

# **SOUTH SHORE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE**

[www.ssec.org](http://www.ssec.org)

## **ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COLLABORATIVE BOARD of DIRECTORS 2022 - 2023**

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## **SOUTH SHORE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE BOARD MEMBERS**

**2022 - 2023**

Richard L. Reino,	Executive Director
James Lee Superintendent	Braintree Public Schools
Patrick Sullivan, Ed.D. Superintendent	Cohasset Public Schools
Margaret Adams Superintendent	Hingham Public Schools
Judith Kuehn Superintendent, Chairperson	Hull Public Schools
Jeffrey Granatino Superintendent	Marshfield Public Schools
Peter Burrows Superintendent	Milton Public Schools
Matthew A. Keegan Superintendent	Norwell Public Schools
Kevin Mulvey, J.D. Superintendent	Quincy Public Schools
Thea Stovell Superintendent	Randolph Public Schools
William Burkhead Superintendent	Scituate Public Schools
Robert Wargo Superintendent	Weymouth Public Schools
Jeffrey Szymaniak Superintendent	Whitman Hanson Public Schools

## **STAFF OF THE SOUTH SHORE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE**

**2022 – 2023**

Richard L. Reino	Executive Director
Arthur Sullivan	Treasurer
Jill Lawrence	Executive Secretary
Catherine A. Cole	Accounts Payable
Stacy Lemieux	Accounts Receivable
Diane Baiardi	Business Office Assistant
Kathleen Flaherty	Payroll
Erin Holder	Director of Student Services
Anne Rowland	Careers Program Coordinator
Denise Demaggio	Program Secretary
Jon Reynard	Community School Program Director
Karen Ring	Program Secretary
Maureen Gattine	Mini School Program Director
Karen Thomsen	Program Secretary
Rosanna Warrick	Quest Program Director
Mike Pagan	Program Secretary
Cheryl Jacques	South Shore High Coordinator
Tara Sepeck	Program Secretary
Dawn Flaherty, OTR/L	Director of Ancillary Services
Anne Rowland	STARTS Program Coordinator

## **1. Letter of Introduction**

This annual report is submitted by Richard Reino, Executive Director and the administrators of the schools and programs that comprise the South Shore Educational Collaborative (SSEC) to describe significant challenges, events and accomplishments that occurred during the 2022-2023 school year.

The SSEC primary location is 75 Abington Street in Hingham, MA. In addition, we have programs in both Hull and Randolph public school buildings. Thank you to both the Randolph and Hull public schools for their continued support of our program.

As if the effects of the pandemic were not bad enough... the '22-'23 school year presented a new and unexpected challenge caused by the pandemic, namely the severe labor shortage. In the erroneous expectation that people would be returning to the workforce in the fall of 2022 we utilized large numbers of outside agency personnel to address the large number of student referrals. This caused a huge, unsustainable financial burden on the collaborative which we cannot afford to repeat. Note as of this writing November 2023, we have taken steps to prevent this from happening again which will in turn limit our ability to accept future student referrals. This "new" reality coupled with the continuing increased need for social, emotional and psychological services frame the challenges that we and other educational institutions are now facing.

The final FY24 budget was approved by the SSEC Board on March 31, 2023 with a tuition increase only modification on June 2, 2023. The FY24 board approved budget of March 31, 2023 with the aforementioned tuition increase was implemented for the start of FY24. Our enrollment has yet to return to pre pandemic levels and remains flat at less than 330 students. The Community School for students with complex physical, medical and educational needs as well as the Quest and Mini School programs for social, emotional and autistic students respectively remain our most in demand programs. All have waiting lists that are constrained by the lack of qualified staff. Our therapeutic pool which is now back up and running cannot be utilized because of the same lack of staff. The two high school programs South Shore High School and the Careers High School are housed at our Hingham location. Students in these two programs have access to improved technology infrastructure and classroom space. We offer cafeteria, kitchen and greenhouse course offerings as well as work in our print shop. These vocational opportunities help students prepare for employment opportunities after graduation if they so choose. Our two transition specialists provide off site field trips to both local employers and local colleges.

In accordance with the law governing collaboratives, the administration of SSEC has been working to meet the requirements of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The submission of detailed student and staff data for DESE to analyze instructional practices remains an ongoing process that administrative staff at SSEC has been completing in a timely manner as required. Starting with the 2018-2019 school year SSEC added the position of Director of Student Services. Serving in this position is Erin Holder. Under her leadership we continue to better coordinate, enhance and increase

professional development for our staff as well as monitor and utilize student achievement data to track their achievement.

Our 2017 – 2022 strategic plan was extended through 2023 and we began work on a new 3 year strategic plan to take us through 2026. As part of this work the board added an additional section to the plan addressing facilities. As of this writing we are in year 11 of our 20 year lease which will end June 30, 2033 for our primary Hingham location. We will need to start planning now for our facility needs in July of 2034.

Because of the increased costs of agency staff in FY23 we discontinued OPEB contributions in January of 2023 with no plans of resuming contributions in FY24. Our cumulative surplus for FY23 was 9.54%. We continue to be one to one in terms of the student to device ratio.

Just prior to the pandemic we were in the planning stages of offering an after school academic service for school phobics as well as for students who may need remedial assistance. The original idea was to have this service be in person. Now, however with our successful experience in remote learning we intend to offer this in a customized hybrid model. Again due to the staffing shortage we were not able to do this during the '22 – '23 school year. This initiative will need to be on hold for the foreseeable future.

Starting in September of 2018 we added a full time school resource officer. This position is now filled by Officer Terrance Low from the Hingham Police Department who has proven to be an invaluable addition to our program. Given all that has transpired in recent years, all have benefitted from this positive police presence. Students and staff get to interact with a uniformed police officer on a more informal level. SSEC staff has also participated in A.L.I.C.E. emergency response training. The entire collaborative has been subject to a risk assessment review by Joe Hendry from the A.L.I.C.E. training institute. This assessment contained several recommendations to improve our readiness in the event of an emergency. We have implemented most of these recommendations.

## **2. General Information**

The South Shore Educational Collaborative (SSEC) principal address is 75 Abington Street Hingham, MA 02043. The executive director and administrators for SSEC are available at this location. The telephone number is 781-749-7518. This annual report provides a summary of the schools, services and programs for the academic and fiscal year July, 2022-June, 2023.

The core values of safety, respect, relationships and growth are always considered as decisions are made for SSEC. The mission statement states that the SSEC is responsive to the emerging needs of communities by providing innovative, fiscally sound, high quality educational programs and services for individuals with special needs. The vision of SSEC is to continue to provide excellence in educational services with state of the art technology in a safe and respectful therapeutic environment.

### **3. Governance and Leadership**

The SSEC is governed by a board of directors comprised of the superintendents from member districts. Each school and program has a director or coordinator who reports to the executive director. The program directors are responsible for daily operations. The board members and SSEC administrators for fiscal year 23 are listed elsewhere in this report.

The following member districts' school committees have appointed their superintendents to serve on the SSEC Board of Directors for fiscal year 2023:

Braintree	James Lee,
Cohasset	Patrick Sullivan, Ed.D
Hingham	Margaret Adams, Ph.D
Hull	Judy Khuen
Marshfield	Jeffrey Granatino
Milton	Peter Burrows
Norwell	Matthew Keegan
Quincy	Kevin Mulvey
Randolph	Thea Stovell
Scituate	William Burkhead
Weymouth	Robert Wargo
Whitman Hanson	Jeffrey Szymaniak

### **4. Programs and Services Provided**

The SSEC school and program information presented later in this report will clearly define the goals and outcomes of the programs while presenting a clear profile of the students served in each school. Each school and program operated by the SSEC provides a specialized educational setting for students who could not make adequate progress in their school district after many interventions. The SSEC school and program reports are provided by the director/coordinator of that program. The student referrals from sending school districts have complex learning challenges. The primary profiles of student needs are in the disciplines of social/emotional, physical/medical and autism spectrum. The districts have made great efforts to meet the educational needs of the students at their home schools before being referred to SSEC.

### **5. Cost Effectiveness of Programs and Services**

Each year brings program and financial challenges. As previously mentioned FY23 was an extremely challenging year both programmatically and financially for SSEC. Due to the labor shortage our staffing costs rose significantly because of the need to utilize outside agency staff. Our outside agency staffing costs rose by more than \$875,000. In addition the severity of the referrals we received were extremely more dysregulated. For the first time since FY16 expenses exceeded revenues significantly. As I stated in my opening paragraph we have taken steps to correct this in FY24.

With the enactment of Chapter 43 of the Acts of 2012- *An Act Relative to Improving Accountability and Oversight of Education Collaboratives*, one of the areas to be included in the annual report is the cost effectiveness of our programs and services.

The schools, programs and services offered at SSEC are specialized and focused to meet the needs of students with intense, complex learning profiles that include physical, medical, emotional, cognitive and learning challenges. By the time a student is referred to SSEC, the public school has initiated interventions that have not been able to demonstrate that adequate progress can be accomplished. The SSEC mission states that the collaborative will provide innovative, fiscally sound high quality educational programs and services. Due to the level of specialized educational services required, the tuitions and fees must be reviewed annually to keep cost increases to a minimum. Each year, the Board of Directors and SSEC administrators review the budget and compare tuitions with collaboratives and private schools before approving annual costs. Negotiated salary increases, health insurance, utilities and lease expenses are required financial obligations that had an impact on the annual budget of \$25,610,842.12 for FY23.

Since most of the revenue and expenses are related to the schools and programs at SSEC, this report will include cost comparisons with some of the schools where students apply and/or attend before enrollment at SSEC.

During 2022-2023, SSEC leased one building at 75 Abington Street in Hingham and classroom space in Randolph and Hull. The classroom rentals in public schools are the most cost effective to the SSEC and also for the districts. The students from the district where a classroom is rented will save significantly on transportation and the families are pleased to have the students in their home town. However, the needs of the students who attend the Community School, Quest School, South Shore High School and Careers High School require a location with a different setting than a traditional school. The physical, medical and emotional needs of the students require a substantially separate location with the ongoing goal of considering the return to a traditional school whenever feasible. The SSEC schools are licensed by DESE and are able to compete with more costly private schools. We are located geographically where all member districts have access with a minimum transportation expense. This is a significant cost effective measure. The town of Hull is the furthest away which leased 11 classrooms to SSEC in 2022-2023 allowing for minimum transportation costs for Hull students enrolled in the program. Situations where students travel long distances to attend a private school may cost a school district \$25,000 or more when a monitor is required.

As requested, the following comparisons by program will demonstrate cost effectiveness to districts when a student is placed at SSEC rather than a competing private school.

SSEC Community School- FY 23 tuition- \$75,201 (includes summer)  
Private School-Perkins Watertown FY 23 tuition- \$136,865  
Private School- BC Campus School FY 23 tuition- \$100,354  
**Savings per student \$25,153 to \$61,664**



SSEC Mini School- FY 23 tuition- \$75,201 (includes summer)  
 Private School- Boston Higashi FY23 tuition- \$84,806  
 Private School- May Institute FY 23 tuition- \$128,243  
**Savings per student \$9,605 to \$53,042**

SSEC Quest School FY 23 tuition- \$64,998 (includes summer)  
 Private School- Brandon FY 23 tuition- \$87,012  
 Private School- Walker FY 23 tuition- \$98,739  
**Savings per student \$22,014 to \$33,741**

SSEC SSH and Careers FY 23 tuition- \$54,792 (includes summer)  
 Private School- Brandon FY 23 tuition- \$87,012  
 Private School- Walker FY 23 tuition- \$98,739  
**Savings per student \$32,220 to \$43,947**

The potential savings on tuitions to districts demonstrates the cost effectiveness of placing a student at SSEC rather than a private school. The private schools selected for comparison with the SSEC schools are the schools where students of similar profiles have been referred or accepted in the past.

The SSEC has sponsored advanced energy purchasing through an RFP bid process for natural gas and electricity. Several south shore towns have participated in this joint purchasing program. The data collected by the consultant who coordinates the purchasing program on behalf of SSEC member districts and other municipalities provides a significant savings. The consulting company used again this year was Titan Energy. The electricity and gas bids result in a significant savings to the participants when comparing the open market price to the 24 month bid price of the contracts. The approximate savings for each participant are listed below.

<b>GAS</b>	<b>Savings</b>	<b>ELECTRIC</b>	<b>Savings</b>
Plymouth Public Schools	\$125,725	Plymouth Public Schools	\$1,076,641
Town of Plymouth	\$52,791	Town of Plymouth	\$923,081
Cohasset PS	\$58,402	Cohasset PS	\$230,112
Cohasset Town	\$24,821	Cohasset Town	\$490,736
Scituate schools	\$96,411	Scituate	\$296,789
Norwell schools	\$58,404	Norwell schools	\$226,613
Hull	\$48,095	Hull	\$0
SSEC	<u>\$653</u>	SSEC	<u>\$0</u>
<b>Total gas Savings</b>	<b>\$465,302</b>	<b>Total electric saving</b>	<b>\$3,243,972</b>

## **6. Progress toward achieving the purpose and objectives**

The SSEC continues to strive toward achieving the purpose and objectives as stated in the approved agreement. The schools and programs that comprise SSEC include students who are low incidence in the member districts. The merging of the Language Enhancement program with the Mini School is an example of responding to needs of the districts.

Our programs offer academic and therapeutic services in a safe environment at staff to student ratios where students are able to achieve success in a setting near their community. The educational services are provided with state of the art technology in a respectful environment. During FY23 we continued the process of standardizing our data collection methods across all programs which was interrupted by the pandemic. Towards that end all programs continue to input data in the Risk Eraser software package. All staff have and will participate in training programs to help facilitate consistent and standardized data collection. In addition, due to Medicaid reporting requirements we have customized our student information software, School Brains to seamlessly interface with the new and ever changing requirements. Both of these initiatives are ongoing and continue to be refined and improved as we move forward. The need for accurate Medicaid reporting will allow districts to submit proper Medicaid reimbursement requests to the federal government. SSEC has always kept student data for all students. Employing Risk Eraser will not only standardize the process but will help us to consistently analyze that data. Once that data is gathered and analyzed; this will help us in formulating individual student learning plans. Students will then be able to learn at their own pace with instruction that is presented at a level that is challenging, yet attainable.

Cost effectiveness and value for high quality programs and services is considered with all program development. The programs, schools and services at SSEC strive to reduce the need for placements at private day and residential schools. The dedicated, SSEC personnel strive to build trusting relationships and confidence with public school representatives, parents and students to form a team that will provide a safe, respectful environment for educational, emotional and social success for all students.

Professional development has also been offered in a cost effective manner for educators to participate in English Language Learner preparation such as W.I.D.A. Unfortunately we were only able to offer internal training on digital media tools, writing I.E.P 's. and E.L.L. due to the pandemic. As we go forward we will be attempting to broaden these initiatives.

All of the SSEC direct care employees participate in Non-Aggressive Psychological and Physical Intervention (NAPPI now called WELLE). The SSEC has personnel approved to conduct the training at SSEC which is also a significant savings.

The '22-'23 school year was an extremely challenging year for the reasons previously mentioned in this report. That said, I would be remiss in saying that given the difficulties in staffing last year the SSEC staff went above and beyond to provide an outstanding education to our students. The difficulties we encountered last year were beyond their control. The work that goes on here on a daily basis is truly remarkable. I continue to be honored and humbled to be part of this amazing group of people.

