

SOUTH SHORE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE

www.ssec.org

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COLLABORATIVE BOARD of DIRECTORS

2024 - 2025

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**SOUTH SHORE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE BOARD
MEMBERS**

2024 - 2025

Michael Losche	Executive Director
James Lee Superintendent	Braintree Public Schools
Sarah Shannon Superintendent	Cohasset Public Schools
Kathryn Roberts Interim Superintendent	Hingham Public Schools
Michael Jette Superintendent	Hull Public Schools
Patrick Sullivan, Ed.D Superintendent, Vice-Chair	Marshfield Public Schools
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Thea Stovell Superintendent	Randolph Public Schools
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Melanie Curtin Interim Superintendent	Weymouth Public Schools
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**STAFF OF THE SOUTH SHORE EDUCATIONAL
COLLABORATIVE**

2024 – 2025

Michael Losche	Executive Director
Arthur Sullivan	Treasurer
Richard Reino	Treasurer (as of January 2025)
Jill Lawrence	Executive Secretary/HR Coordinator
Catherine A. Cole	Accounts Payable
Stacy Lemieux	Accounts Receivable
Diane Baiardi	Business Office Assistant
Kathleen Flaherty	Payroll
Erin Holder	Director of Student Services
Jon Reynard	School Business Administrator
Anne Rowland	Careers Program Coordinator
Denise Demaggio	Program Secretary
Hannah Emery	Community School Program Director
Colleen Overstreet	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
Kristen Skjerli, OTR/L	Director of Related Services
Anne Rowland	STARTS Program Coordinator

Introduction and Letter from the Executive Director

South Shore Educational Collaborative was founded in 1976 and, for its 48th school year, provided high-quality services to its students and school districts through its five programs, district services, assessment, and professional development. During the 2024-2025 school year SSEC programs were located in Hingham (main campus, Careers High School, Community School, Quest Elementary, and South Shore High), Hull Public Schools (Mini School), and Randolph Public Schools Community School and Mini School).

The 24-25 school year was one of significant changes. With the retirements of the Executive Director, Rick Reino, and the Director of Assistive Technology and Related Services, Dawn Flaherty, the majority of the Executive for the SSEC team were in new roles at the collaborative and in for a year of significant change and progress.

I, Michael Losche, moved into the role of Executive Director, and the Collaborative restored the role of School Business Manager, which was filled by Jon Reynard (previously the Director of the Community School). Kristen Skjerli transitioned from the role of Coordinator to Director for Assistive Technology, Home and Related Services. Rounding out the Executive Team was Erin Holder in her role as the Director of Student Services.

Upon my entry to SSEC, I heard the resounding feedback from the collaborative staff that they were ready to move on from COVID. With this, our team planned an ambitious Professional Development (PD) schedule with the overarching goals of meeting our internal staff members ' and non-member districts' PD needs. Over the 2024-2025 SSEC provided over 25 professional development opportunities and provided over 175 PDP's to internal and external staff. Our team was proud of the positive feedback we received and plans to continue to provide a high level of unique professional development.

Two major programmatic changes that occurred during the 24-25 school year were the closing of our campus at Randolph High School (RHS) and the merging of Careers High School and South Shore High School. The collaborative was saddened to close the RHS campus. However, given the staffing challenges and lack of student referrals for this site, we thought it was time to close the campus and bring the Community classrooms back to the Hingham campus, and the Mini classroom to our Hull Campus at Memorial. We conducted this move over February break for the Community classrooms, and overall, it has been a positive change for all, with more support for both staff and students. .

The month prior to this move, we announced that at the end of the school year, Careers High School and South Shore High would merge, creating one comprehensive program that could meet the needs of all students. Program Director Anne Rowland's retirement was a major catalyst for this change, but we also saw the opportunity for two very similar programs to come together to function as one and create more opportunities for students.

At the end of the 2024-2025 school year, South Shore Educational Collaborative served over 300 students from 40 districts and employed 286 staff. SSEC ended up with a budget surplus of over 1.4 million. At

the end of the school year, we were able to identify several capital projects to initiate to support students and staff, including, but not limited to, increasing copiers and installing the PaperCut secure printing solution, new weight room equipment, new furniture to support redesign and moving of classroom and documentation rooms, robot floor washer, technology technology-ungraded (touchviews and projector replacements) access classrooms.

As the Executive Director of South Shore Educational Collaborative, I can say without any reservations that we made significant progress in meeting our Mission, Objectives, and Purposes in our Collaborative agreement. The following pages of this annual report will show that progress in greater detail.

2024-2025 Director of Student Services Annual Report

Programming Overview

During the 2024-2025 school year, all SSEC's programs ran in a typical manner. We continued to look at ways to expand our five programs overall, support our member districts with new enrollments and adapt to the continued staffing shortage still apparent across all programs. We continued to offer our member and non-member districts ancillary services (i.e. Psychiatric Evaluations, Assistive Technology Evaluations, Vision and O&M Services) when needed. Depending on the area of need by the districts some of our availability resulted in a wait list in some and even unavailability in others.

All activities, including Community Based Instruction and Transitional Vocational job opportunities on- and/or off-site, continued. 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 participate and integrate with students from differing programs and explore preferred activities and new interests.

ELL Teacher and Home Liaison

Our ELL teacher continues to support students and families across all five programs of SSEC. Over the course of the year, SSEC was able to continue to establish more consistent services and structures to support those who either require 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. This year, for the first time, we provided a live-streamed virtual meeting interpreted for several languages with information about school paperwork, etc.

The ELL teacher contacted and encouraged ELL families to attend free, anonymous virtual meetings outlining the legal changes to the immigration policies in the U.S. These meetings were provided (and simultaneously translated) by Lexikeet. The Quest Graduation was simultaneously interpreted for the Spanish-speaking family of one of our graduates.

Additional curricular content and materials (i.e. Bilingual Picture Dictionaries) continue to be used. Using, and sharing with families, applications like Unite for Literacy allows students and families to hear stories both in English and in home language. As we continue to expand our ELL resources, the PTO for Community School has upgraded their email platform to allow easy translation. Our ELL teacher models for other teachers on how to better support both the students and their families. Additionally, our ELL teacher shares materials and consultation for staff completing the SEI course. 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.

The ELL teacher attends or is available for consult for IEP meetings of English Learner students. Additionally, translation of all annual paperwork for these families is facilitated by the ELL teacher.

We had 12 students taking ACCESS, in mid-January through early February. Three students (two in Quest and one in Careers HS) took the ACCESS test. Nine students (five 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 same Reading Specialist in consultation with 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
- Myanmar (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.

ELA with Focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA)

Over the course of the FY25 school year, SSEC continued to consider ways 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. SSEC programs did a large clean out of old text and literature that was not used or out of date to be replaced by updated, DESE approved and culturally responsive curriculum and materials.

Stonehill Partnership

FY25 was the fifth year SSEC participated in the Stonehill College Teacher Residency Program. SSEC had 1 participant who worked as a paraprofessional in both South Shore High School and the

Mini School. Teacher Residents 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 continue to offer this opportunity again in the FY26 school year as the planning stages take place a year in advance.

Psychiatric services

SSEC brought on NP Anne Turley Griffiths, a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner at the start of the FY25 school year to replace the exit of Dr. Jeanine Audet the Developmental Behavioral Pediatrician who consulted to SSEC for the FY23 and FY24 school years. Anne Turley was able to continue to take referrals from each of SSEC's five programs as well as outside referrals from member and non-member districts for Psychiatric Evaluations.

Professional Development

SSEC continued to offer in-house training throughout the FY25 school year. These included 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 FY25 year in addition to the recertification training that takes place annually for returning staff. Our Welle Trainers (thirteen staff) participated in their annual Train the Trainer Recertification virtually with Welle facilitators. CPR/First Aid train-the-trainer courses continued to follow their bi-annual schedule.

For ongoing consistency, SSEC hosted a representative from iReady, our benchmarking tool, to return from the previous year to provide three specific professional development opportunities for staff across SSEC before the school year started. For new staff, iReady provided an introduction and solid basis to better understand and become familiar with the tool itself. For SSEC Leaders, iReady revisited our leadership goals from FY24 to explore and expand our next steps. For veteran users, iReady provided personalized instruction and usage guidance to reinforce the many tools and resources available. SSEC had iReady return in the spring '25 for two separate focus groups, data review and analysis for teachers across all SSEC programs and early literacy and Dyslexia screening for reading specialists and k-3 teachers in Quest and Mini School.

SSEC hopes to provide ongoing professional development with iReady throughout the FY26 school year in order to continue to increase its use and effectiveness across programs. Over the course of FY25, SSEC hosted trainings, both in-person and virtual in the following areas:

- Introduction of AbleSpace
- Introduction of Magic School
- Introduction of Powerschools
- Introduction of LessonPix
- CBT
- Clicker 6 Update
- Executive Functioning through Cognitive Connections
- AAC Implementation in the Classroom (Community and Mini)
- Permobil Essentials Training
- Ethics and Jurisprudence for Massachusetts School-Based OT and PT Practitioners
- Plymouth DA Trauma Training (Quest)
- Universal Design of Learning Training by AT
- Mentoring in Action Trainings on Mentoring, Special Education and ELL

In FY25, SSEC identified the ongoing needs across programs for areas of professional development that will be needed in FY26. With a focus on instruction, differentiation and paraprofessional training, SSEC

also identified the need for an additional Professional developmental day to be built into the school year for staff. With agreement from the SSEC Board and the SSEC Union Federation, a full day PD day was added to the 2025-2026 school year calendar for March 20, 2026.

Benchmark & Screening Assessments

- **iReady:** iReady continued to be implemented in each program during FY25. Our SSEC leadership team's goal for iReady was to increase usage across all programs. All five SSEC programs increased their student participation and completion rate throughout FY25 from FY24. Testing can be difficult for some of our students due to frustration, regulation and other needs which may take priority at any given moment. Administrators, Reading Specialists, our ELL and Assessment teachers were all available to step in to help support a student using iReady if needed.
- **IXL:** IXL can be 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 if used. IXL will have a diagnostic that SSEC will utilize next year for FY26.
- **Dyslexia Screening:** SSEC first implemented the Shaywitz Dyslexia Screener for grades K-3 in FY21 and continued through FY24 In FY24, SSEC also implemented the adolescent version of this tool, which was used to screen students aged 14+. In FY25, SSEC had a team of 5 staff participate in DESE's Dyslexia Institute throughout the school year. The result of the institute was a Dyslexia Action Plan (DAP) noting iReady diagnostic 2 & 3 as SSEC's early literacy and dyslexia screener. The DAP also includes the procedure for communicating results with the family and the district.

Policies and Procedures

Over the course of FY25, the following SSEC policies and procedures were revised or updated and/or newly proposed and presented to SSEC's Board of Directors for approval.

Re-adoption in FY25:

- Updated 2023 SSEC Sexual Harassment / Title IX Policy and Complaint & Grievance Procedures originally SSEC Board approved on 12/8/2023 and then SSEC Board Re-Adopted on 1/24/2025.

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Rescinded in FY25:

- The SSEC 2024 Title IX/Sexual Harassment Policy, previously approved by the board on 5/17/24 to reflect the US Department of Education revised Title IX regulations effective August 1, 2024 was rescinded once the regulations were vacated.

Newly proposed and Approved in FY25

- SSEC Hazing Conduct Policy, SSEC Board Approved 9/27/2024
- SSEC Technology and Electronic Communication Device Responsible Use Policy, 9/27/2024
- SSEC Social Media Policy, SSEC Board Approved 12/6/2024
- SSEC Security Camera Surveillance Policy 2025, 1/24/25
- SSEC ESY District Payment Policy, 4/4/25
- SSEC Home Services Policy, 4/4/25

DESE New IEP Improvement Project

- **Transitioning SSEC to the New IEP:** All SSEC programs successfully made the transition to the New IEP for Fall FY25.
- **DESE's IEP Improvement Project Grant /FC 0274 IEP GRANT:** SSEC leaders applied for and were awarded DESE's FY 2024 Fund Code 274 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B (IDEA) Federal Targeted Special Education Program Improvement Grant of \$18,161.00. This funding allowed SSEC to create a one-year New IEP Improvement Project Team with Resource members that will support the implementation and roll-out of the new IEP form across all SSEC programs in FY25. SSEC was able to fund nine staff members across all SSEC programs. Team members created and maintained an online resource platform for SSEC staff. Provided "office hours" and accompanying electronic question & answer opportunities for SSEC staff throughout the school year. Collaborated and created a uniform New IEP training to be used to train new SSEC staff and potentially outside districts.

2024-2025- School Business Administrator- Financial Overview

The FY25 budget was approved by the SSEC Board on April 5, 2024, with a tuition increase of 5% for Member Districts and 7% for Non-member Districts. The FY25 final board-approved budget with the aforementioned tuition increase was implemented for the start of the FY25 School Year. This budget called for 263 FTE Extended School Year enrollments and 319 FTE School Year Enrollments. SSEC did not meet these target enrollments. Year-end enrollment numbers came in at 242.17 FTE's for the Extended School Year and 297.86 FTE's for the School Year. Enrollment trends during the school year did trend in a positive direction when compared to the last few years. SSEC saw consistent and substantial start to finish gains in enrollment with a total increase of 14.97 FTE's during the FY25 School Year. SSEC experienced an easier time hiring for open positions than the last few years. This was particularly relevant as it related to SSEC's paraprofessional needs. Improved staffing was a key factor in SSEC's ability to accept referrals. Although target enrollments were not realized, staffing levels were kept in line with SSEC's student needs. That, coupled with a conservative approach toward spending, helped SSEC end the FY25 School Year with a budget surplus of just over \$1.04 million. Due to the tentative enrollment numbers, SSEC did not contribute to the OPEB Trust in FY25.

Cost Effectiveness of Programs and Services

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 tuition 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 of other collaboratives and private day schools before approving annual costs. Negotiated salary increases, health insurance, utilities, and lease expenses are required financial obligations that have an impact on the budget each year.

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 2024-2025, 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 for SSEC and also for the districts. The students from the district where a classroom is rented may save significantly on transportation and the families are pleased to have the students in their hometown. 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. DESE licenses the SSEC schools 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. Situations where students travel long distances to attend a private school may cost a school district more than when they attend a school locally.

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. The data below was taken from SSEC's FY25 rate sheet and MOEC's FY25 Collaborative Tuition Rates sheet, which provides cost comparison information between Collaboratives and Private Schools.

SSEC Community School- FY25 tuition- \$83,699 (includes 23-day summer program)

Private School-Perkins Watertown FY25 tuition- \$171,055

Private School- BC Campus School FY25 tuition- \$119,770

Savings per student \$36,071 to \$87,356

SSEC Mini School- FY25 tuition- \$83,699 (includes 23-day summer program)

Private School- Boston Higashi FY25 tuition- \$101,213

Private School- May Institute FY25 tuition- \$153,054

Savings per student \$17,514 to \$69,355

SSEC Quest School- FY25 tuition- \$72,344 (includes 23-day summer program)

Private School- Brandon FY25 tuition- \$103,846

Private School- Walker FY25 tuition- \$117,842

Savings per student \$31,502 to \$45,498

SSEC SSH and Careers- FY25 tuition- \$60,983 (includes 23-day summer program)

Private School- Brandon FY25 tuition- \$103,846

Private School- Walker FY25 tuition- \$117,842

Savings per student \$42,863 to \$56,859

The potential savings on tuition 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.

Energy Savings

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 significant savings. The consulting company used again this year was Titan Energy. The electricity and gas bids result in 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.

GAS	Savings	ELECTRIC	Savings
Plymouth Public Schools	\$122,672	Plymouth Public Schools	\$180,630
Town of Plymouth	\$67,679	Town of Plymouth	\$154,867
Cohasset PS	\$68,926	Cohasset PS	\$38,606
Cohasset Town	\$11,739	Cohasset Town	\$82,332
Scituate schools	\$90,388	Scituate Schools	\$49,793
Norwell schools	\$19,425	Norwell schools	\$38,019
Hull	\$24,985	Hull	\$0
SSEC	<u>\$798</u>	SSEC	<u>\$0</u>
Total gas Savings	\$406,616	Total electric saving	\$544,247

2024-2025 Careers School Annual Report

The Careers High School (CHS) is designed for high school students with severe emotional challenges who respond best when engaged in hands-on learning. CHS is therapeutic, collaborative, flexible, and focuses on helping students earn their high school diploma from their sending school districts. CHS, provides a highly individualized educational approach, including independent studies, credit recovery, and a 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.

Through the 2024-2025 school year, the Careers High School student enrollment growth was limited; however, the program graduated eight students in May. This was a third of the total enrollment and a huge accomplishment for any program. In addition, throughout the school year, students were able to continue to pursue their vocational and transition-related goals to prepare for post-secondary education.

Careers High School held many events in collaboration with other programs, especially the Community program. The Halloween party held by the Careers program included activities and games designed by students, accessible for students who mobility challenges. The Careers Greenhouse also provided many included and collaborative opportunities for students throughout the school year and also provided our kitchen with fresh vegetables throughout the school year.

As the year progressed, Program Director Dr. Anne Rowland announced she would be retiring from the collaborative in June. The collaborative would like to thank Dr. Rowland for her time and dedication to Careers High School and the collaborative. She will be missed. With this, transition planning began, and it was announced to staff members in January that Careers High School would merge with South Shore High School to form one comprehensive program. At this point, administration and staff from both programs began to collaborate to discuss what the program would look like for the 2025-2026 school year. The collaborative was extremely proud of both teams working together to meet the needs of all students and create a comprehensive high school program.

2024-2025 Community School Annual Report

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 22nd birthday). Students typically engage in the curriculum at access and entry levels and may present with communication and 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. Due to the extensive needs of the student population, the Community School attempts to provide a 1:2 staff-to-student ratio. Students are provided with 1:1 support on an individual basis as determined by the team process.

The 2024-2025 School Year began with 108 students across 13 classrooms at 75 Abington Street in Hingham and 2 classrooms located at Randolph High School. The school year continued to have challenges related to staff turnover and a lack of applicants to fill open positions, particularly at the Randolph High School location. Program-wide, staff included 15 teachers (14 DESE licensed, 1 long-term substitute), 45 paraprofessionals, and 26 related services staff (8 SLPs, 6 PTs, 3 PTAs, and 9 OTs). In December 2024 the decision was made to close the RHS location, and in February 2025 all students and staff moved to the Community School location at 75 Abington St. Although it was a difficult decision to close the RHS location, the outcome of having our entire program housed in one site has been largely positive. Over the course of the year, staffing improved, and the program was able to welcome 3 new students in the second half of the school year.

Program successes over the course of the year included:

School-wide events and activities including a Halloween Parade and Literary Themed Pumpkin Decorating Contest, Disguise a Turkey contest, Valentine's Day Dance, March Madness Spirit Days, a Wild West themed Art Show and Field Day, and a Scholastic Book Fair.

The prom was held in May 2025, and the theme was "A Night Under the Stars."

Graduation was held in June 2025 to recognize students who will turn 22 during the 2025-2026 school year. This year there were 6 graduates.

Regular Community-Based Instruction, including recurring visits to BJ's, Stop and Shop, and Ryan Family Amusements for life skills/vocational training. AIM classrooms continued to run their highly popular Snack Cart. Community School students joined students from the therapeutic high schools to participate in integrated basketball practice.

The training apartment was reopened at the Hingham location with the addition of a student-run lending library. To kick off the opening of the library, we held an event for students with a visiting author.

The Community School Parent Teacher Organization continued to support the program this year. They hosted a Boosterthon Fun Run in October 2024, which was both an excellent fundraiser and fun-filled day for students and staff. The PTO also recognized the Community School staff during Teacher Appreciation Week, held a family event at Carousel Family Fun roller rink, and hosted our Field Day in June 2025.

A successful Extended School Year program included a multitude of activities for student enrichment including horseback riding, field trips, farm animal visits, "crazy critters" visits, African Drumming, food trucks, and weekly visits from an ice cream truck.

2024-2025 School Year Mini School Annual Report

Program and Services

Established in the early 1970s as part of a Commonwealth of Massachusetts initiative to create “mini-schools” for special needs students throughout the state, the Mini School Program has long served students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The program joined the South Shore Educational Collaborative in 1987.

During the 2024–2025 school year, the Mini School Program provided educational services to 62 students in September of 2024 ending the school year with 65, ages 5 to 22, in classrooms located in Hull, MA at the Memorial School and Hull Middle/High School, as well as at Randolph High School. The Memorial School in Hull houses six Mini School classrooms serving students in Kindergarten through Grade 8. Hull Middle/High School contains three classrooms, while Randolph High School contains one.

The Mini School specializes in educating children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, developmental or intellectual disabilities, and other similar learning profiles. The program uses a multidisciplinary approach that incorporates best practices in applied behavior analysis, positive behavioral programming, language-based instruction, incidental teaching, augmentative and assistive technology, and sensory integration. Our values emphasize safety, respect, relationships, and growth, fostering an environment that promotes optimal student development.

Classrooms at the Mini School maintain a high staff-to-student ratio due to the level of support required by our students. The program consists of a Program Director, a Program Coordinator, and an Administrative Assistant. The Mini School employs 11 special education teachers—one for each classroom and 2 in the Middle School classroom for inclusion—and a total of 24 paraprofessionals, with 2–4 assigned to each classroom.

