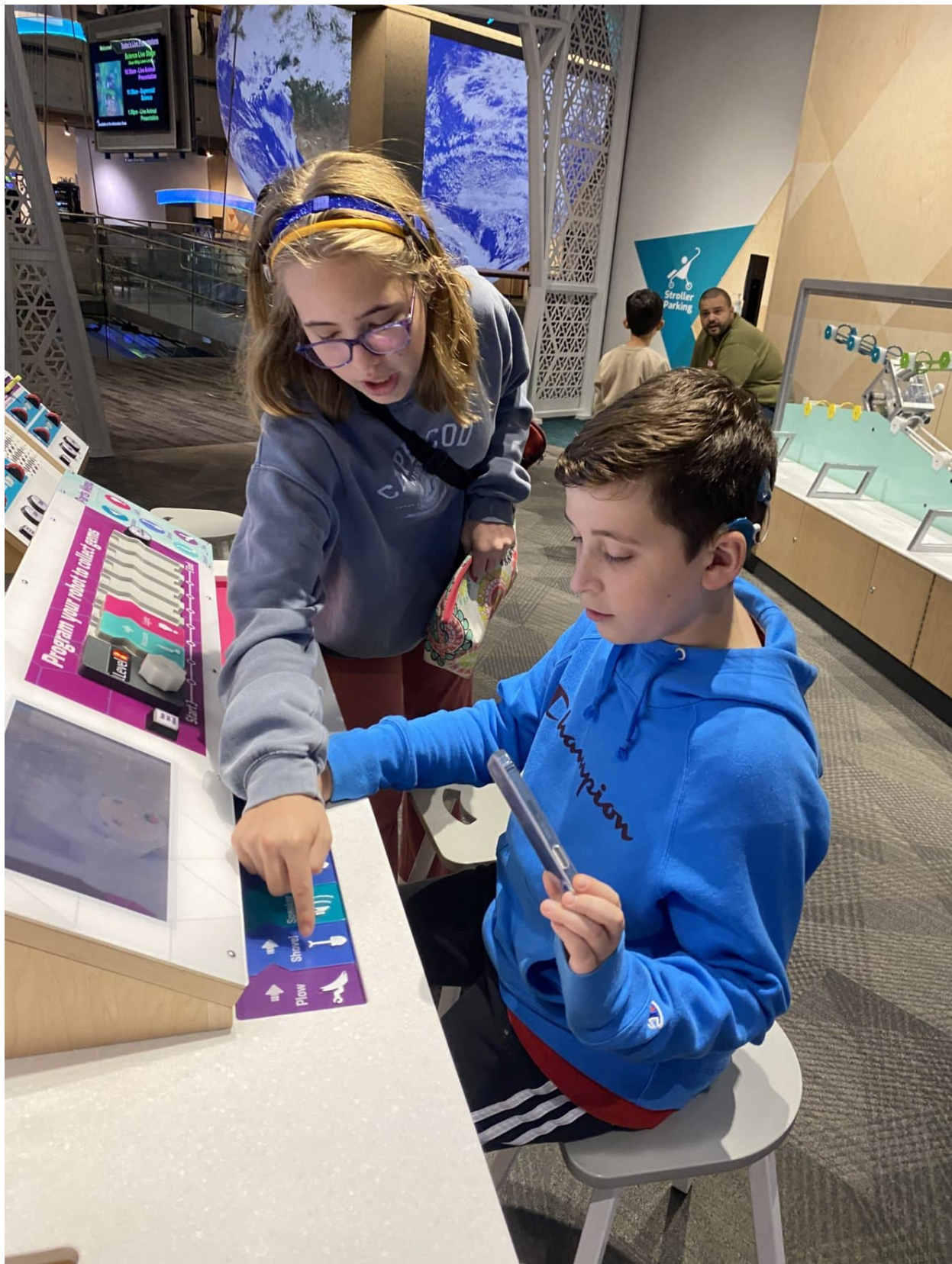
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**Boston's Museum of Science Invites CAPS
Education Collaborative to Help Make
Exhibits More Accessible for Deaf
Community**



From left: Students Elly Reid of Grafton and James Barron of Milton explore an exhibit at Boston's Museum of Science. (Photo courtesy CAPS Education Collaborative)

BOSTON -- CAPS Education Collaborative Executive Director Jennifer Gates is pleased to share that students from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program in Newton

were invited to Boston's Museum of Science recently to offer ways to enhance the experience for deaf and hard of hearing visitors.

Nineteen middle and high school students worked with members of the Museum's Research and Evaluation team to offer suggestions on ways to make exhibits on Artificial Intelligence and Mental Health more inclusive.

Lucy Howard-Karp, a ninth-grader from Dedham in the program at Newton North High School, stated, "The opportunity the Museum of Science gave us to self-advocate made me feel like I was heard and that I have a strong and important voice."

Students tested, played, and explored the exhibits, then offered valuable feedback about the experience, including timing and placement of captioning, lack of visuals, sound awareness, and descriptors.

"Making exhibits equally accessible to everyone is important and meaningful work, and we are grateful to the Museum of Science for allowing our students to provide a voice in this process," teacher Debbie Knisell said. "Our students were able to practice their self-advocacy skills and not only did they really embrace this opportunity wholeheartedly, they stepped up and showed themselves to be fantastic student leaders."

One exhibit included a video that did not have sound. Students suggested that the exhibit should indicate the lack of sound, so that a visitor with hearing loss would know they are not missing verbal information.

"Fostering environments of inclusivity and bringing awareness to disabilities is ingrained in what collaboratives across the commonwealth do. Thank you to the Museum of Science for supporting this mission and giving these students a platform to share thoughtful insights to improve the accessibility of museum exhibits," Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives Executive Director Joanne Haley Sullivan said.

About CAPS Educational Collaborative's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program

The CAPS Education Collaborative's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program serves students ages 3-18. The middle and high school programs, established in 1973 under

EDCO Collaborative, became part of CAPS Collaborative in July 2021 when EDCO closed its educational programs before dissolving the organization. Located at Bigelow Middle School and Newton North High School in Newton, these programs serve students from across the Commonwealth.

Courtney Dunne, Director of the DHH Program notes, “The program values language diversity, serving students who use ASL and students who use spoken English. At the heart of our work is the desire to create meaningful opportunities for students to develop foundational self-advocacy skills.”

CAPS Educational Collaborative is one of three collaboratives in the state to offer deaf and hard-of-hearing programs. The others are READS Collaborative's program in Middleboro and SEEM Collaborative's program in Stoneham. To learn more about them, 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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*From left: Students Sadie Adam of Ashburnham, Jenna Meehan of Malden, Lucy Howard-Karp of Dedham, Mallorie Sanchez of Bedford and Madison Conway of Salem.
(Photo courtesy CAPS Education Collaborative)*



A total of 19 students attended the trip to Boston's Museum of Science. (Photo courtesy CAPS Education Collaborative)

A message from the Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives