

# **EDCO** Collaborative

*Education Collaborative for Greater Boston, Inc.*

March 4, 2011

To: EDCO Board of Directors  
From: Dorsey Yearley  
Re: Special Education Program Development

In the past several weeks, I have been meeting with a variety of potential collaborating partners to explore new special education programs for EDCO districts. These are all in preliminary stages of conversation, but I wanted to share these ideas with you and get your reaction before we go forward with more serious negotiations. Below is a brief description of each program idea and the current status of the conversations.

## **Public Day Program for Students with Dangerous or Disruptive Behaviors**

This is a program that LABBB and EDCO have been working on together for over a year to find a space and develop a program design. Because of our many years managing the Special Education in Institutional Settings contract for DESE, EDCO knows the needs of these students well. LABBB has a variety of services, including clinical and vocational services, that are essential to good program design.

The threshold issue is to find appropriate space, and currently, there are two options. Germaine Lawrence is a private residential program for girls located in Arlington. They have approached us about renting one of their buildings to create this school. The program design would include clinical support, behavioral support and wrap around services provided on a fee for service basis by Germaine Lawrence and the academic and administrative support provided by EDCO and LABBB. The Executive Director of Germaine Lawrence, David Hirshberg, has approached his Board about this idea and gotten their approval to allow boys into this specific school. They would keep the rest of their facilities to support girls exclusively. The advantage to this option is that we would be part of a well established program, and we would be able to access their behavioral and crisis intervention support on an as-needed basis. The disadvantage is that there are issues related to retrofitting the residential space into an educational space, and there are some misgivings about putting a day program of this nature, along with the traffic congestion related to transportation, in a residential neighborhood. However, Germaine Lawrence is very interested in developing this program with us and is waiting for us to take the next step in moving forward.

The second potential space for this program is a leased building in Burlington that LABBB is currently exploring. The advantage of this space is that it is well suited for educational programming, and a program of this nature could be sited at this location without concern about neighbors. The relative isolation of the program, especially compared to Germaine Lawrence, would require that it be well staffed to deal with

**Other Program Efforts**

We are in the very early stages of collaborating with an EDCO district on developing a program for middle school students with Asperger's. The program would extend that district's capacity to provide support to their own students with Asperger's by providing a self-contained option to complement their existing inclusion program. We would develop this program in conjunction with LABBB, which also has an existing Middle School program that has reached capacity because of the lack of available space in the LABBB districts.

In February, we held an open house for out-of-district coordinators at our EDCO North Crossing Program to reintroduce them to the program. We received very positive feedback about the program, and we are continuing to receive referrals both to the EDCO North Crossing Program and the EDCO Manville Partners Program.

Finally, we are restructuring our website to make information about our special education programs more accessible and more detailed.