



*Regional Educational Assessment and Diagnostic Services (READS)*  
*READS Collaborative*  
*105 East Grove St., Middleborough, MA 02346*

## *Annual Report*

### *December 2012*

READS Collaborative is a multi-purpose, public organization established under Chapter 40 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that specializes in the development of regional programs and services for school-age children with disabilities. READS is governed by a Board of Directors that is comprised of the school superintendents from each of the member districts.

#### *Leadership at READS Collaborative*

#### *Board of Directors*

##### Executive Committee

*President* - Patricia Oakley, Ed.D., Superintendent, West Bridgewater

*Vice-President* - Douglas White, Superintendent, Marion, Mattapoisett, Rochester

*Secretary/Clerk* - Thomas Lynch, Superintendent, Berkley

- Peter Schafer, Superintendent, Abington
- Stephen Donovan, Superintendent, Acushnet (Trial Member)
- Jacqueline Forbes, Ph.D., Superintendent, Bridgewater-Raynham Regional
- Richard Gross, Ed.D., Superintendent, Bristol-Plymouth Regional (Trial Member)
- Elizabeth Sorrell, Superintendent, Carver
- Jennifer Wordell, Ed.D., Superintendent, Dighton-Rehoboth Regional
- Susan Cote, Superintendent, East Bridgewater
- Jessica Huizenga, Ed.D., Superintendent, Freetown-Lakeville Regional
- Roseli Weiss, Ed.D., Superintendent, Middleborough
- Christopher Martes, Ed.D., Superintendent, Norton (Trial Member)
- Richard Medeiros, Superintendent, Somerset, Somerset-Berkley Regional (Trial Members)
- Julie Hackett, Ed.D., Superintendent, Taunton

*Middle Management Advisory Committee – Directors of Special Education*

- Dympna Thomas, Ph.D., Abington
- Nance Bellizzi, Acushnet (Trial Member)
- Melissa Donnelly, Berkley
- Carla Thomas, Bridgewater-Raynham Regional
- Amy Cohen, Bristol-Plymouth Regional (Trial Member)
- Karen Teichert, Carver
- Kyle Riley, Dighton-Rehoboth Regional
- Marie Grable, East Bridgewater
- Ann St. Pierre, Freetown-Lakeville Regional
- Teresa Hamm, Marion, Mattapoisett, Rochester
- Mary Buchanan, Middleborough
- Jeanne Sullivan, Norton (Trial Member)
- Patricia Cosgrove, Somerset, Somerset-Berkley Regional (Trial Members)
- Sheilah Reardon, Ph.D., Taunton
- Hope Hanscom, West Bridgewater

*READS Collaborative Administration*

- Theresa Craig, Ed.D., Executive Director
- Donna Richards, Business Manager
- Deirdre Dowd-Pizzuto, Program Director, READS Academy
- Meredith Foye, Assistant Program Director, READS Academy, East Grove St.
- Mary Clougherty, Assistant Program Director, READS Academy, School Street School
- Evelyn Rankin, Director, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program
- Suzan Linehan, Coordinator, District Services

*READS Collaborative Treasurer* – Carol Bower

*READS Collaborative Administrative Leadership Team*

- Theresa Craig, Ed.D., Executive Director
- Donna Richards, Business Manager
- Deirdre Dowd-Pizzuto, Program Director, READS Academy
- Evelyn Rankin, Director, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program
- Suzan Linehan, Coordinator, District Services
- John Dorn, Psy.D., Neuropsychologist
- Christine Pavao, Technology
- Mary Keeler, Executive Secretary
- Linda Woodcock, Clinic Secretary

## *READS Collaborative Mission Statement*

*The mission of READS Collaborative is to provide high quality, cost effective educational programs and services for all students.*

READS Collaborative is a non-profit, public educational organization comprised of area school districts that specializes in the development of regional educational programs for children with low incidence disabilities. READS Collaborative provides diagnostic services, therapeutic services, assistive technology consultation, summer programming and professional development throughout the region. READS Collaborative also provides comprehensive educational programming for children with emotional and/or social challenges and children who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing.

READS Collaborative is focused on the mission to *provide high quality, cost effective educational programs and services for all students to prepare them for higher education or a career.* READS Collaborative provides individualized, caring educational settings and services for students with disabilities through the collaboration of member districts. This collaboration results in cost savings to member districts and provides for services that individual districts may not be able to provide on their own.

READS Collaborative strives to facilitate relationships between students, families, school districts and community services. READS Collaborative improves the educational outcomes for children and families of area communities by providing services through a highly specialized, trained staff of educators, administrators, therapists and assistants. Students participate in educational experiences at READS Collaborative that improve their opportunities for receiving a high school diploma and having options for higher education or employment.

## *Information on Programs and Services Provided by the Collaborative*

### General Statistics

- READS Collaborative was established in 1974
- Years in Service – 38
- Employees – 140
- Member Districts
  - 13 established members
    - Abington, Berkley, Bridgewater-Raynham Regional, Carver, Dighton-Rehoboth Regional, East Bridgewater, Freetown-Lakeville Regional, Marion, Mattapoisett, Rochester, Middleborough, Taunton, West Bridgewater
  - 5 trial members for FY13
    - Acushnet, Bristol-Plymouth Regional, Norton, Somerset, Somerset-Berkley Regional
- Total Member and Non-Member Districts Served – 50
- Program Sites – Bridgewater, West Bridgewater, Middleborough, Freetown, Taunton
- Enrollment (as of December 2012)
  - READS Academy - 105
  - Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program - 76

- o District Services - 186

***Programs and Services Provided to Member and Non-Member Districts***

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• READS Academy (Alternative Education Program K -12+)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavioral Consultation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Program (PreK-12+)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Development</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District Services (Therapeutic Intervention and Support)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Grant Applications</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagnostic Clinic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optional Summer Programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperative Purchasing</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative Mentoring</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistive Technology Assessments and Support</li> </ul>	

***Staff Demographics***

Administrators/Directors/Coordinators Executive Director (1) Program Directors (2) Assistant Program Directors (2) District Services Coordinator (1) Business Manager (1)	7	Administrative Clerks and Secretaries Executive Secretary (1) Payroll Clerk (1) *Business Office Clerk (1) Receptionist (1) *Transcriptionist (1) *Cooperative Purchasing Clerk (1) *Medicaid Processing Clerk (1)	7
Educators – includes special education classroom teachers, reading specialists, PE teachers, etc	31	Special Education Administrative Clerks and Secretaries *Program Secretaries (4) Receptionist(1) Clinic Secretary (1)	6
Teacher Assistants – includes Assistant Teachers and Instructional Assistants as well as 1 to 1 support	43	*Counselors/Social Workers	7
*Occupational Therapists	5	*Nurses	3
*Physical Therapists	4	Technician	1
*Speech/Language Pathologists	8	ABA Specialist	1
*Clinical Psychologists	4	American Sign Language Interpreters	12
*Audiologist	1	*School Psychologists	3
*Assistive Technology Specialists	2	Bus Driver	1
		Custodian	1

\*Some positions are part-time or per diem

## *Progress toward Achieving the Objectives and Purposes Set forth in the Collaborative Agreement*

The READS Collaborative Agreement sets forth the purpose of the collaborative as:

*“The Collaborative shall conduct and/or provide programs and/or services for, but not limited to, special needs children, needs assessment and recommendations, and in-service education.*

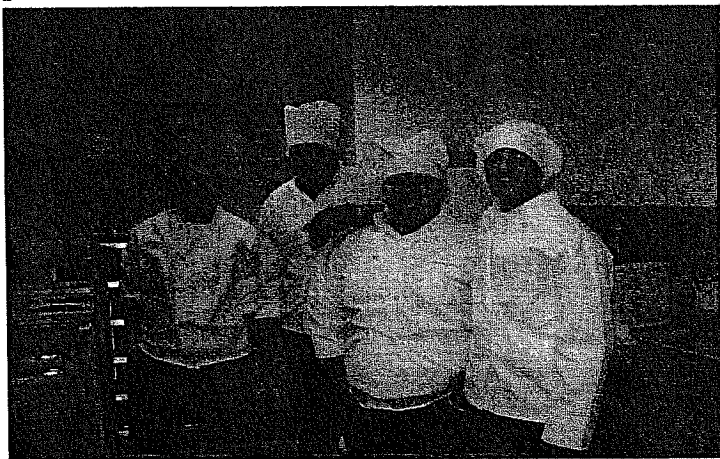
*In addition, the Collaborative shall provide diagnostic testing, evaluation, and recommendation in a variety of areas, including, but not limited to, medical, psychological, educational, audiological, ophthalmological, speech and language, and physical and occupational therapy. Such programs and/or services shall maximize cost efficiency and program effectiveness through a collaborative effort.”*

Progress toward the provision of programs and services and the specific program and service enhancements is cited under each corresponding program heading below.

### *READS Academy*

READS Academy is a day-school program that offers therapeutic, behavioral, and academic services to students in Grades K-12 who demonstrate a range of emotional/behavioral disabilities, learning disabilities, and neuro-developmental disabilities. The Academy is a highly structured program offering individualized and small-group academic instruction, individual and group counseling, and behavioral support and intervention. Ancillary therapeutic services such as speech/language therapy, occupational/physical therapy, adaptive physical education are also available. As a public school program, READS Academy follows the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and all students participate in MCAS testing. The school operates on a 10-month calendar with an optional 6-week summer program.

READS Academy consists of two substantially separate school buildings. The elementary program, Grades K-6, is located at our School Street School campus in Middleborough. Students in Grades 7-12 attend the main campus on East Grove Street. In addition, the Academy offers a district based program located in the West Bridgewater Middle/Senior High School. This program provides the opportunity for integration into a mainstream school setting, while continuing to provide the necessary academic, behavioral, and emotional support.



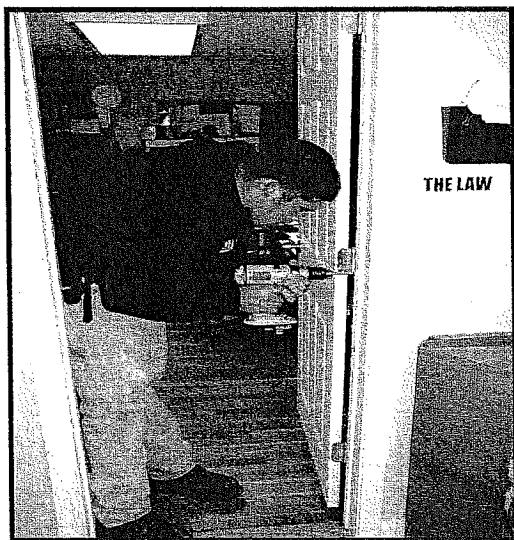
READS Academy also offers a Work-Based Learning Program for high school students who need prevocational and vocational training in the form of on-site internships and off-site work study placements. This component of the program also offers career readiness, transitional services, and opportunities for students 18-22 years of age.

### **READS Academy Assessment Program**

The READS Academy Assessment Program has been established to provide an interim educational placement for special and regular education students in grades 7-12. Students may be referred to this program for a variety of reasons, including chronic pattern of failure to achieve within their school environment, an occurrence of a serious violation of school rules regarding possession of weapons or illegal substances, or a substantial change in the student's behavior or emotional state. All students placed in the program must participate in an assessment process with the goal of determining a plan of action to address the student's needs and the safety concerns within the school environment. In cases where the student may have been involved in an incident that included threatening, aggressive, assaultive behaviors, or possession of contraband such as weapons or illegal substances (including, but not limited to, alcohol, prescription or non-prescription medications), the referring school district is required to provide information regarding any legal action (i.e. police report/charges pressed) that has been taken in response to the incident. The safety and well-being of all students referred to the program is our utmost priority.

### **Services Provided**

- Individualized academic instruction
- Individual/group counseling
- Behavior management/support
- Social skills training
- Consultation to referring school district
- School lunch program



### **Work-Based Learning Program**

READS Academy offers Work-Based Learning (WBL) experiences for students both on and off campus. The program has two main goals: to offer real-life work experience to students and to strengthen community connections.

WBL Programming includes a Careers Education class, vocational counseling, job shadowing and coaching, on-site internships, and off-site work-study placements.

### **Off-site Work-Study**

Students are expected to interview for a placement and create a contract addressing specific goals and how they correlate to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Job Coaches supervise students with decreasing frequency as they become more knowledgeable in their tasks. Job Coaches may also be responsible for bi-weekly and quarterly progress reports that are used for students' grading. Students that complete the program requirements receive school credit toward graduation while acquiring life experience that is unmatched within the classroom.

## *Program and Service Enhancements - READS Academy*

The classrooms in READS Academy have received upgraded access to technology. Each classroom is equipped with a Promethean Board to facilitate student engagement in learning. Classrooms have 3-4 computer stations for student use. The student computers are gradually being replaced with more efficient terminals to provide greater reliability.

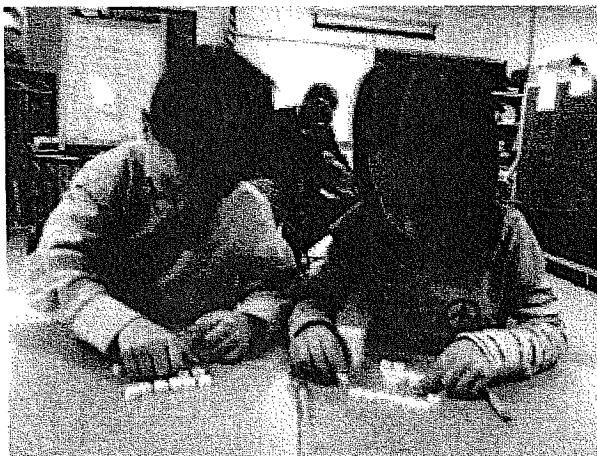
The teachers at the READS Academy engage in Professional Learning Communities throughout the school year. The PLCs meet both formally and informally to review curriculum and instruction as well as the integration of technology into classroom learning.

The Work Based Learning Program has expanded this year to include formal instruction in the fiscal management of the four career preparation tracks: Bicycle Repair, Building Maintenance, Culinary Arts and Office Technology.

### *Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Program*

The Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHH) program was established in the mid-1970s and is housed within public school settings. It provides educational services for students from pre-school through high school, as well as early intervention services.

The preschool is a full-day program and offers a wide range of specialized services. Starting at the lower elementary levels, the students are taught by Teachers of the Deaf in self-contained classes while also being included in general education classrooms with support services. The students are taught how to use educational interpreters as well as a wide range of other support service options. As the students' literacy skills improve, they have the opportunity to be included in more general education classes. At the high school level, general and vocational programming options are available. The DHH Program is currently located within the Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District and the Bristol-Plymouth Regional Vocational High School.



#### *Services include:*

- Small group & individual instruction
  - Interpreted mainstream opportunities
  - Spoken language skill development
  - Speech/Language therapy
  - Specialized aural habilitation for Cochlear Implants and all types of hearing aids
  - Small group and individual counseling
- 
- Extra-curricula support
  - School-to-work programming at the high school level
  - Occupational/physical/adaptive physical education
  - Vision consultation as needed
  - Optional summer program
  - Audiological Consultation

### ***Program and Service Enhancements - Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing***

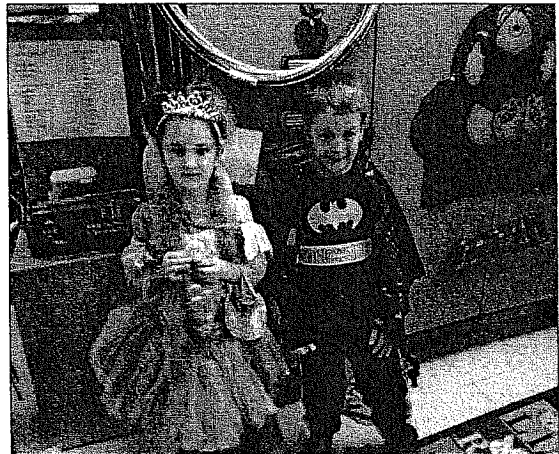
The classrooms in the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing have received upgraded access to technology. Each classroom is equipped with an iPad to facilitate student engagement in learning. Each classroom will have 2-3 iPads for student use this school year. In addition, sound field FM systems are being placed in the DHH classrooms and in select general education classrooms.

The teachers at the DHH Program are enrolled in a literacy course specific to deaf education through Roger Williams University. There has been a focus on increasing literacy resources and professional development. The Diagnostic Reading Assessment and the Leveled Language Intervention System are being utilized regularly to assess student reading progress and provide timely intervention.

The vocational program at Bristol-Plymouth Regional Vocational Technical High School continues to provide students with pathways to employment upon graduation.

The DHH program is expanding! The *Early Childhood Classroom for Auditory and Spoken Language Development* is due to open January 2013.

The Early Childhood Classroom for Auditory and Spoken Language Development within the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Program is focused on spoken English as the primary language of instruction and socialization. Pre-academic curriculum includes early language and literacy skills with a focus on the development of linguistic concepts, vocabulary acquisition, phonological awareness and print concepts; early mathematical concepts; global knowledge and overall cognitive development. The curriculum is supported by multi-sensory learning opportunities to support the auditory and spoken language skill development. These supportive strategies include which include pictures, visual and kinesthetic cues, and sign-supported spoken language.



The long term goal is development of auditory and spoken language skills as the primary means for communication and access to academic instruction. Children in the program are integrated into the Freetown-Lakeville preschool classroom for portions of the day.

### ***District Services***

The District Services Program is a highly individualized program encompassing a wide variety of services, including consultation, evaluation, and direct services in the following areas:

- Occupational/Physical therapy
- Vision evaluation/consultation
- Sensory integration evaluation/consultation
- Speech/Language therapy
- Adaptive Physical Education
- Home-care therapy
- Academic tutoring
- Summer services
- Behavior services: Functional Behavioral Assessments consultation, training services, Applied Behavioral Analysis

Each referral is carefully evaluated; goals and objectives are formulated; and a service/consultation delivery system is established by the service provider.

District Services also houses the Assistive Technology Program. AT is defined as any item,



piece of equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional and academic capabilities of individuals with and without disabilities. The Assistive Technology Team is comprised of speech pathologists, occupational/physical therapists, and technical personnel. This team can identify low-, mid-, and high-tech assistive tools that can support students with learning and physical disabilities.

READS has equipment available to loan on a try-before-you-buy-basis. The AT Team will also assist in locating additional lender options and provide assistance with purchasing.

### *Program and Service Enhancements - READS District Services*

District Services has been flexible in responding to a number of district needs. READS now provides Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) paraprofessionals, a BCBA specialist and School Psychologists per diem to school districts who requested flexibility in providing such services.

There is an increasing demand for Assistive Technology Assessments. READS hosted the first annual Assistive Technology Fair in April 2012. The second one is scheduled for April 2013. A lending and trial lab has been set up in READS administration building to allow districts to train staff and/or try products before making a purchase of AT software or equipment.

## *READS Diagnostic Clinic*

Regional Educational Assessment and Diagnostic Services (READS) came into being in 1974 when it was determined that there was a need for close-to-home, cost-efficient diagnostic services for students who were struggling in school with difficulties related to learning and/or behavior. The Clinic services children between the ages of 3 and 22 years and provides psycho-educational evaluations, neuropsychological-educational evaluations, risk assessments, and ancillary evaluations. The services provided also include audiological and central auditory processing, ophthalmological, speech/language evaluations, classroom observations, and a variety of additional specialized assessments, including servicing the evaluation needs of hearing-impaired students. After all aspects of the evaluation have been completed, a post-evaluation conference is scheduled. Parents and school personnel are an integral part of this conference and are invited to participate by providing information to supplement the findings of the evaluation team. A comprehensive report is provided with each evaluation.

The professional staff forms a multi-disciplinary team that consists of clinical psychologists, ophthalmologist, audiologist, and a speech/language pathologist. All specialists are appropriately certified, licensed, and/or registered.

Referrals to the various programs are accepted at any time during the year and are sent by the Special Education Teams through the Special Education Administrator of the town in which the child resides. Requests are reviewed by the appropriate program director, at which time site visits and other appropriate details can be arranged.