Specialist staff include three full-time speech and language pathologists, two full-time occupational therapists, and one full-time Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA). The program also has a part-time physical therapist and part-time assistive technology staff. In addition, the Mini School employs two full-time behavioral therapists and offers behavioral and home training services. The program also includes a full-time Adapted Physical Education teacher and two clinicians and part-time ESL/Reading Specialist. The Mini School has 2 full time nurses.

Changes and Accomplishments:

- During the 2024-2025 school year, the Mini School has two students who aged out of the program. One student transitioned to adult programming through Mass-Health at Road to Responsibility, Braintree, while another student transitioned to an adult program through Mass Health at Behavioral Associates, Attleboro.
- During the 2024-2025 school year, the 8th-grade moderate classroom had four students return to the district for High School.
- Three students were mainstreamed for classes at Hull Middle School for the majority of their school day with a para-professional/Sped Teacher support.
- The Mini School sponsored and supported staff participating in student teaching, BCBA supervision, and occupational therapy mentoring.

- Successful year at Swim With A Special Child program located at the Weymouth Connell Pool Center where they had over 30 Red Cross certified swim volunteers to give 1:1 swim instruction to our students.
- Memorial School transitioned to just housing the Mini School program. The Mini School accomplished a lot of environmental changes for the space that the program occupies. This included the cafeteria which also enabled us to create student opportunities for vocational work.
- Mini School participated and had a successful season for Unified Basketball. Coaches included our Mini School Middle School teacher and a staff person from Hull Public Schools. There were approximately 15 students in total and played against Duxbury, Whitman Hansen and Pembroke.
- The Mini School started an annual Walk-a-Thon for Middle School and High School students. Each classroom had a specific color and walked 45 minutes worth of laps around the school track. Medals and certificates were given out at a ceremony.
- Special events included Halloween costume party, Presidential Election, Turkey Trot, Polar Express Activity and Movie, Holiday craft workshop, World Kindness Day, Valentine's Day Party and a Science Fair.
- Each classroom hosted a family event at the end of the school year where a slide show representing the school year and awards were given out to the students.
- Vocational jobs included recycling, working at the school store, custodial jobs, Meals on Wheels, Papa Ginos, Hull Diner, L Street Pizza.
- Celebrated Mrs. Pat DiCristofaro retiring after 38 years of service with the Mini School.
- Evan's Walk/Run was the biggest staff turn out yet. We had over 20 staff participating and received a grant to do recreational activities with the students.
- Hosted the annual sibling day in which we had almost 20 siblings attend and participate in activities with the Mini School Clinician and Behaviorist.
- Summer recreational activities included swim sessions at Cohasset Town Pool, beach trips, Crazy Critter Show, Barnyard Animals, Field Day, Musical Bubble Barge, Waterslide, going to the Carousel, Q&A with Hull Police Officers.

2024-2025 Quest School Annual Report

The Quest School is a public day school located at 75 Abington Street in Hingham, MA 02043, designed to serve special needs students in grades K-8 (ages 5-14) in need of individualized educational, clinical, behavioral, and/or remedial services. Students present with varying social, emotional, behavioral, and learning challenges. Challenges associated with diagnoses of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), depression, mood disorders, trauma, and specific learning disabilities are common for Quest students. Quest is also supportive to students who identify as LGBTQIA+. The program/school provides a highly structured, safe environment that ensures consistency and support needed to help these students succeed. The mission of the Quest School 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.

Students attending Quest are provided with a grade-level curriculum, modified as necessary to meet individual student needs as noted in their individualized education program (IEP). Students are provided with modifications and accommodations to help them access the curriculum. Small class sizes are assigned to provide students the support to realize their learning potential. All students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of “specials” such as art, physical education, music, health and field trips. Most Quest students take On-Demand MCAS exams, while others complete the MCAS-Alt in accordance with the state timeline and schedule. Quest also offers an extended school year (ESY) program for six weeks in July and August to prevent the regression of skills.

Quest utilizes a structured, trauma-informed behavior management system in which students are provided consistency and support while also being challenged to work on their goals. The program also uses incentives, such as the school store and group contingency plans to encourage expected behaviors. Quest is supported by a board-certified behavior analyst and they provide consultative services to the staff and develop student support plans as outlined in the students’ IEP.

School-based mental health clinicians and social workers provide comprehensive treatment in the form of individual and group therapy, family support, and collaboration with outside treatment providers. Students develop and practice coping strategies to assist them in effectively managing emotional stressors and to counter the problems that have previously stood in the way of their social and academic success. In addition to school-based clinicians, weekly consultation and potential treatment from a prescriber are available; as well as the services of a full-time nurse with a background in psychiatric medicine.