The Board of Directors support of the strategic plan has continued to allow the SSEC to accomplish many of its goals. The three year plan for 2024-2026 has been completed and now serves as the guide for the future development of SSEC. The directors' reports that follow provide specific detail and data related to the programs and schools of SSEC for the

'22-'23 school year. They present information that provides pertinent information and outcomes relevant to their respective programs.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Board of Directors, Jill Lawrence, Executive Secretary, Erin Holder, Director of Student Services, our program directors, coordinators and all personnel for their ongoing support and dedication to the students and families of SSEC.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard L. Reino". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard L. Reino  
Executive Director  
South Shore Educational Collaborative  
75 Abington Street  
Hingham, MA 02043

## **Director of Student Services Annual Report 2022-2023**

### **Position Responsibilities**

The Director of Student Services, a new position in the Collaborative as of FY2019, changed hands in October, 2022. An entry plan was utilized to become familiar with the position's responsibilities and job duties designed by the SSEC Board of Directors. They are as follows:

- DESE Program Review Compliance
- DESE License Compliance
- Budget Management
- Title IX/VII Discrimination Officer (investigator)
- English Learner Coordinator
- Professional Development Coordinator
- Direct Supervision & Evaluation of Assigned Personnel
- Mentor and Induction Program Coordinator
- Curriculum and Technology Coordination
- Assessment Procedures and Practices including Mandatory Screenings
- Equity Development
- MTSS
- Collaborative Student Transportation
- Coordination of Psychiatric Services
- Coordinate Services Provided by Dr. Marc Hauser
- Coordinate Operating Committee (Sp.Ed. Directors/ Dir. of Student Services) -SSEC Committees

A progress update was provided to the Board of Directors in December 2022 and it was continued to be offered during the remainder of board meetings for the FY23 school year.

### **Programming Overview**

During the 2022-2023 school year, SSEC's programs ran in a typical manner to pre-COVID status. Activities that were halted, such as Community Based Instruction and Transitional Vocational job opportunities on- and/or off-site, resumed. Community Based Instruction across our SSEC programs can include: college/career focus, leisure/recreation, part-time jobs/internships and functional life skills. For transition-aged students, Community Based Instruction is tied directly to the transition plan, as well as to the vision statement, which is developed with the student across all ages but tied more directly to goals during the transition period. Students in our high school programs were able to consistently work in our on-site locations such as our

greenhouse, kitchen and copy center. These on-site work opportunities were also able to welcome students from our other programs to begin participating and integrating with students from differing programs and explore preferred activities and new interests.

We continued to look at ways to expand our five programs overall, support our member districts with new enrollments and adapt to the staffing shortage that was becoming apparent across programs. We continued to offer our member and non-member districts ancillary services (i.e. Psychiatric Evaluations, Assistive Tech Evaluations, APE Consult, Vision and O&M Services) when needed, however decreased staffing levels throughout the year resulted in a wait list in some cases and even unavailability in others.

### **ELL Teacher and Home Liaison**

Our ELL teacher continues to support students and families. She mentored one staff member over the 2022-2023 school year who has since submitted completed paperwork for licensing. Over the course of the year, SSEC was able to continue to establish more consistent services and structures to support those who either required or could benefit from ELL services. For many of our students, there is the presence of a language/communication based disability in addition to having English as a second language.

Additional curricular content and materials (i.e. Bilingual Picture Dictionaries) were acquired as we continued to expand our ELL resources. Our ELL teacher models for other teachers on how to better support both the students and their families. ELL services were also available for homebound students and as part of our home visitation as needed or per request of the family. This continues to be a successful expansion and will continue to be a focus.

We had 12 students taking ACCESS, in mid-January through early February. Four students (all in Quest) took the ACCESS test. Eight students (four in Community and four in Mini) took the Alternate ACCESS. The four Mini students were supported through the year by an SEI Certified Reading Specialist. Their ACCESS testing was completed by the ELL teacher. In addition to the students who took the ACCESS test last year, we have since added four new students (three in Community and one in Mini). There are four students (all in Community) who are not designated as ELs but whose families speak languages other than English. Our ELL teacher acts as a home liaison, consulting with teachers and providing resources and assistance with parent contact as needed.

The families currently served by the ELL Department represent speakers of the following Languages:

- Brazilian Portuguese
- Burmese

- Cape Verdean (Kriolu)
- Chinese: Cantonese
- Chinese: Mandarin
- Haitian Creole
- Moroccan Arabic
- Nepalese
- Pashto
- Spanish
- Vietnamese

### **ELL Learners Translation Services**

SSEC continues to contract with Lexikeet to provide written, spoken and multi-language interpretation for our needs. This allows for more genuine, real-time communication with families on a routine and emergency basis.

### **Continued Exploration and Expansion of Math Curriculum**

SSEC completed a trial of Stemscores Math in the spring of 2022 and did a soft implementation across programs at that time. For those SSEC staff who were already using the Stemscores science content, the math program was easy to access and familiar. The math content addresses K through Algebra 1. All programs had the opportunity to use the content with hands-on materials but it was accepted to varying degrees across programs. Additional professional development would be beneficial to increase buy-in and support a wider range of acceptance and implementation across programs. The DESE ESY Summer Grant allowed for teachers already using the curriculum to participate in Coaching Hours with trained “coaches” to answer questions and support teachers' needs. Professional development in this area will continue to be a focus moving forward.

### **Expansion of ELA with Focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA)**

Over the course of the school year and continuing into the next, SSEC has worked to expand the type of literature the students across programs are engaged with to promote well-being, belonging and to reflect the backgrounds and lived experiences of our students. Teams have considered the types of texts that are needed along with consideration for how the content will be explored.

## Critical Thinking Content & Instruction

SSEC implemented critical thinking content within the QUEST, South Shore High and Career's High School programs in FY 22 and again in FY23. This was facilitated by Dr. Marc Hauser who is under an ongoing contract with SSEC to support data and some of our educational initiatives.

## Curriculum Equity Reviews

Equity reviews will continue to be conducted during the FY24 school year to look at places where we need to continue to improve our content. All areas were addressed on schedule in FY21 and FY22 with the exception of one reading program. A second look was completed on fiction and nonfiction texts as well as on teacher-made materials. Below is the ongoing equity review schedule and completion chart. The Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard continues to be used to conduct the audits. Through these ongoing audits, SSEC has improved representation in our curriculum and will continue to make this a focus each year to address a more comprehensive representation. SSEC continues to look at ways to adapt the scorecard to improve upon the types of characteristics in content we address.

<https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/ejroc/culturally-responsive-curriculum-scorecards>

J. Bryan-Gooden, M. Hester, & L. Q. Peoples (2019). Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard. New York: Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, New York University.

Content	Title	Grades	Implementation	Equity, Inclusivity, Diversity Review
Math	Business Math McGraw Hill (Hybrid)	9-12+	SSHS & CHS	Completed FY22
Math	Reveal Math	9-12+	CHS	Scheduled for FY24
Math	Stemscopes Math	K - Algebra	COMM, QUEST, MINI, SSHS, CHS, AIM	Scheduled for FY24
Social Studies/ ELA/ Science	Benchmark Curriculum (added Hybrid)	K-8	QUEST, COMM, MINI	Completed FY21

Social Studies:	McGraw Hill (Hybrid)	8-12	QUEST, SSHS, CHS	Completed FY21
Science/ ELA	Panorama Science - Hybrid (National Geographic : engage)	K-6	QUEST, MINI	Completed FY21
Science	Science Stemscopes	K-12	QUEST, MINI, AIM, SSH, CHS	Completed FY22

### **Evidenced Based Reading Programs**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Equity, Inclusivity, Diversity Review</b>
Reach Reading (hybrid): (National Geographic: Engage)	Prek-6	QUEST	FY25
Wilson Foundations	Prek-1	QUEST, COMM, MINI	FY24
Wilson	2-12+	QUEST, COMM, MINI, CHS, SSH	FY24
Spire Reading	K-12	QUEST	FY25
SIPPS : Systematic Instruction in phonological awareness, phonics & sight words (Benchmark)	K-12	QUEST	FY24
Reading A-Z	K-12	COMM, QUEST, MINI	Completed FY21



### **Additional Literature (ongoing reviews)**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Grades</b>		<b>Implementation Equity, Inclusivity, Diversity Review</b>
EPIC	All	COMM, MINI	First look completed FY21 Second look completed FY22
Fiction	All	All	First look completed FY21 Second look completed FY22
Non-Fiction	All	All	First look completed FY21 Second look completed FY22
Teacher made materials	All	COMM & MINI	First look completed FY22 Second look FY24

### **Equity Review Summary**

Overall, the content has shown a consistent improvement in the diversity of representation, traditions, points of view and the types of problems faced by people. Across all content reviewed so far, 62% of the material met a satisfactory level. The greatest discrepancy remains in the area of gender diversity with the overall content reviewed coming in at 44% unclear. This is problematic given the student representation SSEC supports. Gender identity representation in the content and texts should be focused on for the next year as selections are made.

### **Stonehill Partnership**

FY23 was the third year SSEC participated in the Stonehill College Teacher Residency Program. SSEC had 3 participants who worked as paraprofessionals in Quest and Mini School. Students participating in this program continue to receive a special tuition rate from the college and have an opportunity to finish their degree and license in one year (moderate Pre-k-8 or 5-12). We will be offering this opportunity again in the FY24 school year as the planning stages take place a year in advance.

## **Professional Development**

Professional development during the FY22 school year started off with a highly anticipated Lego training, followed by 3D printer training for our professional staff. Following the 3D printer training, our fleet of 3D printers (all named after Scooby-Doo characters) were dispersed to each program for use. SSEC continued to offer in-house training throughout the school year Title IX/Civil Rights, ALICE, Welle (our Non-Abusive, Physical and Psychological Intervention) and CPR/First Aid. Four new staff Welle trainings were held periodically throughout the FY23 year in addition to the recertification training that takes place annually for returning staff. CPR/First Aid as well as Welle train-the-trainer courses continued to follow their bi-annual schedule. The DESE ESY Grant allowed for several professional development opportunities. Our SSEC leadership team participated in two half-day courses on unconscious bias in the workplace and staff motivation. SSEC hosted a representative from iReady, our benchmarking tool, to provide a more solid basis to better understand and become familiar with the tool itself in order to increase its use, and therefore effectiveness, across programs. This remains an ongoing priority for SSEC across programs for FY24.

All programs participated in a three-part training on Childhood Adversity & Trauma with Marc Hauser, a consultant to SSEC. Each program participated in the three parts. Our Quest program then customized smaller follow-up focus groups to create case studies for specific students. This helped to personalize the information to our different student populations. Leadership members pre-planned how they would like their programs to move forward with this base knowledge of trauma for more customized training that can take place in FY24.

## **Benchmark & Screening Assessments**

**iReady:** iReady continued to be implemented in each program during FY23. Although it was more widely used across programs this year, it was used on a broader base across programs. Teachers requested more training on the tool itself to better prepare themselves for more functional use in their schedule.

Some students continued to access this tool successfully and others found it frustrating or were not able to engage in it at that time. Testing can be difficult for some of our students due to frustration, regulation and other needs which may take priority at any given moment.

**IXL:** IXL is used for discrete skill development across ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies in grades K-12+ in all programs (to varying degrees and as appropriate). IXL provided direct support for content and skills with formative data tracking, assessment and skills/concept reinforcement.

**Dyslexia Screening:** SSEC implemented the Shaywitz Dyslexia Screener for grades K-3 in FY21 and has now completed its third year of implementation. This is used in combination with iReady information to make initial judgments around possible reading-based disabilities as well as to monitor those who have been identified. Twelve students were screened in the fall of 2022 and 11 of the 12 received ratings of “at risk,” using the Shaywitz Dyslexia Screen. Students receive one of two

ratings – “ at risk” or “not at risk.” The family and the district liaison were notified of the results, and if appropriate, a team meeting was held to discuss any additional needs for testing and possible support needed. SSEC is currently looking at the adolescent version of this tool, which will be used to screen students aged 14+ in FY24.

### **Title IX/VII, Discrimination officer (investigator)**

The Director of Student Services position is also the Civil Rights/Title IX coordinator. Throughout the FY23 school year, two student-related Title IX cases were investigated and resolved. All information was updated on the SSEC website’s Civil Rights page in August 2022 by the predecessor in this position for FY23. All civil rights and bullying information (also housed on the SSEC website) will receive a biennial refurbish in FY24.

### **Developmental Behavioral Evaluation Services**

SSEC brought on a Developmental Behavioral Pediatrician, Dr. Jeanine Audet for the FY23 school year. Dr. Audet was able to take referrals from each of SSEC’s five programs as well as outside referrals from member and non-member districts.

### **DESE Summer 2023 FC523-525-527**

SSEC was one of 60 Collaboratives and/or School Districts who received the summer ESY grant for \$100,000 for summer 2022 and participated in the continuation for a second year, receiving another \$100,000 for the summer of 2023. With this money, SSEC was able to substantially improve high quality hands-on STEAM materials across all programs. The following is a list of areas we were able to use the grant money in ESY 2023.

- Diverse books and manipulatives
- Art, music, adaptive tools, sensory, and vocational/daily living/greenhouse/cafeteria
- Project-based Learning & STEAM materials
- Student transportation related to leisure/transition/vocation
- Costs of leisure/recreation/vocational community experiences/supplies

This grant allowed for three different professional development opportunities. First, teachers using Stemscopes Math were able to participate in virtual coaching hours with a Stemscopes facilitator. This gave specific teachers the opportunity to ask questions, explore digital content with a trainer and plan ahead for the year. Second, teachers & leaders participated in two and a half hour sessions with an iReady specialist in-person. Staff reviewed the iReady tool itself using our own student data from the previous years diagnostic results. The goal of this professional development was to increase staff usage and student buy-in across all of our programs. Lastly, our SSEC leadership team (Directors, coordinators and some clinical staff) chose two half day seminars to participate in for further

professional learning. The two topics were, *Recognizing and Overcoming Unconscious Bias and Sparking Self Motivation In Your Staff*.

Community based experiences were well supported by the grant across all programs to include trips for recreation, leisure and vocational exploration. Activities were also brought to campus to provide our students additional access to varied experiences and explore new interests. These on-site experiences also allowed for our students across all programs to participate together in a more cohesive and fun way to increase relationships and collaboration between programs.

## **ANCILLARY SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023**

### **STAFF AND STUDENT POPULATION:**

#### **Occupational/Physical/Speech Therapy Services-**

During the 2022-2023 school year, The South Shore Educational Collaborative employed a full-time Therapy and Assistive Technology Services supervisor, a full time Therapy Services coordinator, ten physical therapists (eight full time, two part-time) , three full-time physical therapy assistants, fourteen full-time occupational therapists, one full-time occupational therapy assistant, and fifteen speech-language pathologists (thirteen full time, two part-time) . Coverage through an agency was required for 1.8 FTE speech language positions. Therapists have conducted evaluations, and provided direct and consultative services for students in five Collaborative programs, three member school districts, and one non-member school district. Therapists have worked with students who have disabilities that include: intellectual impairment, communication impairment, physical impairment, sensory impairment (vision, hearing, deaf-blind), emotional impairment, neurological impairment, autism, specific learning disabilities, developmental delay, and other health impairments.

#### **Assistive Technology Services-**

The South Shore Educational Collaborative Center for Assistive Technology (CAT) provided assistive technology evaluation, training, consultation, and follow-up services for students in five Collaborative programs, and upon request in SSEC member and non-member school districts.

During the 2022-2023 school year, the South Shore Educational Collaborative Center for Assistive Technology Team (CAT Team) consisted of a Therapy and Assistive Technology Services supervisor, Therapy coordinator, two assistive technology specialists, and a speech/language pathologist. The SSEC Technology Coordinator consulted on an as needed basis. The CAT Team assistive technology specialists and speech language pathologist worked together three and half hours each week from September through June to conduct assistive technology evaluations and follow-up consultation services for school districts. In addition, each CAT Team member was assigned to provide on-going Assistive Technology consultation to SSEC programs and to school districts who requested this service.

### **SSEC Therapy and Assistive Technology Service Outcomes for 2022-2023 School Year:**

#### **Outcome # 1:**

Students will receive therapy services responsive to need in the least restrictive environment to support school participation.

#### **Evaluation Design:**

This outcome was measured by tracking the number of students and type of service provided through:

- Information Sharing (Least restrictive type of service where therapist may educate team about student's disability and provide information to adjust school activity demands or context.)
- Accommodations/Modifications (Activity and environmental changes may be made to support student participation.)
- Consultation (Therapist develops and trains team in use appropriate strategies and collaborates with teacher/team to support student participation/learning.)
- Direct therapy service in context (Therapy services are provided within the context of classroom/school activities with peers and designed to facilitate participation.)
- Direct therapy services in and out of context (Therapy session frequency is divided between services provided within the context of the classroom/learning activities with peers and out of context and separate from classroom/learning activities.)
- Direct therapy service out of context (Therapy services are provided individually or in small groups separate from classroom/school activities with peers.)

