

# Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives



Joanne Haley Sullivan,  
Executive Director

---

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, June 12, 2023

Media Contact: Madelyn Hedges

Phone: [781-428-3299](tel:781-428-3299)

Email: [madelyn@jgpr.net](mailto:madelyn@jgpr.net)

## MOEC Highlights Expansion of CAPS Collaborative's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program

SANDWICH -- Executive Director Joanne Haley Sullivan and the [Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives](#) (MOEC) are pleased to share that the CAPS Collaborative will be relocating in order to expand its program offerings to more students.

[Upon taking over the program from EDCO Collaborative](#) two years ago, the CAPS Collaborative's Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) programs in Newton, under the direction of Courtney Dunne, have seen substantial growth in both the middle school and high school programs as enrollment has grown from 9 students to a projected 29 for September 2023.

In order to meet the needs of individual students and faculty inside of the growing program, CAPS Collaborative has decided to forgo its location at the J.R. Briggs Elementary School in Ashburnham and open the doors to a new facility in Ayer. This move will allow CAPS to expand its program, providing new opportunities for teachers and staff and to deaf and hard-of-hearing students across the Commonwealth.

"I would like to congratulate CAPS Collaborative for their recent successes which will allow them to continue their meaningful work and provide education opportunities to a wider range of students," said MOEC Executive Director Haley Sullivan.

The facility, located at Page Hilltop Elementary School, 115 Washington St. will officially open its doors to students and their families at the end of August.

"I want to thank the J.R. Briggs Elementary School community for their many years of continued support," said CAPS Collaborative Executive Director Jennifer Gates. "I would especially like to extend my gratitude to Special Education Director Justine Muir and Principal Nathaniel North."

DHH programming provides services for students using all communication modalities including American Sign Language (ASL), listening and spoken language and spoken English with sign language support. Students have opportunities for small-group instruction and full inclusion in general education settings. Upon the expansion of the program, the new facility, serving students in preschool through grade five, will provide CAPS Collaborative with three new classrooms, equipped with Teachers of the Deaf and paraprofessionals supporting each classroom. An additional space for providers to take students outside of classrooms or inclusion classes to provide services in a quieter environment will also be available.

The CAPS DHH support team consists of teachers of the deaf, ASL/English educational interpreters, counselors, speech-language pathologists, education audiologists and paraeducators. This specialized team works with each student to develop confidence and fundamental self-advocacy skills needed to be successful in various settings.

In addition to providing adequate space for students and staff, this transition sparked the initiative for CAPS to update and improve the program's education model for the younger grades to align with the model used in Newton for the last 50 years.

This model emphasizes the importance of looking at the language and academic needs of each student as an individual and determining the best method of instruction while providing as much inclusion as possible through universal design.

CAPS DHH programs will continue to emphasize the importance of educating families, colleagues, faculty and staff in the program's public host school on best practices for educating deaf and hard-of-hearing students, including an overview of hearing loss and the implications on education and classroom instruction, deaf history, culture and norms, language and learning needs, accessible curriculum, materials and instruction, hearing assistive technology, how to work with an interpreter and/or notetaker and support with closed-captioning.

In correlation to the change in location and programming for preschool and elementary, CAPS Collaborative plans to hire a part-time counselor to support students through social-emotional learning, an educational method that aims to foster social and emotional skills within school criteria, specific to students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

"We are incredibly thankful for this new opportunity," said Executive Director Gates. "The process of working with the administration in Ayer to facilitate this expansion has been outstanding and I would like to thank Superintendent Dr. Adam Renda, Special Education Director Tara Bozek and building Principal Fred Deppe for their continued support."

CAPS Collaborative is one of three collaboratives in the state to offer deaf and hard of hearing programs. The others are READS Collaborative's DHH programs in Norton and Taunton and SEEM Collaborative's DHH program in Stoneham. To learn more about them, please visit MOEC's website [here](#).

## **About CAPS 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.

To learn more about the CAPS Education Collaborative's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program, click [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.

###

---

## A message from the Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Manage subscription](#)

John Guilfoil Public Relations LLC  
8 Prospect St.  
Georgetown, MA 01833  
617-993-0003