



The Bi-County Brief

Issue 1

November 2023

A Message from the Executive Director



Dear BICO Community,
Welcome to the first edition of our new newsletter! I am excited to share the great things that are happening in our classrooms throughout the Collaborative. In this month's edition you will learn about community service activities that our staff and students are involved in as well as daily activities, field trips and special events. All of these activities are so essential to providing our students a well rounded learning experience. It is through service, collaboration, practice and experience that we can learn and develop our skills. We hope you will find us on social media. We are now on X: @BiCollaborative, Facebook: Bi-County Collaborative, and Instagram: bicollaborative. We look forward to sharing all of the great news with you. I want to take a moment to wish a Happy Thanksgiving to all of our student and staff families. Families, Thank you for entrusting us with educating your children!! BICO Staff, Thank you for all you do everyday to support the mission and vision of BICO, our students and each other! I hope you can all take some time to rest, relax and enjoy time together.

Sincerely, Jeanne Sullivan

TEP Students Participate in Morning Movement Breaks

Students in the Therapeutic Education Program (TEP) have recently been participating in a daily walking group to kickstart the day.

In October, Program Director Kristin Boni, and TEP Paraprofessionals Stephanie Cimildoro and Kaylee Fonseca created the Morning Movement Break program as a way to encourage students to be more physically active.

As part of the program, each morning TEP students and staff walk laps around the John J. Ahern Middle School Track. Students keep track of the laps that they walk using a poster with velcro dots. For every five laps that each student completes, they get a sneaker next to their name. Students then earn "BICO Bucks" based on the number of laps walked each week. Students average approximately three laps per day and use the BICO Bucks they earn to purchase prizes of their choice.

Each Friday, students and staff visit the school store where students can purchase various snacks and toys, including candy, stress balls, pencils, sticker packs, fidget spinners, books, building blocks and more. Students can also choose to continue collecting their BICO Bucks to save for a bigger prize. The student with the most sneakers next to their name at the end of the month earns five extra BICO Bucks.

As colder temperatures approach, teachers plan to continue morning movement breaks by taking students for laps around the hallways of the school.

"This program has been a great way to help the kids start the day off right and get settled in for classroom activities," Fonseca said.



Bi-County Collaborative

Making It Possible

Upcoming Events

Monday, Dec. 18- Friday, Dec. 22 - BICO Collaborative Wide Holiday Spirit Week

Monday, Dec. 18 - Ugly Sweater Day: Wear your favorite ugly sweater.

Tuesday, Dec. 19 - Hey Tinsel Toes, Fleece Navidad: Wear your favorite holiday socks and your favorite fleece clothing.

Wednesday, Dec. 20 - Long Winters Nap: Wear your favorite pajamas to school.

Thursday, Dec. 21 - Holiday Color Day: Wear your favorite holiday colors. (red, green, blue, white, yellow)

Friday, Dec. 22 - Snowman Day: Dress like a snowman.

Important Dates

Friday, Dec. 8 - Early Release Day

Friday, Dec. 22 - Early Release Day, Blackstone and Plainville Programs Closed

Monday, Dec. 25 - Friday, Jan. 1, 2024 - Winter Break

Mansfield EDLP and PDLP Students Explore Wards Berry Farm



Students in Mansfield’s Preschool Developmental Learning Program (PDLP) and Elementary Developmental Learning Program (EDLP) recently spent the day using their five senses to explore the fall harvest at Wards Berry Farm in Sharon.



On Monday, Oct. 16, eight PDLP and EDLP students, accompanied by Collaborative faculty and staff, enjoyed fall-themed activities including hayrides, pumpkin picking and farm duties.

Throughout the day, staff encouraged students to feel different crops, hay and animals to familiarize themselves with different textures. Students also worked to identify colors, shapes, and objects through games of “I Spy.”



While exploring the farm, students had the opportunity to feed pigs and visit the Wards Berry Farm Market to purchase a variety of produce, flowers, and snacks.

“This field trip is an integral part of our curriculum because students are able to explore what we have been learning about with tangible items and experiences,” said teacher Maeve Carney. “The students are able to use multiple senses throughout the day while exploring a whole new environment.”

Past Event Photos



Life Roles Education Program Students to Participate in Mural Mosaics Global Roots Project

Beginning in January, students in the Roles Education Program (LREP) will participate in the Mural Mosaics Global Roots Project.

The Mural Mosaics Global Roots Project reconnects communities, families and long-distance loved ones through the joy and inspiration of bringing mosaic tiles together into one united piece of art. The one-of-a-kind mural mosaics are created, connected and shared around the world. As part of the program, the Project sends kits to participants that include instructions, a small square tile made of canvas and paint.

Under the direction of Physical Therapist Dawn Rice Norton and Teacher Rebecca Blackburn, LREP students will work collaboratively to complete one tile to be submitted to the Mural Mosaics Global Roots Project.

To make this project more accessible, students will fingerpaint the tile rather than use paint brushes. This adaptation will allow students with the most severe visual impairments to still experience painting even if they are not able to see the paint. Additionally, this activity will be adapted by adding glitter, shaving cream and sand into the paint so that it will be textured when it dries. This will allow students with severe visual impairments to still enjoy the final product tactilely. Students will also have the option of using an adaptive spin art machine to complete their portion of the tile. This will still allow them to actively participate in the project without the sensory input of finger painting.

For this activity, students will be given paint color choices. Students will use various augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices to indicate their choices. This includes a GoTalk 9+, step-by-step voice output switches, and communication apps on an iPad. Students will begin working on the project in January with the goal of completing the project by the end of that month.

Therapeutic Elementary Alternative Programs Host Mystery Readers

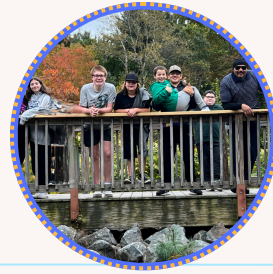
Throughout the month of November, students and staff of Bi-County Collaborative's Therapeutic Elementary Alternative Programs (TEAP) have welcomed community members to participate in a newly implemented Mystery Reader Series.

Spearheaded by teacher Nikki McInnis, the Mystery Reader Series increases family involvement and provides opportunities for students to positively interact with members of the community.

Each week, second-grade students at the Delaney Vogel School are greeted by a mystery guest reader at the library. Previous mystery readers have included parents, grandparents, Delaney Vogel School Principal Kathleen Maloney, former paraprofessionals and Wrentham Police Officer Morris and K-9 Cruiser.

As part of the series, community members sign up for a time slot and bring a book of their choosing to the Delaney Vogel School Library to present to students. Throughout the visit, students are encouraged to actively participate by asking questions about the book.

"I would like to thank each of our mystery guest readers who have volunteered their time to engage with our students," McInnis said. "Reading is a powerful way to spark imagination and creativity among children and adults alike. We look forward to continuing this program for years to come."



Students Celebrate Halloween During Fall Fest

Students in the SELC, SMH, SHS, STAP, ATP, AMS and TEP programs participated in a variety of Halloween-themed activities last week. On Friday, Oct. 27, students in Bi-County Collaborative's SEAP and AMS programs, joined by students from Annie Sullivan Middle School, participated in Bi-County Collaborative's annual Fall Fest at Bi-County Collaborative's Walpole location.

Over 50 of students and staff, dressed in their Halloween costumes, spent the afternoon dancing, playing games to music provided by Paraprofessional Ethan Gomes and indulging in treats, provided by Music Specialist Ryan Jackson.

Throughout the day, students had the opportunity to join in a variety of games at activity stations including a mummy wrap, where students took turns wrapping each other in toilet paper to resemble a mummy, a chubby bunny marshmallow challenge, where students placed marshmallows inside of their cheeks to resemble a bunny, mini golf, balloon challenges and a pie-eating contest.



Happenings Around the Collaborative

AMS Students Explore Franklin Sculpture Park

Students and staff in Bi-County Collaborative’s Alternative Middle School (AMS) Program recently spent the day exploring the Franklin Sculpture Park.

Throughout the day, students spent time looking at the different sculptures and practiced their reading skills with sculpture descriptions.



Little Hornets Halloween Inclusion Parade

Students and staff in the Elementary Developmental Learning Program (EDLP) and Preschool Developmental Learning Program (PDL) recently participated in a Halloween Inclusion Parade.

On Friday, Oct. 27, 40 students and staff, dressed in their favorite costumes, gathered at the Little Hornets classroom before making their way through a parade route around the Mansfield Public Schools complex. The parade route began at Robinson Elementary School and continued by Qualters Middle School and Mansfield High School before concluding at the Jordan/Jackson Elementary School. Students gathered outside their respective buildings to cheer on students and staff as they made their way around the school complex.



AMS Students Celebrate Halloween

On Wednesday, Oct. 25, students and staff in Bi-County Collaborative’s Alternative Middle School Program (AMS) spent an exciting afternoon carving pumpkins to share in the spirit of Halloween.

Students also had the opportunity to take pumpkin seeds home for cooking. Pumpkins were purchased by AMS staff prior to the event.