### *Program and Service Enhancements - READS Diagnostic Clinic*

The Lead Psychologist for the clinic led a professional development session for area educators on the new requirements surrounding sports-related head injury and concussions. The clinic is now equipped to conduct assessments of students who have suffered a concussion and can support districts in conducting baseline assessments for students who are active in athletics.

*Discussion of the Cost Effectiveness of Collaborative Programs*

**READS COLLABORATIVE BUDGET SUMMARY - FY12**

PROGRAM	FY12 APPROVED BUDGET
Administration	\$777,309
Clinic Program	\$253,307
Clinic Ancillary Program	\$349,420
Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Program	\$1,805,680
Academy Program	\$3,195,187
District Services Program	\$475,748
District Services Ancillary Program	\$684,351
<b>TOTAL FY12 BUDGET</b>	<b>\$6,763,693</b>

The collaborative is designed to leverage cost savings on behalf of districts in the provision of programs and services to children with special needs as well as other collaborations for services. The collaborative's process for the development of the budget provides for a thorough review of revenues and expenses in relation to tuition rates and fees for services. Budget subcommittees of the Middle Management Advisory Group of Special Education Directors meet for an in depth review of the following budgets: READS Academy, Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, District Services and the Clinic. The Personnel Subcommittee and Finance Subcommittee of the Board of Directors meet jointly to do a further analysis of the proposed budget. The Middle Management Advisory Group meets as a whole to endorse the budget after another review of revenues, expenses, tuition rates and projected service fees. The Board of Directors then meets to review the budget and discuss any additional adjustments prior to a meeting to vote approval of the budget.

This process provides for multiple avenues for input from the advisory group and the Board. Tuition increases are carefully considered and questioned before endorsement. The costs of services and programs provided by READS Collaborative are highly competitive and result in cost savings to the member and non-member districts when compared to other out of district placements.

In addition, READS Collaborative's educational programs strive to provide interventions that promote a student's return to his/her home district to continue learning. Students also receive support that has proven successful in helping them meet competency determinations for a high school diploma. Both of these programmatic goals result in reduced expenses for school districts as students spend less time in the Collaborative than they might spend in a private placement.

**Program Tuition Cost Effectiveness Comparison for FY12**

	Tuition	Projected Enrollment	Projected Total Tuition Charge for Enrolled Students
<b>Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Program</b>			
READS* (average of Level 1 and Level 2 tuition)	\$32,130	38	\$1,220,940
PRIVATE Schools (2) average	\$42,813	38	\$1,626,894
*READS has 3 Levels of Tuition for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Program. Level 1 tuition is established for students who require moderate intervention. Level 2 tuition is established for students who may have cochlear implants and require prescriptive, intensive speech and language services. Level 3 tuition is established for students who have specialized needs requiring intensive intervention and support within the program.			
<b>READS Academy (Alternative Program for K-12+)</b>			
	Tuition	Projected Enrollment	Projected Total Tuition Charge for Enrolled Students
READS tuition	\$24,480	120	\$2,937,600
PRIVATE Schools (2) average	\$46,660	120	\$5,599,200

Total estimated savings for districts using READS Collaborative for programs as compared with the average of private school costs for similar programs for the students currently served is **\$3,067,554.**