#### Analysis/Discussion:

The data collected during the 2022-2023 school year reflects the types of conditions/environment therapy services were delivered.

**Figure 1**

Type of Therapy Service:	Occupational Therapy	Physical Therapy	Speech/Language Therapy
Information Sharing (only no other service)	0%	0%	5%
Accommodations/Modifications (only no consult or direct service)	1%	2%	5%
Consultation	9%	9%	4%
*Direct therapy service in context	4%	16%	5%
*Direct therapy service in and out of context	70%	57%	64%
*Direct therapy service out of context	16%	16%	17%

\*All direct services were provided in conjunction with consultation, accommodations/modifications, and/or information sharing. Consultation services were also provided in conjunction with accommodations/modifications, and/or information sharing.

## Outcome #2

The SSEC Center for Assistive Technology Team will develop ways to incorporate assistive technology supports into the classroom. This outcome will be measured by a ranking of the top three assistive technology supports in the areas of:

**Figure 2**

<b>Supports in the areas of:</b>	<b>AT</b>
<b>Communication</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Participation in Classroom Learning</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Environmental Access</b>	<b>1</b>

### Analysis/Discussion:

The top ranked assistive technology support was in the area of Communication. Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC), AAC trials and device acquisition were the most common communication supports. The second ranked assistive technology support was in the area of Participation in Classroom Learning which most often included executive function, literacy and STEM supports. This was followed in ranking by Environmental Access that included supports such as switches, eye-gaze, device mounts, and visual supports.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- During the 2022-2023 school year, we were able to utilize grant funding from the Edwin Phillips Foundation for therapeutic pool maintenance/repair costs and purchase of therapeutic pool adaptive equipment for students.
- Occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech language pathologists who work in SSEC programs continued to utilize a comprehensive documentation tool to develop therapy intervention plans for students, track student attendance and service delivery, record therapy session notes, collect data on student IEP goals/benchmarks for monitoring student progress, complete School-based Medicaid billing documentation and therapy outcomes.
- On a monthly basis, all SSEC occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech language pathologists met in-person and virtually via Google Meet to discuss topics related to therapy service delivery, intervention planning and implementation of School-based Medicaid Program directives.
- SSEC assistive technology specialists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech language pathologists conducted evaluations for all referred students.

- Throughout the 2022-2023 school year, members of the SSEC CAT Team collaborated closely with team members to coordinate AAC device trials for students and acquisition of communication devices if deemed appropriate.
- The SSEC Center for Assistive Technology coordinated bulk Assistive Technology software, app and subscription purchases at reduced costs for SSEC programs.
- SSEC Center for Assistive Technology and SSEC Therapists continued to assist in the coordination of repairs, adaptations, and ordering of new adaptive equipment through meetings, email and phone communication with the families and vendors. Trials for new speech devices were completed to ensure the students have access to the most appropriate communication device. The assistive technology team and therapists wrote funding letters and letters of medical necessity for any necessary adaptive equipment.

#### SUMMARY OF ANCILLARY SERVICES:

During the 2022-2023 requests for occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, and assistive technology services were fulfilled for Collaborative programs and member school districts. Occupational therapy services were provided for 297 students. Physical therapy services were provided for 262 students. Speech/Language services were provided for 328 students.

Our main objective is to evaluate the need for and if necessary, provide supportive services so that students can access the school environment, participate in classroom learning and learn life skills. We also aim to provide awareness about assistive technology, and to link students with disabilities to technology systems that will increase opportunities in education, daily living, and employment.



# **Careers High School - Annual Report**

2022 – 2023 School Year

Anne Rowland, Psy.D., Program Coordinator

## ***CHS Program Description***

The Careers High School is designed for high school students with severe emotional challenges who respond best when engaged in competency-based curriculum and projects. CHS is therapeutic, collaborative, flexible, and focuses on helping students earn their high school diploma from their sending school districts. Most of the students who succeed in CHS have a history of poor experiences with schools in general and are reactive to traditional educational approaches. These students respond to the ‘family feel’ of CHS, the individualized educational approaches including independent studies, credit-recovery, and the strong emphasis on preparation for transition to post-secondary experiences, especially opportunities to move from pre-vocational projects to entry-level jobs. Through increasing skills in social pragmatics and emotional regulation, greater time is then available to spend focused on academic and vocational endeavors, credit acquisition and employability.

### **Capacity**

Careers High School moved from a programmatic capacity of 37 to 40 students in 2015-16. Since then, while the age range of the student population typically is from 13 through 18 years, older students have remained enrolled if the educational Team determines it meets the students’ needs. In 2022-23, the age range was 13 - 20, but no waiver requests were required.

Careers High School assists students in modifying decision-making behaviors, improving academic skills, and managing the emotional interference that prevents them from being successful in a less-restrictive setting. When a student has met the emotional and behavioral goals of the IEP to the extent that s/he can return to a less restrictive setting, the Team ensures this happens. If the behavioral or emotional issues are too severe for success in a less restrictive environment, then a student could remain in placement at CHS until graduation.

There are five academic classrooms and one Greenhouse Lab in the Careers High School wing of the 75 Abington Street campus. Classrooms are staffed by certified special education teachers with the support of paraprofessionals. Four of the classrooms emulate the more traditional comprehensive high school model in the sense that the students move

from one content class to another content class. While class size is dependent upon population need, it generally ranges between six and nine students.

The fifth classroom is the Transition Classroom that is partially self-contained for the core academic classes (with some exceptions). It too is staffed by a special education teacher and a paraprofessional, and can accommodate up to 12 students. The student population identified for this classroom tends to have greater difficulty with change and may have diagnoses that include Autism Spectrum Disorder (DSM-V), anxiety disorders and nonverbal learning disabilities. These are also typically the younger students enrolled in CHS. Students are encouraged to take one or more classes in the other four classrooms as their comfort level and skills increase.

### **Staffing**

All staff, including the Administrative Assistant, Transition Specialists, Speech and Language Pathologist, Reading Specialist, Occupational Therapist, BCBA and two clinicians work together with the teaching staff as a comprehensive, collaborative team committed to working with CHS students in navigating specific difficulties to then result in their successful completion of high school. This may be accomplished in any number of ways, such as within the classroom, in dyads, in the Greenhouse Lab, Industrial Kitchen, through individual or group therapy situations, or social skills group, e.g. These sessions may be scheduled or on an as-needed basis. The clinical team (Katelyn Hagan and Caitlin Foley) works closely with classroom teachers, students' families, and outside collaterals. They hold individual sessions, conduct student training (Anti-Bullying, Civil Rights, e.g.) and are embedded within the classrooms. Together, all staff members work on developing and implementing an effective program to help each student increase good-decision making skills and progress towards their post-graduation goals.

Careers High School and SSHS share the Speech and Language Pathologist (Ellen Bernier), who completes evaluations and coordinates and runs groups focused on social pragmatic skills, as well as the BCBA (Julie Foshey). The Transitional Specialists (Bobby Nelson and Drew Himberg), who are also shared between CHS and SSHS, are critical to facilitating most aspects of the students' goals and plans upon achieving their diplomas. Mary Anne Kahler, the Reading Specialist, meets routinely with CHS students who require this service throughout the year, and Alicia Kearney, OT, also provides direct service to students and consultation to staff.

### **Transition Programming**

Originally, Careers High School developed a Transitions Program based on Jobs for American Graduate work standards. This program embedded these standards into the daily schedule. Students' schedules have them participating in on and/or off site transitional-vocational projects during their school day. These include work study

experiences, community service activities, paid positions in competitive employment situations, hands-on pre-vocational projects during school, and dual enrollment in college courses.

Students learn basic employment expectations, vocabulary and experience that translate directly to the work world. In addition, basic “soft” employment skills are built into the program to reinforce real world expectations. One of the Strategic Planning goals from administration for SSEC is to sharpen the focus of the pre-vocational offerings so as to increase employability skills. As this transpired, Bobby Nelson designed tracking sheets and gathered data about the use of the various opportunities. Bobby and Drew develop and coordinate the vocational program, including monitoring the students’ progress in competency level as measured by each Workplace Softskills Rubric.

The Transitional Specialists also assist students in exploring college and other post-secondary education and training, such as (P)SAT’s, ACT’s, Accuplacer test, college applications, college campus visits, and meetings with admissions officers to make the transition to college more manageable and successful. Resume development, mock job interviews, online applications, and support in the pre- and post- phone calls are part of the efforts with students, as well as assisting students’ connections to other job/vocational agencies, such as MRC. The Transition Specialists also complete and write Transition/Vocation Evaluations as part of the IEP 3 year re-evaluation process.

## ***2022-2023 Year in Summary***

### **Student Population**

Careers High School students have serious mental health, emotional and behavioral issues. The clinical team takes the leadership role in helping students maintain stability so they are able to access the curriculum and earn credits towards graduation. The therapeutic success of our students is ultimately gauged by successful credit acquisition toward graduation, or readiness to return to the district, whichever comes first.

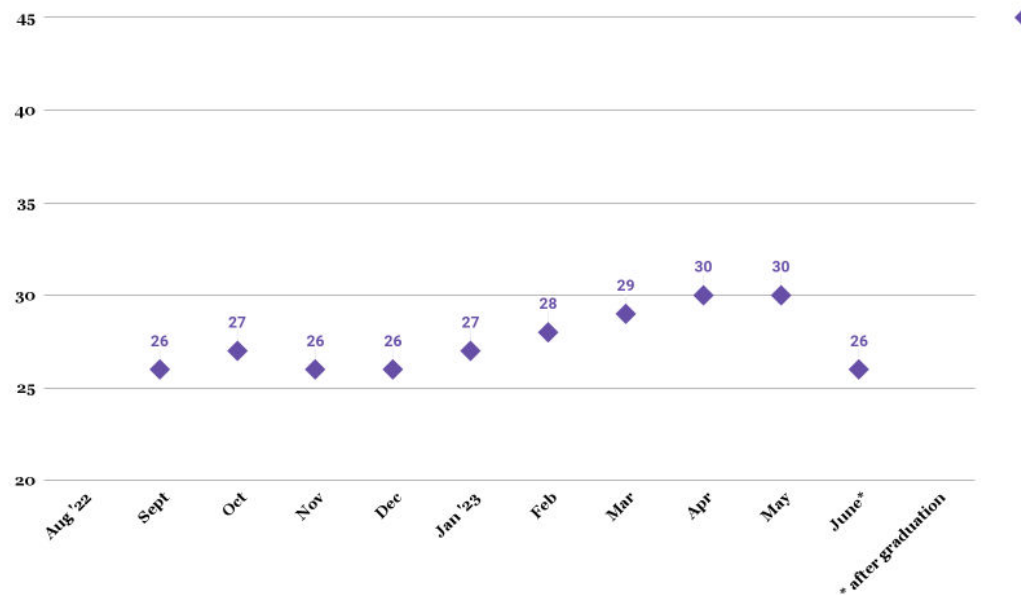
### **Year Two of Post COVID-19 Pandemic**

As seen below in Table 1, CHS began the year with a census of 26 students. While overall there were three more students enrolled than last year, similar to the prior year, enrollment fluctuated only slightly throughout the year. However, of note there was significant turn over of students again this year: five unenrolled during the year and nine enrolled. Of those who unenrolled from CHS, one moved out of state, one went back to district and returned four months later, one went to residential school, and two graduated early. CHS then graduated six more students (double the number from last year) in June:

one enrolled in the Weymouth Animal Center Veterinary School, one planned to participate in DDS services, one joined the Job Corps, one planned to participate in YOU Boston, one joined the BOOST Program through Mass Hire (with the goal to become a pipefitter), one enrolled in school to be an esthetician, and two took jobs in their community (Stop & Shop and a Coffee Shop). Among the graduates was a student who had chosen to defer his diploma and worked on transitional skills, especially Custodial Arts, throughout the building; he earned a uniform and staff badge based on his skills, work ethic and engaging personality. As a result, two other students have begun a similar training track during ESY and will continue throughout 2023-24.

Table 1

CHS STUDENT ENROLLMENT 2022-2023



The 2022-23 academic year's greatest challenge was still not being able to maintain the necessary staffing level to effectively run the classes. As with other SSEC programs, CHS reached out again to an agency (Norton) to hire a paraprofessional (Mark Cornacchio), who has been offered an SSEC contract for the 2023-24 school year. In addition to the Greenhouse specialist being out periodically for periods of time, CHS incurred significant staff leave of absences (teacher for the first 6 weeks of school, and paraprofessional for the last four months of school). Of significant surprise to all of SSEC, one of the administrators suddenly gave notice to take another job, which

impacted morale as well. CHS did participate in the newly established monthly Clinical Review Team, where Program Directors and clinicians present various student cases for 'peer consultation/supervision' within the group, which includes Dr. Audet, the Executive Director Rick Reino, and SRO Terry Low when available. Additionally, four CHS staff people joined the newly developed Threat Assessment Team for SSEC, which is still in the process of defining its role and procedures, including training with MBAT and Dewey-Cornell.

As part of year two of the DESE Accelerated Learning initiative, CHS continued to engage in related pursuits and activities in 2022-23. The teachers implemented regularly scheduled assessments with iReady in an effort to support and increase student learning, and incorporated the data into IEP goals. The Data Team (soon to be renamed Student Success Team) refined its focus this year on relating Goalseeker performance measures in the classroom to credit acquisition, and developed an early warning system of data to use in mid-term report cards when needed. The Data Team made progress integrating PBS and the Tiers of Student Support into this process, led by Julie Foshey, and will go into greater depth in the upcoming year.

In an effort to continue to build feelings of belonging and community, more routine, regularly scheduled Student Council meetings and activities were held, and the organized the following: an 80's Day, a fundraiser through Panera Bread, acknowledgement and celebration of student birthdays, handing out treats at Halloween to the Quest students, decorating hallways for the Community students' parade and winter holiday festivities, interacting with the Healthy Hints Whiteboard in the center of the CHS hallway, creating T-shirts, and made inspirational cards for their staff and peers who were on leave to help them feel connected.

The most well-known accomplishment this year of course was the creation of the SSEC Basketball Team, led by Mark Lemieux. With the support of the administration, Mark was able to create guidelines and parameters, liaise with other SSEC staff and students, and ultimately schedule two games between staff and students during the year. The SSEC Cobras have T-Shirts, and is composed of teammates from the four programs within the building. This has had an incredibly positive impact on most of the CHS students, where it has been evident that they have channeled much of their energy and focus on playing on the team, rather than showing negative behaviors in the classroom. The collegiality and empathy among the team is also quite evident. The Team hopes to have one or two off-site games in the upcoming year.

This was the second year incorporating the Critical Thinking class (which we titled Perspective Taking) with Marc Hauser. In 2022-23, Marc joined Ryan Cirillo's science class throughout the year, and helped Ryan deliver the Biology curriculum in a way that increases and deepens the learning process.

In terms of Transition Services and Vocational offerings, Bobby Nelson and Drew Himberg organized an in person Transitional Services presentation for the students during ESY. This was well received, so they organized a virtual presentation for the parents which was held during the school year and was very well attended. Due to the pandemic, the vocational offerings were not as broad, so data on student participation was paused and the chart removed from this report. However, during this past year more students were able to work in the Copy Center (and again produced and sold 13,700 greeting cards as in past years), Kitchen and Greenhouse. Students were again able to participate in Custodial Arts and went next door to Bolt Depot, as seen in the re-introduced chart (Table 2). Additionally, CHS issued seven work permits to students who had gained employment out in the community, and a total of 12 CHS students gained employment by the end of the year.

Table 2 Student Vocational Hours

<u>Area</u>	<u>2017-18 Hours</u>	<u>2018-19 Hours</u>	<u>2022-23 Hours</u>
<i>On-Site</i>			
Greenhouse	0	1460	1220
Kitchen	1774	864	813
Audio Visual	398	641	
Copy Center	1327	1255	1216
Basketball Referee	705	835	
Quest Intern (Art)	4	---	
Quest Intern (Para)	50	---	
Community Class	20	24	
AIM Class	1.5	---	
Custodial Arts	---	36	518
<i>Off-Site</i>			
Boston Bowl	75	14	

Bolt Depot	52	24	210
Old Navy	26	59	

### ***CHS Plans for Future: 2023- 2024***

Given the elimination of COVID-related restrictions, the high schools were planning for a return to continued integration of CHS and SSH, specifically staff overlap, course integration, and an increase in standardization of training for staff. This did not occur, but has begun already to take shape for the upcoming year. Additionally, CHS is striving to continue to expand and increase student vocational offerings and opportunities when/where possible in the community, including more trips to the Weymouth Wildlife Center. Bobby and Drew have organized a membership with the Chamber of Commerce which will help provide job shadowing opportunities for students.

Within the building, thanks to the second year of the ESY Grant, CHS is able to offer more opportunities for team building and belonging through recreation. As we have all experienced, especially in schools, a result of COVID has been separation, isolation, fatigue, and fewer electives and activities. However, the addition of more recreational activities (pickleball, Squat bench, corn hole and art supplies, e.g.) continued to allow our students and staff to play, laugh and create together. We believe that this joy and community bonding is part of why the student body has been more engaged academically, socially, and receptive to and compliant with the cell phone policy that was new last year. Similar to last year where staff and students learned together how to integrate technology such as 3-D printing and the new Lego sets that require programming, these new activities in particular also provide opportunities for OT and S/L specialists to work with students in different, more creative ways than they had been able to do previously.

Next steps to consider are how to measure the impact of Marc Hauser’s involvement in the classes, and how to engage him with the other two teachers/classrooms effectively in 2023-24. We are looking forward to the positive impact of his six training sessions with the paraprofessionals (CHS and SSHS), which will focus on executive functioning and social emotional learning. CHS will also be initiating and engaging in more activities that are building-wide to foster inclusion and greater sense of community.

# **2023 Community School Annual Report**

## **Description of School/Student Population**

The South Shore Educational Collaborative's **Community School Program** is a day school that provides educational services to students with severe and multiple disabilities from preschool through transition age (up to their 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday). Students typically engage in the curriculum at access and entry levels and may present with communication deficits, mobility challenges, complex medical needs and/or behavioral challenges. Classroom cohorts are developed by taking student age, academic level, social interests and functional skills into consideration. These variables may lead to classrooms that have students at either end of the forty-eight month age span. Due to the extensive needs of the student population, the Community School attempts to provide a 1:2 staff to student ratio. Additionally, when determined by the team process, a student may have 1:1 staffing assigned (nurse or paraprofessional). Enrollment is based on a referral process and students may be accepted on a year round basis.

Over the course of the 2022-2023 school year, enrollment fluctuated between 110 and 115 students. The Community School had nine classrooms in Hingham and four classrooms housed in a substantially separate section of Randolph High School. In addition, we maintained five classrooms for the AIM model which includes students from both the Community and Quest Programs.

## **2022-2023 Classroom Breakdown:**

### **Community School Classrooms at 75 Abington Street:**

Early Childhood:	Two classrooms for preschool through first.
Elementary:	Three classrooms for grades two through six.
Middle School:	Two classrooms for grades six through nine.
High School:	Two classrooms for grades nine through 12+.
AIM:	Five classrooms for grades one through 12+.

### **Community School Classrooms at Randolph High School:**

High School/Transition:	Four classrooms for grades nine through 12+.
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## **Program Overview:**

The Community School uses a standards based curriculum linked to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. This curriculum is adapted to meet the diverse needs of each student with a focus on functional academics geared toward individualized developmental needs. Thematic interdisciplinary units, standards based math and reading



instruction programs are utilized to allow the students to access the general education curriculum while working on skills related to academics, communication, activities of daily living, social/emotional development, self-regulation, adaptive behavior, vocation/pre-vocation and leisure/recreation. Most Community School students enter the general education curriculum and participate in the MCAS Alternate Assessment through access and entry points according to grade level standards. The content related to each standard area is then individualized to meet the student's needs. A small portion of Community AIM students access the curriculum at or close to grade level and participate in on-demand MCAS testing with individualized accommodations.

The Community School uses a number of specialized curricula to support student learning. Individualized accommodations and modifications are identified based on student assessment and data analysis and include an extensive use of assistive technology to improve access, engagement and understanding. Content is individualized as appropriate and presented utilizing a variety of methodologies. Some of the formalized curricula and resources include;

1. Reading A-Z (online program)
2. iReady
3. Unique Learning Systems (differentiated fully adapted integrated units)
4. Brain Pop
5. Scholastic online
6. News 2 You adapted readers
7. Social Thinking
8. Zones of Regulation
9. Help Kidz Learn
10. Flocabulary
11. Mystery Science

In addition to these structured programs, each teacher adapts curriculum, content and materials while supplementing with a variety of thematic activities to enhance student learning and support effective progress.

### **AIM (Achieve, Inspire, Motivate):**

The AIM program is a hybrid program model that includes the South Shore Educational Collaborative's Community School and Quest Programs. This model was introduced at the start of the 2015-2016 school year and has now grown from a single classroom to five classrooms serving students from both the Community School and the Quest School. The AIM program focuses on higher level academic content for students who would typically attend the Community School and more individualized modifications for the students who would typically attend the Quest school. Students in these classrooms receive individualized attention for social, emotional, and academic needs. Students benefit from the diverse experience provided to them with access to social groups and a focus on their social learning through the social thinking curriculum. There is an integrated social skills

curriculum that includes strong positive behavioral supports. Social skills focus on the recognition of feelings that occur throughout the day and the affects these have on the student's academic and social relationships. Each classroom utilizes the Social Thinking Curriculum to help students identify how our social interactions impact the way others think and feel, and how we, ourselves, interpret the world and social situations around us. Students learn a variety of skills which include sharing space effectively with others, learning to work as part of a team, and developing relationships with family, friends, and classmates. The curriculum focuses on various strategies and coping skills to help manage emotions throughout the school day in order to better access academics and social situations. Counseling based on individualized student needs is also offered. Students at the High School level participate in many volunteer vocational job opportunities either at school or in the community. Opportunities to collaborate on a social, vocational and academic level with students from the Careers and South Shore High Programs continues to grow and be explored on an individual student basis.

### **Evidence Based Methodologies:**

In order to meet the individualized needs of our students, the Community school utilizes a variety of methodologies. The overarching principles of Applied Behavioral Analysis are integrated based on the individualized needs of each student. Teaching methodologies focus on structured learning programs that capitalize on repetition and consistent implementation. Once mastery criteria is achieved, opportunities to generalize and apply skills in natural settings are offered. Essential learning skills are integrated into all aspects of the day including manding skills, imitation, turn-taking and joint attention. These skills are worked on at varying levels of complexity and are central to the learning process.

Task Analysis: A task analysis is often used for instructional purposes to break down specific skills and to target acquisition in a more precise manner. This allows for IEP goals and broader content to be taught in a systematic and consistent manner across teachers/trainers while detailing individualized step sequences, reinforcement strategies and correction procedures.

Behavioral supports and interventions include such practices as; antecedent based intervention, varied reinforcement procedures, functional communication training, replacement skills training, modeling, formalized prompting hierarchy, naturalistic intervention, exercise and visual supports.

Social skills training integrates many methodologies in addition to specific social groups using the Social Thinking content, social stories, social scripts and self-management supports such as the zones of regulation.

Technology-aided Instruction and Intervention: This includes the extensive use of advanced speech generating devices (SGD) to support the augmentative communication needs of the students. The Picture Exchange System (PECS) is used with specific

students in both low tech and high tech formats. Other low tech options include tangible symbols, real and representative pictures and modified sign language.

Aided Language Stimulation is provided by the staff when they are communicating with a student. Staff will model the use of the communication system with the student to facilitate greater understanding of language use as well as the operational aspects of the system. This supports natural language use and language immersion.

### **Technology:**

Technology is utilized throughout the program in a variety of ways. It is embedded in a manner that supports students in accessing content and developing increased independence and participation while also acting as a motivator and reinforcer. Advanced communication devices along with some of the latest technology that is student or Collaborative owned is utilized to support our students. This allows them to have greater access to educational materials, and their environment. These devices frequently make more clear and detailed communication possible. This allows for more robust communication opportunities and helps students to participate more fully and effectively while also building social skills, other reciprocal communication and an understanding of cause and effect. These devices also promote the generalization of skills to a larger number of potential communication partners.

### **Accommodations:**

The Community School embraces the principles of universal design through curriculum and environmental accommodations that are available to all students in addition to their individualized supports, accommodations and methodologies. This allows students to have consistent access to their school environment and curriculum. Examples of such supports include but are not limited to; varied seating and seating supports (sensory input), multimedia instruction, assistive technology, broad based sensory supports available to all students, flexible overlapping curriculum, movement, sensory and cognitive breaks, sound dampening ceiling panels, sensory sensitive lighting, consistent tangible symbol sets used in common areas, language accessible environment and materials and additional common augmentative and alternative communication supports available at all times.

### **Community Based & Community Referenced Instruction Content**

Beginning in preschool, students attend field trips related to the curriculum and individual learning goals with a focus on generalization of learned skills and acquisition of novel skills related to safety, communication, socialization and overall independence. Community based instruction is expanded throughout each grade with increased focus on functional life skills. Examples include;

1. Weekly shopping trips for school supplies

2. Leisure based opportunities
3. Varied vocational and vocational related opportunities
4. Academic/content themed outings

In addition, community referenced activities are practiced within the school based environment to reinforce the skills needed for planned community outings.

**Program staff & services include:**

Special education teachers, teachers of students with visual impairments, multi-sensory impairment, orientation & mobility services, assistive technology services, paraprofessionals, speech, physical & occupational therapists, nursing, social workers/clinicians, adaptive physical education teacher, music therapist and BCBA or behavior level staff.

The program offers additional services including; onsite wheelchair/equipment assessment, repair and ordering through local vendors with parental consent. We also have an established lending program with AAC vendors to trial various communication devices with the students at the Collaborative prior to purchase or official insurance based trials.

**School Year Program:**

During the 2022-2023 school year, students attended 180 school days beginning in August/September through June. Program hours are 9:00am to 3:30pm. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of each month are early dismissals at 12:00pm. This provides time for staff to participate in professional development opportunities.

**Extended School Year Program:**

The extended school year program runs six weeks from July through August. Students attend Monday through Thursday from 9:00am to 2:45pm. This is offered to current students attending the Community School as indicated within the IEP and through the referral process for those who attend different programs during the regular school year. Students are engaged in thematic based academic, therapeutic and leisure activities which change weekly over the course of the six week session. Special electives are offered throughout the summer. Vocational activities and both community referenced and community based instruction continue throughout the ESY program. Many professional and paraprofessional staff who are contracted throughout the school year apply for and are hired to work the extended school year program. This allows for continuity of services. This is supplemented by many returning summer staff that include college students studying in a related field (education, nursing, occupational/physical/speech therapy etc.).

## **2022-2023 Program Information and Outcomes:**

The 2022-2023 School Year began with approximately 115 students across 14 classrooms at 75 Abington Street in Hingham and 4 classrooms located at Randolph High School. The school year had many challenges including higher than usual staff turnover and a lack of applicants to fill open positions. Additional staff shortages related to illness lead to increased strain and demand on the Community Schools dedicated staff. All of this made it difficult to maintain staffing levels and to accept new referrals without impacting programming. This had a noticeable effect on staff morale. In addition, SSEC's longtime Director of Student Services moved on from the Collaborative in October. The Community School's Assistant Program Director was selected to fill this vacancy. In turn, the Assistant Program Director position was filled by a veteran teacher with leadership experience. Both of these changes had the potential to cause disruption to programming but the transition process and aptitude of both individuals made the change as seamless as possible. Our therapeutic swimming pool in Hingham remained closed for the duration of the school year. Despite the challenges and the negative impact on morale, the staff, students and families persevered as always. The Community School staff went above and beyond to implement the programming that our students require. This is evidenced through the many successes listed below.

1. The success of the AIM program since its introduction in 2015-2016 encouraged an expansion from four classrooms to five this year. With the increase of students with social emotional challenges this growth allows the program to better serve our students and districts through this valuable classroom model.
2. Community Based Instruction resumed regularly this year. Regular student groups went to BJ's, Stop and Shop, and Boston Bowl for life skills/vocational training, and content based/leisure outings included farms, restaurants, shopping, the New England Aquarium, and the Franklin Park Zoo.
3. The AIM program instituted a new school store in the form of a traveling snack cart. Students shop for new items monthly and practice social skills along with their functional academics as they deliver snacks around the school building on a daily basis. The School Store at the Community Randolph High location continued to open on a weekly basis, and began a delivery program to the Randolph High School staff members.
4. Fundraising and Community Service
  - a. Classrooms continued to lead program wide fundraisers including Valentine's Day flower sales and Penny Wars
  - b. This fundraising enabled the purchase of important materials benefiting the students.
  - c. Some classrooms supported causes outside of SSEC by raising money for student selected charitable causes. This helped to foster student collaboration and a sense of community while addressing student goal areas and social skills development.
5. Student Council

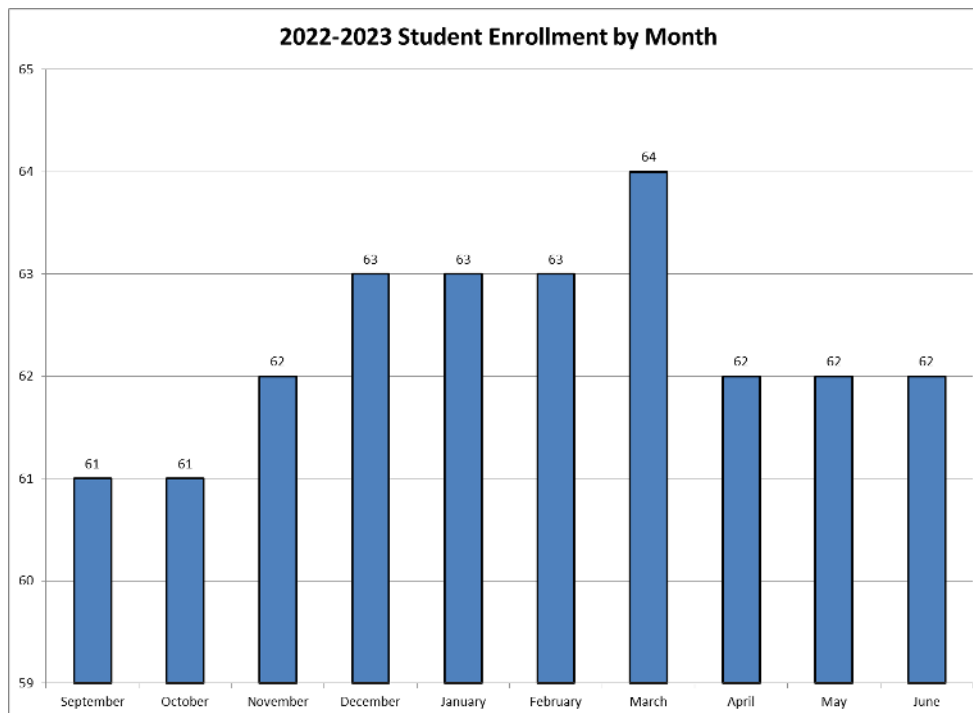
- a. The Community Randolph High Student Council continued to meet on a bimonthly basis.
  - b. This year the students wrote and voted in their own by-laws and had another successful election day.
  - c. Student Council activities include fundraising and event planning. Students are given a voice to vote on any relevant school activities and issues.
- 6. Family Engagement
  - a. The Community School Parent Teacher Organization resumed meetings this year. The virtual format has added a level of convenience that has typically limited the number and consistency of participants. It served as a nice way for families to connect with one another and with the school community
  - b. The PTO recognized the Community School staff during Teacher Appreciation Week which seemed to have a positive impact on morale.
  - c. The PTO assisted with Field Day by providing both supplies and volunteers
  - d. An Estate Planning workshop was held to provide families with information on the topic
- 7. Nine Community School students received MCAS-Alt Achievement Awards.
- 8. The Community School hosted the Community/Mini School Prom in May 2023. This was the first Prom held for these programs since 2018. The theme, voted on by students, was Dancing Through the Decades. For the first time, this event was held in the SSEC Gymnasium. The prom committee worked tirelessly to transform the gym into a truly elegant venue. Many staff and students volunteered their time to make this a fantastic event for students, families, and staff.
- 9. Field Days were held at both Hingham and Randolph locations.
- 10. Graduation was held in June 2023 to recognize 3 students who will turn 22 during the 2023-2024 school year. Eighth Grade Graduation was also held to recognize students in the AIM program who will be moving on to high school age classrooms.
- 11. At the end of the school year all Community and AIM classrooms at 75 Abington Street in Hingham moved within the Community hallway. This move, while a lot of effort for staff, allowed the classrooms to realign to an age/grade classroom order that included a section of hallway dedicated to AIM classrooms.