The AIM (Achieve, Inspire, Motivate) classrooms within Quest serve students who present with below-average cognition and are in need of a higher staffing ratio than what a traditional Quest classroom provides. The AIM classrooms have a focus on activities of daily living (ADLs) and functional communication.

For the 2024-2025 school year, Quest ran ten classrooms (eight traditional Quest/2 Quest-AIM) and serviced over 70 students. Quest graduated 11 eighth-grade students in June 2025. Quest was led by a Program Director and Program Coordinator with support from an administrative assistant. The Quest team consisted of an assistive technology specialist, a board certified behavior analyst, two certified therapy dogs, a consulting psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner, five licensed clinicians (social worker or mental health counselor), one licensed English language learner teacher, nine licensed special education teachers, one long-term substitute, two milieu coordinators, two registered nurses, two occupational therapists, twenty-five paraprofessionals, two physical therapists, three reading specialists, two speech language pathologists and one teacher of the visually impaired. The Quest School also has access to SSEC’s school resource officer (Hingham Police officer).

Notable changes and accomplishments for the 2024-2025 school year include: the transition to the new DESE IEP, the revision and improvement of Quest report cards, redesign of the behavior support team area (e.g. more visual supports, coping strategies, and removal of doors), removal of doors of the backrooms in the classrooms, and for the students in middle school (grades 6-8)- small scale transitions to different classrooms for different subject areas to emulate a public mainstream school (e.g. science teacher, math teacher and social studies/civics teacher). Some traditions that continued in Quest were the annual Open House in September, annual Thanksgiving Dinner in Thanksgiving, where families are invited to attend and the annual holiday support provided to Quest families in need. Quest also brought back the eighth-grade field trip and had a successful graduation ceremony in June 2025.

2024-2025 RELATED SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

OVERVIEW

During the 2024-2025 school year, requests for therapy, assistive technology (AT), and vision services were fulfilled for each of the Collaborative programs and local school districts. 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.

Between SSEC and district services, SSEC employed: 4 AT Specialists, 3 Teachers of the Visually Impaired, 1 Orientation and Mobility Specialist, 14 Occupational Therapists, 1 Occupational Therapy Assistant, 9 Physical Therapists, 3 Physical Therapist Assistants, and 14 Speech Therapists. SSEC utilized internal staff and additional hires to cover leaves and resignations, which decreased the need for agency staff.

Therapy Services (Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech-Language Therapy)

- SSEC Therapy Staff provided occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech therapy to all 5 SSEC programs and 5 local school districts.
- During the 2023-2024 school year, SSEC therapy staff utilized grant funding to purchase sensory materials and literacy supports that promote classroom instruction and access.
- Occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech-language pathologists who work in SSEC programs trialed a new documentation system.
- SSEC updated our standardized testing to include the BOT 3.
- SSEC Therapy staff supported 4 Occupational Therapy interns, 1 Physical Therapy intern, and 1 Speech Therapy intern from 6 different graduate programs throughout the 2024-2025 School Year.
- On a bi-monthly basis, all SSEC occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech language pathologists met in-person to discuss topics related to therapy service delivery, intervention planning and implementation of School-based Medicaid Program directives.
- SSEC Community School hosted 29 scheduled equipment repair clinics, 22 new equipment clinics and 36 orthotic clinics for bracing needs. These clinics allowed therapists to be involved in the process of acquiring and maintaining equipment and bracing options for our students.
- Therapy staff worked through a year-long training on writing School-Based Evaluations.

Assistive Technology Services

- AT consultation hours are embedded into all SSEC programs to promote access to the school environment and curriculum.
- SSEC assistive technology specialists provided AT/ AAC evaluations for 2 SSEC students (other programs).
- SSEC Assistive Technology Specialists provided regular consultation in 6 local school districts and supported 10 trials of new speech devices.
- Assistive Technology Evaluations were completed for 24 district students across 9 local districts.

- The SSEC Center for Assistive Technology coordinated the purchase and implementation of bulk Assistive Technology software, app and subscription purchases at reduced costs for SSEC programs.
- SSEC Center for Assistive Technology and SSEC Speech 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.
- 12 SSEC student trials for new speech devices were completed to ensure the students have access to the most appropriate communication device. The assistive technology team and speech therapists wrote funding letters and letters of medical necessity for any necessary adaptive equipment.