*READS Collaborative's Plan of Action*

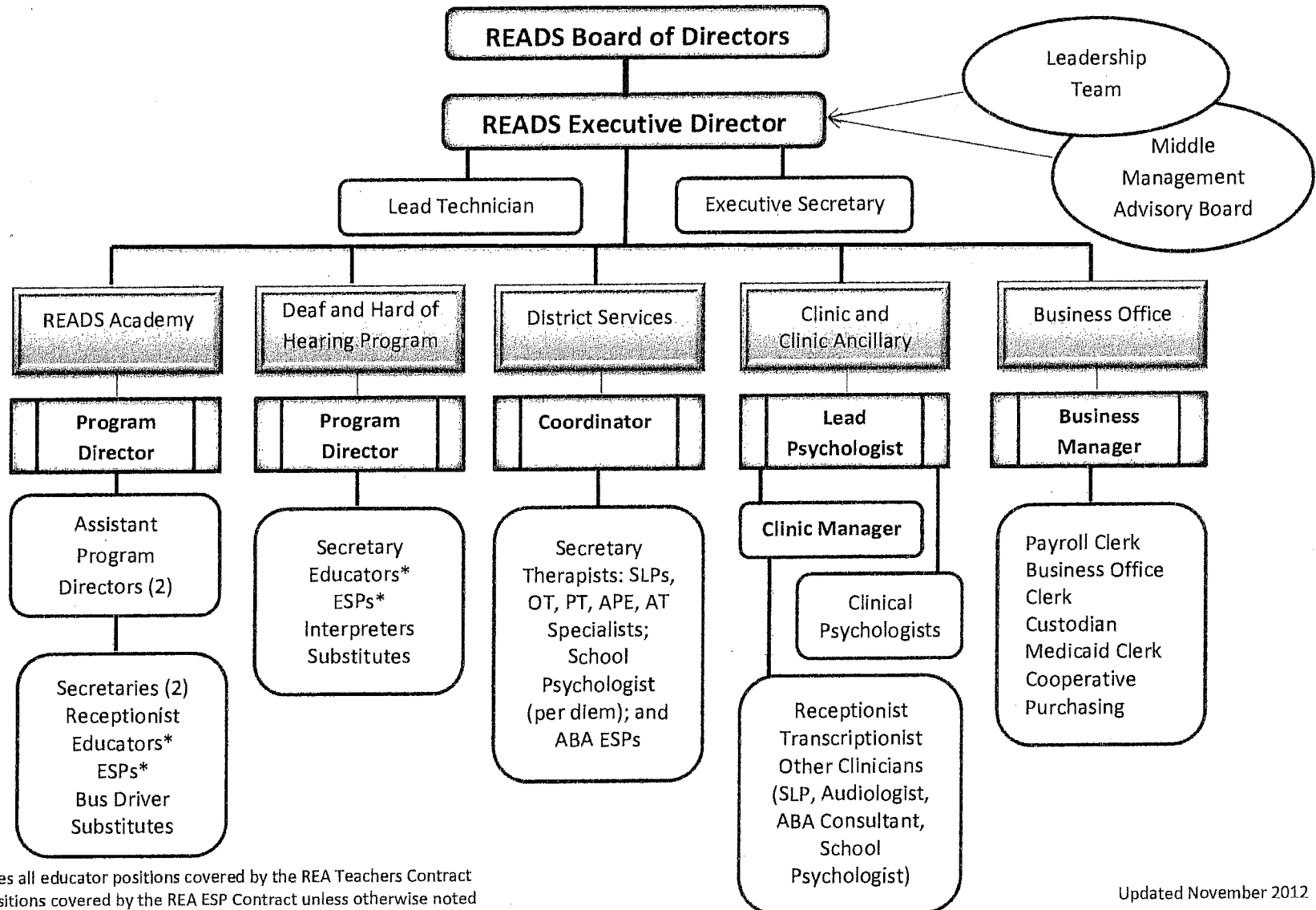
READS Collaborative Improvement Goals for the Executive Director 2012-2013 as approved by the Board of Directors, March 22, 2012:

1. Prepare the educators and support staff for the full implementation of the common core and the educator evaluation for 2013-2014 (Professional Practice).
2. Conduct a gap analysis and inventory of the available data and the use of that data within the collaborative (Student Learning).
3. Improve communication and efficiency through current technologies (Collaborative Improvement Goal).
4. Implement the new regulations of Chapter 43 of the Acts of 2012, An Act Relative to Improving Accountability and Oversight of Education Collaboratives (Collaborative Improvement Goal).
5. Advance the mission of the collaborative: To provide high quality, cost effective educational programs and services for all students (Collaborative Improvement Goal).

This report has been prepared by the Executive Director, Dr. Theresa Craig, 508-947-3634 x 107, [tcraig@readscollab.org](mailto:tcraig@readscollab.org).



# READS Collaborative Organizational Chart



\*Educators- Includes all educator positions covered by the REA Teachers Contract  
 \*ESPs- Includes positions covered by the REA ESP Contract unless otherwise noted