## MINI SCHOOL PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

Maureen M. Gattine, MS., BCBA, LABA  
Program Director  
School Year 2022-2023

Established in the early 1970's as part of an initiative of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to start "mini-schools" for special needs students throughout the state, the Mini School program has served students on the autism spectrum, joining the South Shore Educational Collaborative in 1987. During the 2022-2023 school year, the Mini School Program provided educational services to 61 students (September, 2022) in classrooms located in Hull at the Jacobs Elementary School, Memorial Middle School, Hull High School and one Randolph High School classroom. Public school settings provide Mini School students the opportunity to interact with the general education population both in mainstreaming classes for some students and throughout the school environment.

Enrollment Data:



SSEC Mini School students require a multi-disciplinary team teaching approach with a high staff/student ratio. Each student's daily programming focuses on teaching skills he/she needs in order to be as independent as possible. Students receive the following services from specialists as needed: Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Assistive Technology and Adapted Physical Education. We also continued instruction in teaching Drums Alive with the three instructors that we have. Drums Alive is an all inclusive, comprehensive, multi-generational, culturally diverse Brain and Body program for all ages and abilities that empower participants to achieve healthy lives through research based fitness and wellness applications. This evidence based program encompasses music, rhythm, psychological, educational, emotional, physical and social skills. This year we started a music program through the South Shore Music Conservatory in Hingham and the students received music therapy 1x30 a week in each classroom. The Mini School hours are 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM, Monday through Thursday and 8:30 AM – 2:45 PM on Friday, totaling 36.25 hours per week of direct instruction. The program follows the public school calendar of the town in which each class resides.

Summer programming runs for six weeks, Monday through Thursday, 8:30 AM – 2:45 PM. During the summer students engage in recreational activities that include swimming at the Cohasset Town Pool and going to the beach. The Mini School has a lifeguard on staff for the beach and Cohasset Town Pool has their own lifeguards. Mini School staff go swimming with the child at these events. This gives students an opportunity to work on recreational skills as well as activities of daily living and transition skills. Also, from a grant we were able to have recreation programs at the school such as a Drum Circle Show, Magic Show and a Crazy Critter Show. We hosted a SIBLING day for families to attend. The Mini School clinician, the Home Consultant and some paraprofessionals hosted a day for student siblings to come to school for the day. They spent time in the classroom of the sibling and then they spent time together as a group where they had activities and worked with the staff about being a sibling of a special needs brother or sister. They also had scheduled activities such as art, cooking, games, water slide, and tie-dye shirts.



Staff training and professional development are held on Thursday's during the school year, following early dismissal, once to twice a month. This year training included in depth WELLE to all new staff and a review to returning staff. Welle is a methodology that SSEC uses to de-escalate behavioral issues both before and when they occur in a safe, humane and effective manner as well as teaching a physical skill set in working with students. Staff also received training in DESE physical restraint regulations. They also received annual trainings in policies, procedures, health care, emergency drills, child abuse and neglect and bullying intervention and prevention, MCAS standard and alternate testing and First Aide/CPR training, Civil Rights and Title IX training. Shannon Sullivan, Mini School Clinician, educated by MARC (Bridgewater State College) as a trainer for Anti-Bullying/Cyber Bullying Intervention and Prevention. Our Nurses continue to be a Trainer in CPR and First Aid and trains 1 of 2 groups every school year. The Mini School also has 5 trainers for WELLE, formerly known as NAPPI (physical intervention and de-escalation). The Mini School also attended a 6 hour workshop on Neurodiversity.

The Mini School continues to use Panorama Science by National Geographic with printed texts. It is science based content that engages students to learn more about the world around them. The Mini School continues to use Stemscores for science curriculum in three of the classrooms that are working toward grade level standards with modifications. It is aligned with the curriculum frameworks and is an online 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum that guides students in rich scientific discourse through modeling, questioning, and interactive activities. The Mini School also uses Benchmark books to help support the History and Social Science curriculum. This is for emerging, early and fluent readers. The Mini School has begun to be trained and implement Math Stemscores. Other online curriculum resources that the Mini School uses across the classrooms are Flocabulary, an online, fun engaging and musical way to learn vocabulary across the content area. Mathematics is also taught using Touch Math (a program geared towards visual learners) as well as the Saxon Math program. English Language Arts is taught through a guided reading program, Edmark Reading Program, and Read Naturally Live as well as instruction in phonics and spelling programs. The Mini School used

i-Ready for appropriate students, which is a comprehensive assessment and instruction program that empowers educators with the resources they need to help the students. This also helps in developing differentiated instruction for the students. Some classrooms also use IXL to determine current performance levels. It helps in assisting the teachers to determine grade level proficiency based on state and national standards. The Mini School also used McGraw Hill Social Studies curriculum. The Mini School also uses a reading specialist that travels to all the classrooms and consults with teachers as well as direct services with some students. Dyslexia screening (Shaywitz Dyslexia Screener for Grades K-3) was implemented for students that were able to participate in it. The Mini School also has an EL teacher that supports students in our program and gives direct as well as indirect services and consultation.

#### DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

##### **Delineation of Mini School Staff**

<b>Position</b>	<b>FTE</b>
Program Director and BCBA	1.0
Assistant Program Director	1.0
Teachers	10.0
Clinician	1.0
Home-School Behavior Consultant	1.0
BCBA	.75
Behavior Specialist	.84
Occupational Therapists (2)	1.43
OT Assistants (1)	.84
Physical Therapist	.07
Speech Therapists	2.5
Adaptive PE Teacher	.84

Music	.12
Nurses	1.38
Paraprofessionals	24

Traditionally, the Mini School has served students with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder who present with developmental delays from ages 5 -22 years old. Over the years the Mini School has expanded to serve students on the autism spectrum in grades K-8 who function at or close to their grade level, but do not possess the socialization and self-regulation skills necessary to be educated in their home districts, as well as needing extra educational support. Some students have participated in inclusion classes with the support of Mini School teachers and/or paraprofessionals. Examples of classes would include gym, music, technology, art, ELA, Math and Science.

Mini School curriculum emphasizes language based programming, positive behavior management techniques, social skills training and acquisition of functional life skills. Instructional methods include prompt hierarchies, systematic instruction, task analysis, incidental teaching and discrete trial training. Emphasis is also placed on the acquisition of academic skills: reading, English Language Arts, mathematics, social studies and science. Students learn at their developmental level following the Curriculum Frameworks. Students are assessed for MCAS each year by either standardized testing or by portfolio assessment at their chronological grade level according to the state model. The three Mini School high school classrooms and one middle school classroom focuses on transitional skills to include vocational training, functional academics, life skills, social skills and communication. The students at the high school have vocational opportunities within the classroom, school environment and the community. Job placements, such as the SaltWater Diner, Papa Gino's and Blazing Saddles. Both Randolph and Hull High School classrooms participated in Meals on Wheels. The Mini School participated in the Swim with a Special Child program located in Weymouth and is a program in which our students are assigned a 1:1 volunteer that is swim certified and

gives instruction for 45 minutes. This is an elective and 84% of our students participate in it.

Students with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder display challenges in many areas which impact their ability to access the general curriculum. These challenges include delays in the ability to communicate effectively, develop social skills, interpret sensory input, and understand and control their emotions. At the Jacobs Elementary School, the Mini School uses an extra classroom space for de-escalation and sensory needs. In using the Zones of Regulation curriculum the room is designed to help students that enter the Yellow Zone (starting or feeling like losing control) and Red Zone (lost control, dangerous behaviors). Since using this intervention we have seen a decrease in maladaptive behaviors and an increase of students using tools to help regulate their behavior and return to the classroom which is the Green Zone (ready to learn). The Mini School uses a computer system, *Educata* for purposes of data collection, analyzing and interpreting, as well as fulfilling the reporting requirements of DESE for physical intervention and behavior support strategies.

At the Mini School, 14 students participated in standard MCAS for grades 3-8 with accommodations. The Mini School uses Computer Based Testing for grades 3-8. The students all have chrome books that they used throughout the school year. 24 Mini School students participated in MCAS testing by Alternate Assessment. Students with a significant cognitive disability are eligible to participate in MCAS-Alt in all content areas. Results were in the ‘progressing’ category in most subject areas with some “emerging” scores in the area of writing.

The Mini School provided parent training services to families of students enrolled. The delivery of services range in the area of communication, behavior and activities of daily living. The parent home consultant also helps with communication between home and school. This is a meaningful service and available to all families.

During the 2022-2023 school year, the youngest Mini School students (grades K-6) attended school in five classrooms at the Jacobs Elementary School in Hull. Mini School teachers use many strategies and accommodations to help our young students develop the prerequisite skills needed to learn. In order to be able to sit and attend, sensory input and schedules are provided throughout the school day. Positive reinforcement programs, visual schedules, timers, topic boards and social stories help organize the students' day, as well as remind them of classroom expectations.

Two middle school classrooms are located at the Memorial Middle school in Hull. Students at this age continue their academic learning as well as beginning instruction in pre-vocational and functional life skills.

Planning for transition to adulthood is a major component of the curriculum for our high school students. Emphasis is placed on helping students prepare for adulthood with a focus on transitioning. Students receive educational, speech and occupational therapy services which are directed toward building independence in social pragmatics, leisure activities, recreation and exercise, vocational skills, personal hygiene, self-advocacy, finances and daily chores. Vocational opportunities were offered both in the school and community settings. asynchronous vocational and life skills training. We had 3 students that turned 22 and earned a certificate of attendance. One student transitioned to the adult program at Road to Responsibility, one went to Brockton Arc and one is still awaiting placement in a day habilitation center. The Mini School works closely with the families and Department of Disability Services for transition purposes. We also had 2 eighth graders that transitioned back to district for High School in the Braintree Public Schools and the Whitman Hanson Public Schools. Another eighth grader transitioned to the Careers High School program at SSEC.

The Mini School program participated in the Evan Henry Road Race in May, 2023. The Mini School had a Team and received a grant of \$2000.00 that will be used toward purchases for sensory equipment for the 2023-2024 school year.

By using best practices in the field of autism, the Mini School strives to provide all of its students with a free and appropriate public education so that each student is able to reach his or her full potential.

*Maureen M. Gattine, MS, BCBA, LABA*

Maureen M. Gattine, MS, BCBA, LABA

Program Director, Mini School, SSEC

# QUEST PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT FY 2023

## Quest Mission Statement

The mission of the **Quest Program** is to provide a safe and respectful learning environment where relationships between staff and students can be nurtured and developed and where students can learn new skills for continued growth.

## Description of Program, Student Population and Staff

The Quest Program is a public day school located at 75 Abington Street in Hingham, MA designed to serve special needs students in grades K-8 with social, emotional and behavioral challenges. The program/school provides a highly structured, safe environment that ensures consistency and support needed to help these students succeed.

Our student population continues to diversify and has steadily returned to pre-COVID19 numbers. The majority of our students' primary disability is Emotional. We are also serving students with significant learning disabilities as well as students on the autism spectrum. Quest students have a variety of mental health diagnoses. A significant portion of the student population carries attention deficit hyperactivity disorder as a primary or secondary diagnosis. Anxiety disorders (trauma related disorders, generalized anxiety disorder, school phobia, and obsessive compulsive disorder) as well as mood disorders (bipolar disorder, depression and disruptive mood dysregulation disorder) comprise other prevalent disorders. The majority of students attending the Quest Program have experienced some sort of trauma in their young lives. These disorders, along with diagnosed specific learning disabilities, make learning a challenge for the majority of our students. During the 2015-2016 school year, we expanded the program to also provide programming for students with more severe special needs who have concurrent social skills and mental health challenges. Providing programming for this very specialized population has allowed the program to expand and support an additional 10 to 15 students each year. Many students referred to the Quest Program struggle to attend school on a daily basis. Once in school, the inability to remain focused combined with intrusive thoughts, mood lability and/or weak social skills make academic progress a daily struggle for many of our students. It is only with comprehensive academic, behavioral, and therapeutic support that our students are able to make progress toward their IEP goals. The program integrates an evidenced based multisensory academic curriculum which has been aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Where needed, students are also provided with a functional, remedial curriculum in 1:1 and/or small group settings.

The Quest Program continued to have 11 classrooms during the 2022-2023 school year. Eight classrooms are traditional Quest classrooms and three of the classrooms continue to be a joint venture with the SSEC Community School. These classrooms, given the name AIM (Achieve, Inspire, Motivate), are designed to meet the needs of students that required the therapeutic and behavioral support of the Quest Program but required

modifications to the academic programming and social skills instruction typical of a Quest classroom. In these areas, the students require programming more similar to what was available at the Community School. In conjunction with the Community School, the three AIM classrooms served 21 students (14 enrolled in the Quest Program) over the course of the school year. The classrooms are led by a Special Education teacher with the support of 2 or more paraprofessionals in each classroom. A full time licensed social worker works with all students in these three AIM classrooms to provide counseling and social skills instruction. This social worker is a part of the Quest clinical team and is supervised by a licensed independent social worker working in the Quest Program. Further support was provided by Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists and Speech Language Pathologists from the Community School as well as Reading Teachers from the Quest Program. The classrooms access the Quest Art teacher and both the APE teacher from the Community School and the Quest PE teacher. Behavioral support was provided by both programs as needed. Students in the AIM room were able to participate in electives and activities with the Quest Program and the Community School. In previous years, students were also able to access the therapy pool, sailing and horseback riding programs through the Community School. Some of these activities were placed on hold due to the COVID 19 pandemic but have begun to be put back into place. Staff continue to learn the best ways to work together to serve this diverse group of learners. These classrooms are truly a part of both the Community and Quest Programs. Most importantly, SSEC continues to be able to meet the needs of students with challenging and unique needs. The AIM classrooms provide a model for collaboration and flexible programming designed to meet the changing needs of our students and sending districts. Given the success of these classrooms, AIM expanded to 5 classrooms (high school and transitional aged students). These students were able to join in activities and services with the other AIM classes and access instruction and programming appropriate for their age and developmental level.

The SSEC Quest Program continues to be supervised by a Program Director, Jennie Williams, who serves as the academic administrator of the program. Rosanna Warrick is the full time Program Coordinator responsible for supervising the behavior team, managing the milieu, supervising paraprofessionals, data collection and running the program in the absence of the director as well as other duties as needed. For the 2022-2023 school year our staff included: 12 full time certified special education teachers, 2 student teachers, a full time PE/Health teacher shared with 3 programs, a full time Art teacher shared with 3 programs, 25 paraprofessionals, 1 full time and 2 part time reading teachers, 6 full time school based clinicians, 1 clinical psychology intern, 1 social work intern, 1 full time behaviorist, 1 full time and 2 part time occupational therapists, 1 full time and 2 part time speech and language therapists, a part time physical therapist, a full time administrative assistant and a part time assistive technology teacher. Quest also continued to access the services of a music therapist on a part time basis. The behavioral needs of the students were served by a behavioral team supervised by a Program Coordinator and comprised of 3 full time behavioral aides. Two full time school nurses, a food service director and 3 food service aides are shared with the other school programs in the building. Quest also shared one part time board certified child and adolescent psychiatrist with the other SSEC programs.



Program hours from August to June are 8:30am to 2:50pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Every Wednesday, students are dismissed at 12:50pm. This provides time for professional development and staff meetings. During the summer, Quest provides a 6-week extended school year program for those students whose IEP includes a longer school year to prevent substantial regression of previously learned skills. Students enrolled in the Quest AIM classrooms follow the Community Program schedule and calendar. Their program hours from August to June are 9:00am to 3:30pm daily. Two Mondays each month, students are dismissed at 12:00pm. Quest AIM students also have a 6-week extended school year program which runs Monday through Thursday, 9 am to 2:45 pm daily.