Vision District Services

- Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) evals were completed for 9 district students and TVI consultation was completed for 19 district students.
- Orientation and Mobility (O&M) evals were completed for 7 district students and O&M consultation was completed for 20 district students.
- O&M purchased the BOEHM-3 to assist in testing.
- Vision (TVI and O&M) services were restructured to be under the Director of Therapy and AT to provide better tracking of services and simplified coordination with districts.

Cost Efficiency of Related Services

- SSEC includes all IEP-related services within its tuition. Those disciplines include evaluation, consultation, and direct services from Assistive Technology, Behavioral Support, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy, Teacher of the Visually Impaired, and Orientation and Mobility.
- SSEC district rates were adjusted for the 2024-2025 school year to align with other school districts and collaborative providers.
 - Assistive Technology (AT/ AAC) evaluations remained the same cost.
 - Assistive Technology consultation increased by \$5/ hr to align with the staff salary increases for FY 25.
 - Therapy and Vision evaluations remained the same cost.
 - Therapy and Vision services increased by \$5/ hr to align with the staff salary increases for FY 25.
 - BCBA services by a licensed provider increased by \$5/ hr to align with the staff salary increases for FY 25.
 - ABA hourly services by a non-licensed provider remained the same.
- In addition, the SSEC admin researched outside providers and their rates to create member and non-member rates for the May 2025 board meeting.

Comparison of SSEC Related Services Rates				
Related Service	SSEC Rate	Public Member Rates	Public Non-Member Rates	Private Rates
BCBA	\$104	\$107	\$120	\$105
Behavior Tech	\$66	\$58	\$62	\$55
AT evaluation	\$1,540	\$1,540	\$1,786	\$2,500
AT hourly	\$104	\$167	\$183	\$205
Therapy hourly	\$104	\$107	\$121	\$110+
Vision hourly	\$104	\$139	\$170	\$205

2024-2025 South Shore High School Annual Report

South Shore High School (SSHS), located at 75 Abington St. in Hingham, is a therapeutic high school program offering special education services to students in grades 8-12.

STUDENT POPULATION:

With approximately seventy-five students and room to grow, comprehensive therapeutic services are offered to students with a variety of social, emotional, learning, and mental health challenges. SSHS also services students with a diagnosis of high-functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder. Typically, students are of solidly average cognitive abilities, with a cohort of students above average and a cohort of students slightly below average. SSHS offers a rigorous academic program with IEP-driven accommodations and modifications to support learning challenges and assist students to achieve their potential.

SSHS STAFF:

At the current time, South Shore High School students are supported by fifteen special education teachers, four licensed mental health licensed clinicians, two milieu coordinators, two transition specialists, a reading specialist, a speech and language pathologist, an occupational therapist, and a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). In addition, students have access to elective staff which include, a certified art teacher, a certified physical education teacher, a greenhouse/horticultural teacher, a digital visual arts teacher, and the cafeteria culinary arts staff. All SSEC staff have access to consultation from a psychiatric nurse practitioner (with potential to see students for evaluation and medication management via an arrangement with their sending school district). In addition, SSEC contracts with a Neuropsychologist to provide consultation and evaluation per sending district requests.

2025-2026 INITIATIVES and ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

South Shore High School and the former Careers High School launched a successful merger for the 25-26 school year, resulting in a comprehensive SSEC therapeutic high school program. The high school program remains named South Shore High School. Positive benefits of the merger include the majority of classrooms having two special education teachers, more robust elective offerings, more robust vocational exposure, and increased specialized instruction and support. In addition, South Shore High School offers 8th grade students the opportunity for exposure to high school level academic courses as a bridge between middle school and high school level expectations to promote success upon entering high school. South Shore High School has a thriving Student Council that has been instrumental in promoting a safe and positive school culture for all.

GRADUATES:

South Shore High School graduated eleven students last year, while the Careers High School program graduated nine for a combined total of twenty students receiving their high school diplomas. Post high school, the majority of our graduates entered the workforce or attended college. Colleges our graduates are attending include: University of Pittsburgh, The College of Wooster, UMASS Amherst's Stockbridge School of Agriculture, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Massasoit Community College, and Mass Bay Community College. One of our graduates is the current Class of 2029 President of Massachusetts Maritime Academy. Students entering the work force included careers in culinary arts, manufacturing, and the trades.