### **Program Development for the 2022-2023 School Year**

Quest students were able to attend school in person. Staffing continued to be a challenge during this school year. Hiring sufficient staff was challenging throughout the year and some staff were out for periods of time due to COVID 19.

Students were able to return to the art room and this class was taught in person. Physical education increased this year and students had between two and four classes per week as well as a weekly health class. Music was provided in the classrooms. Staff provided multiple opportunities for motor breaks and mask breaks throughout the day. Middle school students were able to volunteer with younger peers and high school students were able to volunteer in the Quest Program. The cafeteria serves students in person. Most Team meetings were held virtually but in-person meetings became more frequent as the year progressed.

### **Data Collection**

In our ongoing effort to demonstrate efficacy in our program and to be compliant with DESE regulations, we have continued to devote considerable resources to data collection. More specifically, we continued to utilize the services of consultant Marc Hauser and his Educata system to track student behavior and we continued to use the Goal Seeker program as well. The Educata system allows the staff to track a wide variety of data and the program also helps to manage reporting requirements with regard to time out of class and physical intervention. Providing this data has allowed all disciplines (educators, therapists and behavioral staff) to tailor and to focus their approaches and interventions with our students. Goal Seeker was added as a way to more efficiently track IEP goals in the classroom. Each classroom started with one student entered in Goal Seeker to allow staff the opportunity to learn the program. This has also helped the paraprofessionals become more involved in goal development as they are frequently responsible for data collection. Their input has helped the professional staff write goals that capture a student's area of need in a manner that can be efficiently tracked in the classroom throughout the IEP period. Staff are consistently using data collection measures in place when writing IEPs and gathering baseline data on proposed goals. Staff are also using this data during pod meetings and when developing and updating

individual and classroom wide behavior support plans. In addition, at our IEP meetings we have been able to present collected data in a visually and readily understandable format for parents and district colleagues. Adopting more stringent data collection measures has enabled us to keep pace with the current emphasis in the Massachusetts Professional Development Initiative. Increasing efficiency in data collection as well as improving our ability to utilize collected data continues to be a point of emphasis in the Quest Program. The Quest data team met weekly to provide analysis of collected data and implement changes needed to the data collection systems.

### **Classroom Pods**

At the core of service delivery in the Quest Program is the “pod” model. Each of the 11 classrooms has a “pod” or comprehensive team of staff that work together to provide the services enumerated in each child’s IEP. Each pod consists of the teacher, the classroom aides, a clinician, a behavioral aide, and any other staff (occupational therapist, speech and language therapist, intern) that work with the students in the classroom. Pods meet weekly to discuss any individual or classroom issues that arise. This can include training on a newly signed IEP, drafting an individual behavior plan, addressing classroom management issues, drafting IEP’s, planning social skills groups, and sharing information gained through case management. Pod members also share information with our consulting psychiatrist prior to a student’s appointment, through structured online communication forms. The pod model has evolved to incorporate the data collection completed by the Data Team and the pod members. This has allowed for focused and data driven conversations about goals and interventions.

The pod model not only makes communication between staff easier, it also makes the communication more meaningful. This model provides the opportunity for all staff working with a particular student to share their perspective. Each staff member has a different relationship with each student and each discipline has different services to provide. When all the disciplines work together, the pod is better able to understand the complex needs of our students and provide integrated interventions. At the Quest Program, we have come to understand that what makes the program successful is everyone working collaboratively.

### **Behavioral System**

Our behavior management system continues to be driven by Ross Greene’s Collaborative Problem Solving approach to behavioral intervention. At Quest, we agree with Dr. Greene that “kids do well if they can”. Staff works with students to understand their behavior so we can teach the skills needed for change. Our space for behavioral interventions includes 4 settling rooms, 2 quiet study rooms, a sensory room, a comfort room, an office shared by the Program Coordinator, Behavior Specialist and Milieu Clinician and an office for the behavioral aides. The behavioral space in our school building was designed to be safe and away from a main hallway. This has allowed students and staff the privacy and space needed to help students settle and be ready to return to class.

Quest students continued to take advantage of the available sensory strategies, Quiet Study and spaces for self-initiated breaks in order to help them remain in class using these rooms 6,211 times during the course of the year. Students were able to take a teacher directed break 8,794 times. In comparison to the data from the 2021-2022 school year, Quest students used more breaks with an increase from 13,958 to 15,005. A point of emphasis in the Quest Program is to increase the number of student-initiated breaks.

The Quest Program also continued to benefit from the training and implementation of WELLE behavior management system. The primary reason the collaborative utilizes WELLE is that their program's physical interventions are safer for students and staff. This program also provides significant staff training in de-escalation and psychological intervention. During the 2022-2023 school year, there were 381 instances of physical intervention. Similar to past years, a small percentage of students accounts for all of the physical intervention. Quest has seen an increase of students with trauma reactive behaviors and resort to physical harm to self and others when dysregulated. As we continue to work on building positive behavior supports and reducing instances of physical intervention it is important to remember that, though it is a last resort, these interventions allow staff and students to remain safe at school. There are students who would not be able to remain at a public day school without this intervention as they learn the emotional regulation strategies they need to remain safe in school and the community.

In addition to weekly and monthly review of restraint data, Dr. Marc Hauser worked with program administrators and staff to analyze data trends. This helps to evaluate program wide interventions as well as individual plans for the students frequently requiring physical intervention. Interventions utilized included increasing staffing ratios, completing FBAs and implementing behavior plans, consultations with our consulting psychiatrist and behaviorist for the school year. Reducing the need for physical restraint continues to be an important goal of the Quest Program even as we expand the program and service an increasing number of students with some of the most challenging behaviors.

### **Social Skills and Emotional Regulation Curriculum**

As a program, we adopted the Social Thinking® Curriculum in 2010 and the language and concepts of the curriculum continue to be used program wide. The Social Thinking Curriculum was developed by Michelle Garcia Winner, a Speech and Language Pathologist, through her work with school age students on the autism spectrum. This curriculum, which is both evidence based and practice informed, is a social cognitive approach to social skills instruction designed to teach perspective taking and social thinking skills to students with a variety of social challenges. The goal is to help students better understand how their words and actions impact the thoughts and feelings of others around them, making them better able to share space effectively with others. All Quest students have at least one direct instruction group based on this curriculum each week. Staff continued to receive regular training on Social Thinking both in the program and through trainings led by M.G. Winner and her staff. The Quest Speech and Language pathologist continues to incorporate Social Thinking measures into formal and informal assessments of students, better allowing us to assess this important aspect of

communication often missed in standardized assessment tools. The behavioral staff continues to use Social Behavior Maps to guide processing of behavioral incidents with students. Throughout the program, students are learning to match the size of their reaction to the size of the problem. In addition, weekly planning time is built into the schedule to allow time for the clinicians, speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist, and classroom staff to plan cohesive group lessons. This time has allowed staff to create a bank of lessons that have been used successfully. Social Thinking group lessons are also discussed in pod meetings and both teaching and behavioral staff continue to participate in classroom groups. Social Thinking is not only taught during classroom groups, it is being taught and reinforced by all staff throughout the school day. Clinicians in the middle school classrooms also utilize other cognitive therapy approaches, including Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and mindfulness strategies in conjunction with Social Thinking. All staff were trained in the Calm Classroom mindfulness program in March 2019. These strategies were piloted in the Quest and AIM classrooms throughout the end of the year of the 18-19 school year and continue to be implemented throughout the program. All of these evidence based approaches teach students to be mindful of the cognitive processes driving their social interactions and emotional experiences. Staff are also learning about neurodiversity and there are many ways to teach social skills. Social skills instruction continues to be provided to help students have the skills they need while also respecting their differences and individual needs.

### **Responsive Classroom**

In July 2015, the Quest teachers, clinicians and SLP participated in a week long training in the Responsive Classroom method. The Responsive Classroom website describes this as an approach to ‘teaching (which) emphasizes academic, social, and emotional growth in a strong school community. This approach stresses that how children learn is as important as what they learn, and that academic success is inextricably tied to building social-emotional competencies. This approach provides K-8 educators with practical training and resources to help create safe and joyful classrooms and schools where children can thrive.’ All of the Quest classrooms continue to incorporate the Responsive Classroom methods. There is a morning message posted in each class and, at 9 AM daily, each class holds a Morning Meeting. The clinicians and SLP frequently co-lead these meetings and use the activity to reinforce previously taught Social Thinking lessons. Teachers are incorporating academic choice and a wider variety of behavioral interventions. The Responsive Classroom method has dovetailed well with Social Thinking and Collaborative Problem Solving providing even more cohesiveness and consistency across the Quest classrooms.

### **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**

As required by law SSEC created a bully prevention and intervention plan. The following key components required by law were implemented:

1. A professional development plan was established for all staff
2. A K-8 curriculum on bullying was adopted for all of our students

3. Staff who witness or had knowledge of any bullying incident were required to report it
4. Investigation and disciplinary policies were instituted for the act of bullying
5. When criminal charges were appropriate, law enforcement was notified
6. Resources and information was made available to students, parents and guardians including curricula, the dynamics of bullying, online safety, and cyber-bullying. This topic is covered in the classrooms during Health classes and Social Thinking Groups.

In addition to meeting the requirements of the bullying prevention law, staff continue to work with students to identify both potential targets and potential bullies. We address this issue in health class, social skills groups, in individual therapy sessions, and in IEP goals to ensure that Quest is a safe and respectful environment for all students. Staff continue to receive annual training through the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) at Bridgewater State University and the curriculum developed by MARC is incorporated into health classes as appropriate.

### **Student Activities & Learning**

Quest teachers continued to present lessons that integrated functional, remedial and grade level academic curriculum which has been aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. We were also able to provide students a weekly art class with a certified art teacher and all of our classes had access to a music therapist weekly. A certified PE teacher led all gym and health classes.

During the summer of 2022, we held many community wide activities at the school. Students took part in an African Drumming demonstration, played with baby animals and reptiles, visited food trucks and attended a science demonstration. We were able to hold our Annual Open House in September in person.

This year's graduation of 10 eighth grade students was held in person in the gym and students were able to invite all their family and friends. Students from the Quest and AIM classes participated in the graduation ceremony, many of them reading speeches they had written. Graduation is always a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the progress of our students. It was wonderful to celebrate our graduating students in person.

### **Curriculum**

Instruction in the Quest Program follows the MA Curriculum Frameworks for all subject areas. Given that all classrooms are self-contained and students are coming from more than 20 districts, planning lessons that are appropriately rigorous and differentiated at the same time can be challenging for the teaching staff. To support the teachers in their planning and instruction, the Director of Student Services continued to support teachers in implementing Math, ELA and Science/Technology curriculum that meet the needs of the majority of our students. All classrooms used Pearson's Social Studies curriculum which is aligned with the updated Massachusetts frameworks. Elementary school teachers continued to have access to the Panorama science curriculum which has been created by National Geographic. This program has the tools to differentiate for all

students, including English Learners, built in. Also provided to the elementary teachers is the REACH for Reading program to teach ELA through science content and is also produced by National Geographic. Middle school teachers also are accessing the Benchmark curriculum for science and social studies. All teachers had access to STEMScopes Science and Math as well. These materials present the content into manageable parts and the texts look like magazines and graphic novels. In addition to these initiatives, teachers used many online programs, such as IXL, Mystery Science and Readworks, to support students learning in school and remotely. Students also took part in iReady benchmark testing three times during the course of the school year.

### **Summer Program**

The 2022 Summer Program was fully in person with 63 students enrolled. We had a total of 11 classrooms (8 in Quest, 3 in AIM) for ESY 2022. Academic instruction as well as all services and therapies were provided in person. As noted above, students took part in several activities and were able to interact with students outside their classroom while outside. Free breakfast and lunch were provided for all students.

### **Home and Community Involvement**

This year we continued to place an emphasis on parent involvement. Daily communication was provided between home and school. Some teachers used a communication log while others used digital formats such as the Google Classroom or the Class Dojo app. Regardless of modality, parents were asked to acknowledge the communication daily to strengthen the connection between home and school. Classroom pod members also had weekly phone or email contact with parents. This enabled us to share positive accomplishments with parents on a regular basis as well as to quickly address concerns. In addition, families were included in the Open House and graduation as described above. The program behaviorist was also able to complete home/school FBAs and in-home consultation for those students whose team determined required the service. Quest counselors also continue to work closely with community based providers working with our students.

### **Outreach Initiative**

We have continued to have many students referred to the Quest Program presenting with school avoidance/school refusal. These students have caused districts considerable difficulty in terms of helping them access the curriculum. In response to this dilemma, we have pulled together an outreach team to address the presenting and underlying issues associated with school refusal/avoidance and anxiety. In selected cases, using the essential tenets of exposure treatment, we have been quite successful in helping both the student and his/her parent(s) manage their heightened anxiety and gradually take the steps to join the larger school community at Quest. While we are not able to offer this service in all cases, we have deepened our understanding of the issues and developed an effective treatment model to ameliorate this potentially crippling problem. The Quest Program has also continued to provide in-home behavioral services to Quest students to help them generalize the social and self-regulation strategies learned in the Quest Program. These services are included on a student's IEP and provided before or after school hours at the request of the sending school district with parental consent.

## **Technology**

The Quest Program, in line with the SSEC Strategic Plan, continues to be dedicated to increasing the availability and usability of both assistive and instructional technology for students and staff. Each professional staff member has been given an iPad, Chromebook or laptop to use for instruction, data collection and accessing Teach Point and working on the DESE teacher evaluation. Students continue to use iPads, laptops and Chromebooks to support their learning. All Quest students have access to a Chromebook in their classroom throughout the school day. Having 1:1 devices has allowed students to utilize assistive technology, such as Cowriter and Read, Write, Google, to help them access the curriculum. Students receive direct instruction from an Assistive Technology teacher weekly in their classrooms to learn how these tools can be used to access their schoolwork. In the spring, students have typically then used their devices to take the next generation MCAS on the device they have been using throughout the school year. Each Quest classroom continues to have a projector with at least two computers. Members of the Tech Team also provided training in available technology to interested staff members.

SSEC continued to loan Chromebooks to any student or staff member who needed a device to remain engaged in remote learning due to COVID 19. Teachers utilized the google classroom as well as other google extensions, IXL, brainpop and the online portion of the curriculum programs as they planned their lessons. While instruction was delivered in person, students continued to use the tools they learned during remote learning.

## **Quest School Handbook**

A school handbook was revised before school reopened in the fall of 2022.. It was received positively by parents/guardians as well as staff and students. When home and school join efforts to create a safe environment that fosters academic and emotional growth, while providing care and support, each student can be successful. Close communication and clear, consistent guidelines are key to the process and are the prime reasons for the handbook.

## **Year in Summary**

In total, the Quest Program served 80 students this school year. We began the school year with 63 students and ended the year with 72 students. The 80 students that we serviced came over 20 different school districts.

We serviced 16 S.T.A.R.T.S. students, providing them with an extended evaluation. 15 of the students remained at the Quest Program for part or all of the remainder of the school year.

During the 2022-2023 school year, 5 students left after ESY. Three moved to their high school programs as they had graduated from grade 8 the previous spring. Over the course of the year, 1 student moved and 5 students required a more restrictive setting. In June we graduated 10 grade 8 students. Of the 10 students, 3 students moved to a South Shore Educational Collaborative high school program. Four will attend South Shore

High School and one will attend the Careers High School. Six students will return to their sending district for high school. At the end of the school year, one other student also returned to their sending district.

Quest enrollment remained steady over the course of the school year. The enrollment was at capacity by the end of the school year. Quest began the 2023-2024 school year with 69 students.

SSEC and the Quest Program continued to provide high quality instruction and services to students in a safe and supportive school setting.



## **South Shore High School Annual Report 2022-2023**

### ***Program Description***

South Shore High School (SSHS) is a public therapeutic day school within the South Shore Educational Collaborative. SSHS is designed to support students with significant social and emotional challenges in a small, therapeutic environment in order to promote academic, social, and emotional success and well-being. South Shore High School services students in grades 8-12 in a highly structured environment with low student to staff ratios allowing for the ability to provide intensive support and consistency in a safe learning environment.

### ***Student Population***

The majority of students referred to SSHS have been identified as having an emotional disability via their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). In addition, SSHS services students with specific learning disabilities, high functioning autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and social pragmatics difficulties. Students are mainly of solid average cognitive ability, some slightly above and some slightly below. Students tend to be treated for diagnoses that include, but are not limited to, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety disorders (post-traumatic stress disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder) and mood disorders (depression, bipolar disorder, disruptive mood dysregulation disorder). Many students referred to South Shore High School have a history of absenteeism due to multiple psychiatric inpatient hospital stays, short term acute care stays, and school avoidance. Many students have a history of trauma and disrupted home-life and caretaker consistency. Most students receive treatment support outside of school including individual therapy, family therapy, therapeutic case management, psychiatric/medication management, in-home behavioral consultation, and agency involvement (DCF, DMH). A small number of students attend SSHS directly from an agency run group home. SSHS has a strong population of students that also identify as LGBTQ.

**Monthly Enrollment**  
(SSHS students/ Bridge Classroom Students/STARTS Evaluation Students)

Monthly Enrollment	#	Bridge	STARTS
Sept. 2022	50	3	0 STARTS
Oct. 2022	51	3	+ 2 STARTS
Nov. 2022	49	3	+ 2 STARTS
Dec. 2022	50	4	+ 1 STARTS
Jan. 2023	51	4	+ 3 STARTS
Feb. 2023	49	3	+ 4 STARTS
March 2023	47	4	+ 3 STARTS
April 2023	48	4	+ 2 STARTS
May 2023	44	3	+ 1 STARTS
June 2023	45	3	

South Shore High School/Bridge had between 47 and 55 students enrolled between September and June of the 2022-2023 school year. In addition, over the course of the year, SSHS was able to accommodate 6 students for a STARTS extended evaluation. Of the students present through the end of the school year, ***South Shore High School successfully graduated 9 seniors, from 7 different districts.*** All seniors were able to meet the credit and course requirements of their sending districts and meet all MCAS graduation requirements. The graduating class of 2023, their families, district personnel, SSHS staff, our Executive Director, and Director of Student Support Services were able to celebrate in a meaningful ceremony and small luncheon within the SSEC main building. The ceremony was held at a time that could accommodate having the entire SSHS student body participate in the graduation ceremony of their peers. This is crucial in allowing younger class members to visualize their own goals and future success, have a sense of school pride, and practice the social expectations of a large gathering with their peers' family members. In addition to the success of graduating seniors, ***SSHS successfully returned four students to their sending district.*** In addition, one student in the graduating class of 2024 applied to and was accepted to the Bard College at Simon's Rock Early College Program in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Three students required more restrictive placements; one being placed in an IRTP (intensive residential treatment program) and two being placed in staff secure residential treatment programs. Of the four students attending South Shore High School from residential or group home placements, three were largely unsuccessful in attendance. This information will be utilized to inform future referral decision.

***Program Staff***

During the 2022-2023 school year, South Shore High School operated 8 classrooms led by a special education teacher and supported by paraprofessionals. One of the 8 classrooms, our Bridge Classroom, is a transition classroom for students in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade who demonstrate some readiness to gain an introduction to a high school model. Students in the Bridge Classroom remain in a self-contained classroom with access to high school aged peer role models, teaching staff, clinicians, and related service providers to support their successful transition to high school. During the 22-23 school year, there were no Bridge Students attending from the SSEC Quest Program. Bridge only accommodated four students, all from sending districts. In addition to teachers and paraprofessionals, SSHS staff included one part time and three full time clinical social workers, a milieu coordinator, a part-time speech and language pathologist, part-time occupational therapist, part-time reading specialist, two part-time transition specialists, and a .5 BCBA. During the 22-23 school year, the program was also supported by SSEC program nurses, our program assistant, and the SSEC contracted developmental pediatrician consultant, Dr. Jeanine Audet.

### ***Academic Structure***

Students at SSHS are assigned courses designed to meet the graduation requirements from their sending school district. Upon graduation, students receive an official transcript and diploma from their sending school district. Classroom instruction is differentiated to meet the needs of diverse learners in order to ensure the academic success of all students. Class sizes remained at 8 students or less to provide for maximum instructional and social/emotional support. With the exception of our Bridge classroom, the majority of students change classes each period per subject matter. SSHS follows the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. In addition to the standard classes that SSHS offers, SSEC has a contractual arrangement with an online learning platform called Fuel Education. Students are offered the opportunity to take a Fuel Ed course through independent study classes with support from a SSHS teacher that acts as a liaison with Fuel Education to monitor their progress and offer any support if needed. Fuel Ed offers a robust course choice to supplement and enhance student transcripts, to provide students the opportunity to pursue a particular academic interest, and to support college readiness and competitiveness in the college application process. With the support of our transition specialists, students in primarily the 12<sup>th</sup> and at times 11<sup>th</sup> grade may take a dual enrollment course at a local community college. SSHS continues to be a PSAT and SAT approved testing site for our students.

***During the 2022-2023 school year students took courses at both Quincy Community College and Cape Cod Community College for dual enrollment credit.***

### ***Clinical Support and Counseling***

For the 2022-2023 school year, SSHS had three full-time clinical social workers. In addition, the program had support from a psychiatric consultant. SSHS is a trauma informed school. Principles of Solution Focused Narrative Therapy, Cognitive

Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), and Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) are used in the counseling work with students. In addition, SSHS clinicians write all of the social emotional IEP goals, collect data on goals, and report on IEP goal progress four times per year. Clinicians meet weekly for advanced case consultation and discussion. Clinicians provide significant home to school communication to support families and caretakers and act as a liaison to outside treatment providers per parent request and consent. The primary focus of counseling at SSHS is to assist students in countering the problems that have had a negative impact on their academic, social, and emotional success through accurate problem identification and the development of healthy, effective coping strategies. In order to support as needed crisis assessment and intervention, SSHS utilizes an on call clinician schedule at all times throughout the school day.

***During the 2022-2023 school year, one student was sectioned for an emergency mental health evaluation from SSHS and 10 students received inpatient hospital level care at some point during the school year as a result of crisis evaluations precipitated outside of school. One student had a lengthy inpatient stay in a substance abuse facility***

### ***Transition Services***

SSHS has two part-time Transition Specialists that meet with all students to develop solid transition plans (TPF) for every student turning 14 or older. The transition staff works with all students to assist them in:

- Self-advocacy (understanding their IEP's, their disability area, their accommodations, their strengths and weaknesses as learners)
- Vocational skills (establishing onsite vocational opportunities, off site internship sites, resume writing, mock interviewing, employment applications, assessment of vocational skills with the Workplace Soft Skills rubric)
- Career/Trade identification (online research tools, O\*Net Interest Profiler)
- College identification and readiness (scheduling PSAT and SAT testing, college search engines, college tours, assistance with signing up for and supporting dual enrollment classes at the community college level, attending college fairs)
- Establishing connections with adult support agencies (completing direct referrals to the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, attending meetings with student and MRC case managers, supporting the Pre-ETS pre-employment transition skills program through Tempus Unlimited)
- Establishing community service experiences (both onsite experiences and offsite experiences to meet sending district community service requirements or per student interest)

Three SSHS students were able to take and pass college level dual enrollment classes; two at Quincy Community College and one at Cape Cod Community College. Transition staff also coordinated tours at local colleges, college fair nights, informational sessions with trade schools, and informational sessions with Job Corps. Students were also able to access onsite vocational opportunities in our industrial kitchen, in our Greenhouse,

working with younger students in our Quest Program, and working with multi-handicapped students in our Community Program. ***Due to their success and experience, one SSHS student became gainfully employed in the Community Program's extended school year session.***

### ***Related Services***

***Speech and language*** supports are provided for students with identified speech and language needs and social pragmatics needs on their individualized education plan. Most of the students requiring speech and language support at SSHS are students with identified weaknesses in social skills and social pragmatics. Our speech and language pathologist provides small group sessions to improve students' social-verbal interactions, perspective taking, and conversational skills following the Social Thinking Curriculum developed by Michelle Garcia Winner. All students in our Bridge classroom receive a social skills group co-lead with teaching staff to support carry-over of skills and promote improved social interactions.

***Occupational Therapy*** supports are provided for students with identified executive functioning deficits, sensory integration deficits, and sensory regulation needs. The occupational therapist works directly with students on understanding their sensory profile and sensory needs, creating motor break schedules when needed. The occupational therapist meets with students individually and in small groups.

***Reading Support*** is provided for those students with an identified reading disability on their individualized education plan. The SSHS reading specialist meets with students individually to support improved reading skills and improved access to their curriculum.

### ***Data Collection Methods***

Staff continued to work with our data consultant, Marc Hauser to collect data, track progress, and use the data to make informed program decisions and individual student interventions. The data team used two platforms, Educata and Goal Seeker. The Educata platform was able to collect data throughout each day on any time off learning, a key indicator in determining successful outcomes and a student's ability to return to their sending district. Goal Seeker was utilized to collect individual student data for both IEP goals and clinical counseling goals. The data was taken on class participation, teacher redirections, and teacher prompts. Data informed decision making was utilized for programmatic interventions and student interventions and discussed at TEAM meetings and shared with parents.

### ***Program in Review 2021-2022***

SSHs saw a minimal increase in physical intervention (5 in the 21/22 school year to 6 in the 22/23 school year; 4 of which were the same student) and a minimal decrease in out of school suspensions due to significant events (12 in the 21/22 school year to 11 in the

22/23 school year). Out of school suspensions were mainly given for episodes of assaultive behavior. Others included one for threats to cause mass harm to SSEC, two for possession of THC Vape products, and one for possession of a weapon (knife) on school grounds.

***Parent Involvement:*** Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their children's education. Successful outcomes occur most often when parents feel comfortable to share their expertise and unique knowledge of their child, partner in the process, and feel as though they have a trusting, mutually supportive relationship with SSHS. Parents have an understanding that they may request to speak to their child's teacher, clinician, related service provider, or program director whenever needed. SSHS held an in person open house for parents in the fall of 2022. A weekly email entitled "The Wednesday Weekly" was sent to all parents with key programmatic information, supportive resources, important dates, and student successes.

***Noteworthy Achievements:***

- ☐ SSHS graduated 9 seniors.
- ☐ SSHS seniors (and one junior) were accepted and plan to attend the following colleges: Quincy Community College, Lasell College, Curry College (nursing program), Champlain College, and Colby-Sawyer College, and Bard College at Simon's Rock.
- ☐ A meaningful in person graduation ceremony with families and the entire SSHS community occurred in June of 2022.
- ☐ The SSHS Class of 2023 was able to plan and attend a Senior Class Field trip Patriot Place.
- ☐ The SSHS Classes of 2023 and 2024 held a junior and senior prom at SSEC in May.
- ☐ SSHS continued with Student Council elections at the start of the year. The Student Council planned, organized, and led school-wide events such as; spirit week, honor roll ice cream events, a junior/senior prom, "First Friday Fun" events, and set up/welcome for graduation.
- ☐ SSHS successfully returned four students to their sending school districts.
- ☐ SSHS continued to demonstrate significant ***MCAS success*** in the spring of 2023. Of the ten grade 9 students that took the Biology portion, seven met the MCAS Science graduation requirement. Nine of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade students that took the exam met the ELA requirement and all nine students met the Math graduation requirement.
- ☐ Established relationship between the Plymouth office of NAMI (the national alliance of the mentally ill) in order to receive a \$500 scholarship to a deserving senior toward college expenses.
- ☐ Staff training in WELLE (crisis prevention and intervention training) led to limited need for physical intervention despite the significant social/emotional needs of our student population (six incidents for the entirety of the school year)

- With the help of our transition coordinators, nine age appropriate students held part-time jobs throughout the school year.
- Development of a school logo to promote positive school pride and culture.

### ***SSHS Goals for the 2023-2024***

In addition to the already established highly specialized and accomplished components of the program, South Shore High School will continue to evaluate and seek areas for continued growth and improvement, including the following:

- Continue to be responsive to member and non-member districts to provide comprehensive, highly effective programming for students with social and emotional challenges.
- Given the increase in students with school avoidance, pilot a small re-entry classroom to promote re-engagement in consistent school attendance, academic credit acquisition, and avoidance of placement changes.
- Continued use of Student Council to enhance student representation in programmatic decisions
- Continue to promote increased parent communication and involvement via the use of weekly parent updates. Increase dissemination of supportive resources within the email
- Continue to improve the efficacy of data collection and intervention
- Increase dual enrollment opportunities on community college campuses
- Addition of paraprofessionals to enhance classroom staffing
- Continued use of on-site consultant/professor to promote Critical Thinking skill development in teaching methods and student learning.
- Reduce need for physical intervention and out of school suspensions by 10%
- Increase psychoeducational opportunities to combat vaping.
- Improve academic rigor through effective use of educational grant funds.
- Resume educational field trips
- Utilize professional development to better utilize the IReady Diagnostic Assessment program with corresponding interventions in Reading Comprehension and Math
- Utilize professional development to ensure readiness to use the new DESE IEP format for the start of the 24-25 school year.

## **S.T.A.R.T.S.**

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023**

**Anne Rowland, Psy.D. Program Coordinator**

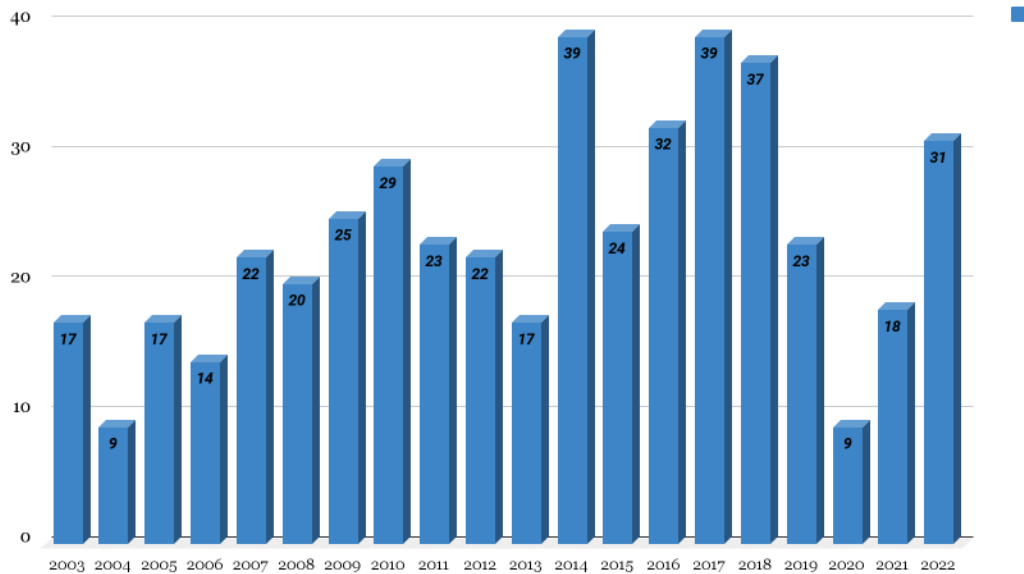
#### **S.T.A.R.T.S. DESCRIPTION**

S.T.A.R.T.S. (Short-Term Assessment and Return to School) is an Alternative Interim Educational Setting (A.I.E.S.) which provides an opportunity for extended evaluations utilizing educational, psychological and psychiatric assessment for students who are having serious difficulties in their school and require evaluation to better understand their challenging behavior and learning styles. It now accommodates students in grades K-12, for up to 45 school days, after which recommendations for future educational, social/emotional and psychiatric supports are made. For high school age students, STARTS students have been assessed while in small classrooms (8-10 students) within the South Shore High School (SSHS) and the Careers High School (CHS). Elementary and middle school age students are assessed while in small classrooms (7-8 students) within the Quest Program or AIM classrooms (Quest/Community Program hybrid). Some students have been evaluated while in the Mini School at Hull's Jacob's Elementary School, or in the Community Program in Hingham. STARTS students participate in and have access to all the learning and activities that are provided for all students within each age-appropriate school. For example, opportunities for job interest exploration (Graphic Design, Greenhouse, 3-D Printing, and the Industrial Kitchen) are available and are incorporated into the assessment. CHS and SSHS also offer two different types of classroom settings (self-contained and integrated), which allows for students with a greater range of needs and disabilities to come to SSEC for a STARTS assessment.



Table 1

**STARTS ENROLLMENT 2003- 2022**



2022-2023 was the 20th operational year of STARTS, and a more typical enrollment (31) occurred this year for the first time since before the COVID pandemic. As seen in Table 1 above, enrollments over the years have fluctuated; the current mode (most frequently occurring student enrollment number) is 17, which has occurred three times. 39, 23, 22 and nine annual student enrollments have all occurred twice. And the current sum of the number of student enrollments over the last 20 years is 462.

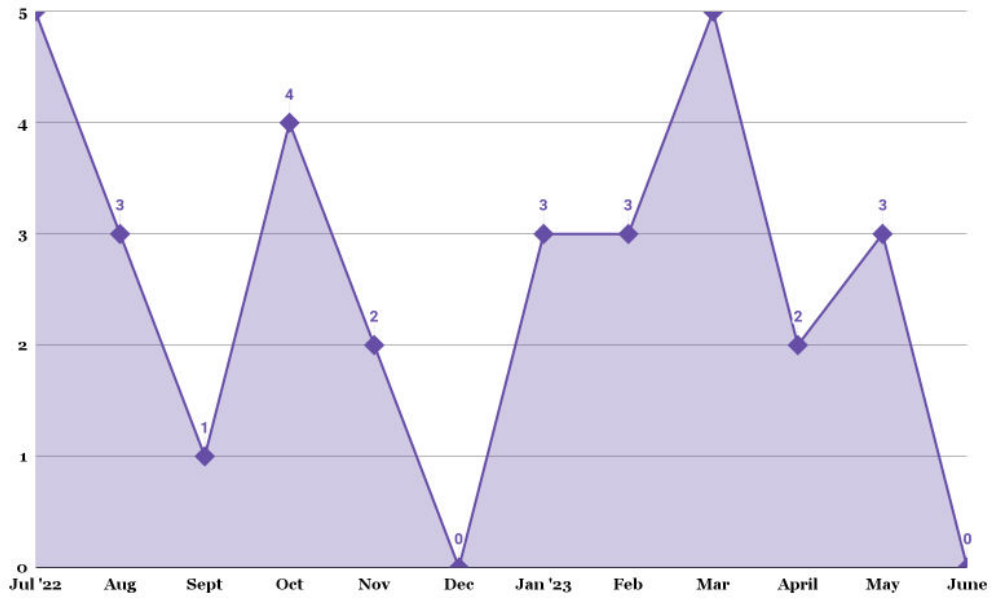
Of the 31 students enrolled in STARTS this year, 21 were males and 10 were females. With the exception of 2020-2021, STARTS has always had more males than females enrolled. Referrals came either from districts' mainstream classrooms or their alternative classrooms within mainstream buildings.

Six evaluations were completed within SSHS, 13 were completed in Quest, nine were completed within the CHS, and three in AIM. This was the seventeenth year that a predoctoral psychology intern was placed at SSEC via Aspire Health Alliance (formerly South Shore Mental Health) APA internship program, and the fourth year that two interns were placed instead of one. This allows STARTS to continue to assess more elementary age students for evaluation, as well as greater training and opportunities for collegiality among the interns. Within Quest, the intern Brandon Bray completed ten evaluations. And within the two high schools, intern Amanda Tirado Concepcion completed ten. Unlike last year, this year required many other clinicians to complete STARTS evaluations: Natasha Babul 3, Sarah Pearlman 2, Robert Holloway 2, and Liz Donahue,

Eric Steeves, Katelyn Hagan and Caitlin Foley each completed 1. Both Brandon and Amanda also completed psychological and achievement testing (WAIS/WISC/WIAT) for students in need of their IEP mandated 3-year re-evaluation process. SSEC contracted Sarah Tenore Cooper to complete additional 3-year re-evaluation tests. SSEC has hired a new evaluator (Leah Callahan) for testing for the 2023-2024 academic year.

Table 2

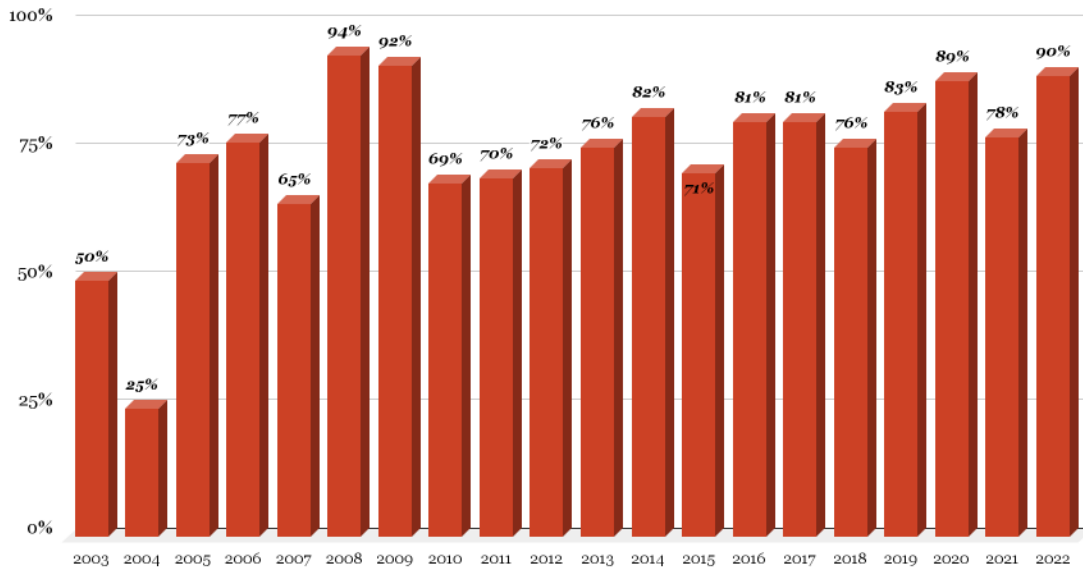
**STARTS Number of Students Beginning Assessment by Month 2022-23**



The Table 2 graph shows the number of STARTS students who began each month in order to give a more accurate visual of high and low times of enrollments. The largest peaks were in July, October and March, which is more typical than the enrollment pattern last year.

Table 3

**Percentage of Students Remaining in SSEC After STARTS**



As seen in Table 3, this year 28 out of the 31 (90%) students remained at SSEC after their STARTS assessment. One of these students already came from an SSEC program (Mini School) and stayed. While 89% remained in 2019-20, there have not been as many students who remained at SSEC since 2008-09 (94%) and 2009-10 (92%). This year, as was the case last year, three students required a higher level of care, and none returned to their referring district.

Percentages of students remaining at SSEC programs from STARTS went from 50% in year one, 25% in year two, 73% in year three, 77% in year four, 65% in year five, 94% in year six, 92% in year seven, 69% in year eight, 70% in year nine, 72% in year ten, 76% in year eleven, 82% remained in year twelve, 71% remained in year thirteen, 81% remained in years fourteen and fifteen, 83% remained in SSEC programs after their STARTS evaluation in 2019-20, 89% in 2020-2021, 78% in 2021-2022, and 90% in 2022-23.

Table 4  
Primary and Secondary Diagnoses (DSM-V)

Number of Primary and Secondary Diagnoses by Year										
Primary and Secondary Diagnoses	'13-'14	'14-'15	'15-'16	'16-'17	'17-'18	'18-'19	'19-'20	'20-'21	'21-'22	'22-'23
Bipolar Disorder	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Learning Disorder/Intell Dis	1	3	2	0	1	2	2	0	5	8
Anxiety Dis/Social Phobia	5	10	10	11	20	21	9	3	10	15
PTSD(Spec'd Trauma)	2	5	3	4	7	12	1	5	1	4
DMDD	6	7	5	9	4	4	6	3	2	4
Conduct Disorder	0	1	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Substance Abuse	0	3	2	2	2	4	5	1	2	1
ADHD /ADD	2	12	9	8	5	9	6	5	10	9
PDD/Asperger's(ASD)	6	9	4	12	9	6	8	1	2	5
OCD	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	1
Mood Disorder/Dep'n	1	6	2	3	10	10	2	2	4	14
Personality Dis Traits	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Social Comm'n Dis	n/a	2	1	1	3	2	2	0	0	2
Unspec'd Neuro Dis	n/a	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Reactive Attachment Dis	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
Other Dis, Impulse & Conduct	0	0	0	0	0	7	3	2	6	2
Selective Mute	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Psychotic Spec Dis	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Conversion Dis	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0

The primary and secondary diagnoses are listed in the statistics chart (Table 4) and in the corresponding Graph Version. All students presented with multiple diagnoses. Since most STARTS students receive an extensive psychiatric evaluation and diagnoses completed formerly by Dr. Jeff Turley and as of July 2022, Dr. Jeannine Audet, there is consistency in the procedure. Dr. Audet completed 14 evaluations with STARTS students. During the 2022-2023 school year, one can see there was an uptick in the

following DSM-V diagnoses: Learning Disorder, Anxiety, PTSD, DMDD (Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder), Autism Spectrum Disorder, and Depressive Disorders.

## Number of Primary and Secondary Diagnoses by Year

### Primary and Secondary Diagnoses

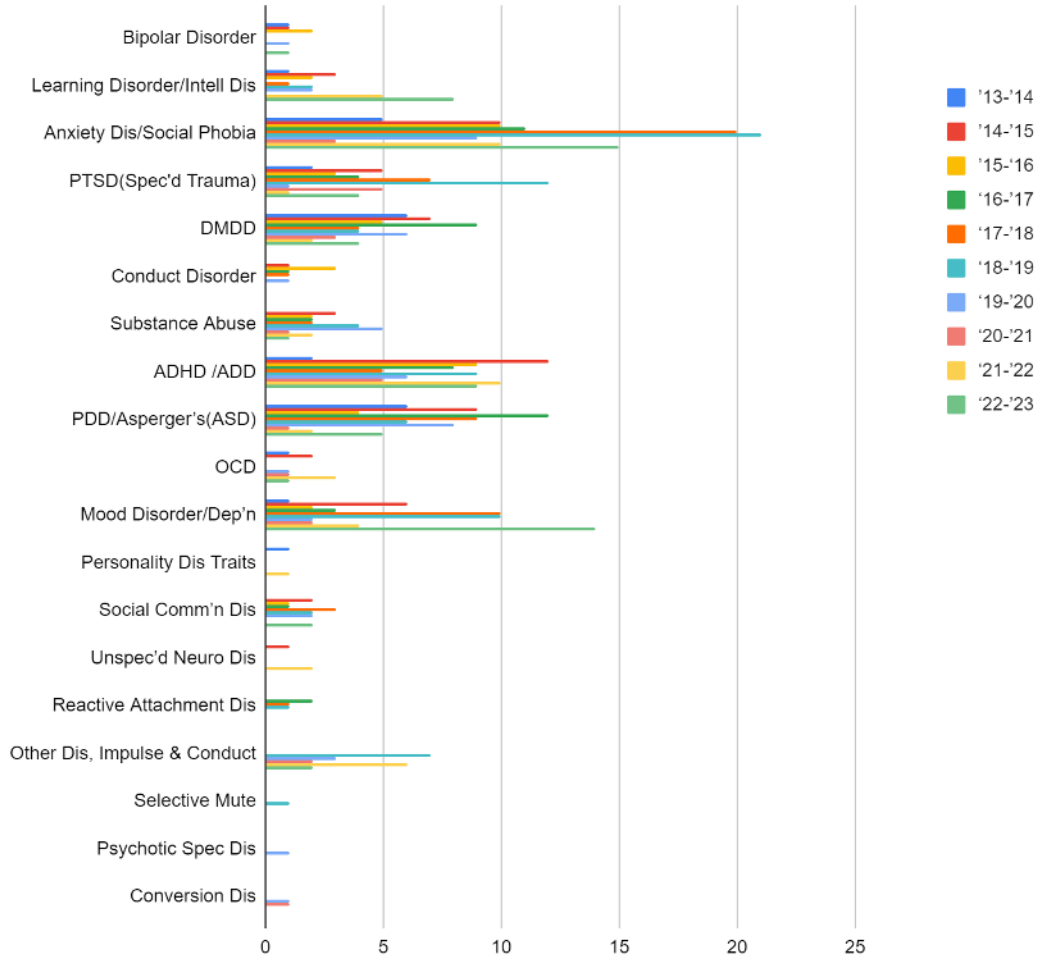


Table 5

<b>Number of Students Enrolled by District by Year</b>										
<b>School District</b>	<b>'13-'14</b>	<b>'14-'15</b>	<b>'15-'16</b>	<b>'16-'17</b>	<b>'17-'18</b>	<b>'18-'19</b>	<b>'19-'20</b>	<b>'20-'21</b>	<b>'21-'22</b>	<b>'22-'23</b>
Abington	0	0	0	0	1	5	2	0	1	1
Attleboro	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Avon	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Braintree</b>	1	3	2	6	4	6	3	1	2	4
Bridge/Rayn	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Canton	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
Carver	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Cohasset</b>	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Dennis	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Duxbury	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Easton	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
East Bridgewater	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Falmouth	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Foxboro Charter	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Foxboro Reg Dist	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Hanover	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0
<b>Hingham</b>	0	4	2	1	4	1	1	0	3	1
Holbrook	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	1
Holliston	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Hull</b>	2	5	5	4	2	2	0	1	1	0
King Philip RSD	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Marshfield	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Middleboro	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Milton</b>	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	0	1	1

Nantucket	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Needham	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	2
<b>Norwell</b>	1	5	2	0	3	1	1	0	2	0
Pembroke	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Plymouth	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
<b>Quincy</b>	1	3	1	3	3	2	1	0	0	5
<b>Randolph</b>	0	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0
Rising Tide										
Charter	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Rockland	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	2
Sandwich	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Scituate</b>	3	0	3	1	4	5	0	1	1	1
Sharon	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Silver Lake										
RSD	2	1	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
South Shore										
VoT	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stoughton	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Taunton	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Walpole	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Wareham	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Westwood	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Weymouth</b>	3	6	0	5	3	4	0	1	1	1
<b>Whitman/Han</b>	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1

As seen in Table 5, again this year STARTS had multiple repeat enrollments from previous years from multiple districts, indicating a level of satisfaction through meeting these goals for the districts. Compared to last year, enrollments of students from *member* districts decreased from 67% to 45% of the total enrollments this year. Over the last 11 years, the districts sending the most students continue to be Braintree (36), Weymouth (25), Hull (23) and Quincy and Scituate (20).



## STARTS OUTCOMES

In terms of outcome measures, the major goal of the STARTS program is to maintain a commitment to the referring school districts to: provide quality assessment and useful recommendations to the school and family of students who have academic and psychological challenges; complete timely intakes and placement (“at a moment’s notice”); continue to provide educational services, keeping students up to speed with their academics; and balance the needs of the student and needs of the district.

The opportunity to integrate STARTS students into other SSEC programs enriches the assessment process and final product; the small team setting provides quick, frequent and thorough communication between staff, as well as creativity and flexibility of programming to meet the myriad needs of students and demands of districts. Additionally, immersion in other programs and utilizing multiple clinicians as evaluators enables STARTS to accept a greater range of students, thus more immediately meeting the needs of the districts.

As STARTS referrals continue to become more complex, demanding, and exhibiting more safety concerns in terms of both clinical and classroom presentations, collaboration between educators and more clinicians provides the capacity to identify the most effective interventions and support for students, their families, and the districts. As always, the psychiatric evaluations completed by Dr. Jeff Turley have been instrumental in providing critical recommendations in addition to comprehensive differential diagnostic assessment. Unfortunately Dr. Turley retired from SSEC at the end of the 2021-2022 school year. Dr. Jeannine Audet is a developmental pediatrician who completed psychiatric evaluations in the 2022-2023 school year. Dr. Audet will be continuing in this role for the 2023-2024 school year, and will be adding completion of risk assessments for those students in need as determined by the district and/or SSEC.