

**SOUTH SHORE EDUCATIONAL  
COLLABORATIVE**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
TO THE  
COLLABORATIVE BOARD of DIRECTORS**

2014 - 2015

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SOUTH SHORE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE BOARD MEMBERS

2014 - 2015

Henry W. Perrin, Ed.D.	Executive Director
Maureen Murray, Ed.D.	Braintree Public Schools
Barbara Cataldo Chairperson	Cohasset Public Schools
Dorothy Galo, Ph.D.	Hingham Public Schools
Kathleen Tyrell, Ed.D.	Hull Public Schools
Scott Borstel, Ed.D. Ellen Martin, Interim Superintendent	Marshfield Public Schools
Matthew A. Keegan Vice Chairperson	Norwell Public Schools
Richard DeCristofaro, Ed.D.	Quincy Public Schools
Thomas Anderson	Randolph Public Schools
John McCarthy	Scituate Public Schools
Kenneth Salim, Ed.D.	Weymouth Public Schools

STAFF OF THE SOUTH SHORE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE  
2014 – 2015

Henry W. Perrin, Ed.D.	Executive Director
Richard L. Reino	Business Administrator
Arthur Sullivan	Treasurer
Cynthia J. Lindberg	Executive Secretary
Catherine A. Cole	Accounts Payable
Diane Baiardi	Accounts Receivable
Laura J. Polleys	Payroll
Patricia Mason	Community Program Director
Gina Manzo	Program Secretary
Mary Scott	Mini School Program Director
Karen Thomsen	Program Secretary
Timothy Handorf	Clinical Director
Amy Norton	South Shore High School Director
Lisa Penzo-Johnson	Program Secretary
Theresa Gazzola	Program Secretary (April – June)
Jennie Williams	Quest Program Coordinator
Lisa Penzo-Johnson	Program Secretary
B. Corie Fehsenfeld, Ed.D.	Careers Program Director
Lauren Clark	Program Secretary (July - August)
Abigail Mann	Program Secretary (August – June)
Dawn Flaherty, OTR/L	Director of Ancillary Services
Anne Rowland	STARTS Program Coordinator

## **1. Letter of Introduction**

This annual report is submitted by Henry Perrin, 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 2014-2015 school year.

The process of moving SSEC from 90 Industrial Park Road in Hingham and settling into the new school building at 75 Abington Street in Hingham took place during fiscal year 2014. The 2014-2015 school year was the second complete year at the new building. This relocation project was initiated and implemented as a result of the strategic plan that was approved for 2011-2016. The new building is 86,000 square feet which is approximately 25,000 square feet larger than the building at 90 Industrial Park Rd. After several years of planning, four of the SSEC schools and the administrative offices relocated and began daily operation in July, 2013 at the new building. The Community School for students with complex physical, medical and educational needs has seen an increase in enrollment for several years. The former building was not able to meet facility requirements to provide a safe and adequate environment for the students. Specially designed classrooms, physical and occupational therapy area, bathrooms, and a therapeutic salt water pool are improvements that have greatly enhanced the learning opportunities and environment for the students who attend the Community School. The Quest School, South Shore High School and Careers High School are also located at the new building and have access to improved technology infrastructure, classroom space, culinary center, greenhouse and gymnasium. The building project was made possible with the support of the management of Foxrock Properties by including improvements SSEC may not have been able to afford.

In accordance with the new 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 is an ongoing process that administrative staff at SSEC has been completing in a timely manner as required. The Collaborative Agreement with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education was approved and accepted by the member districts and DESE this year in 2014.

The strategic plan that was approved in March, 2011 has been utilized as a planning guide as decisions are made for student programs, personnel and facilities. The leadership team of SSEC considers the goals and objectives that are included in the plan while building the budget and making decisions for personnel, programs, facilities and technology.

## **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 2014-June, 2015.

The core values of safety, respect, relationships and growth are always considered as decisions are made for SSEC. The mission statement is 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 2015 are listed in this report following the Table of Contents.

The following member school districts/ committees have appointed the superintendent to serve on the SSEC Board of Directors for fiscal year 2015:

Braintree	Maureen Murray, Ed.D.
Cohasset	Barbara Cataldo
Hingham	Dorothy Galo, Ph.D.
Hull	Kathleen Tyrell, Ed.D.
Marshfield	Scott Borstel, Ed.D.
Norwell	Matthew Keegan
Quincy	Richard DeCristofaro, Ed.D.
Randolph	Thomas Anderson
Scituate	John McCarthy
Weymouth	Kenneth Salim, Ed.D.

The SSEC had a change in board members this year from Randolph, Mr. Thomas Anderson.

During the past few years, declining enrollment at the Language Enhancement Program led to the merge of two remaining classrooms with the Mini-School. The program enrollment has been declining as school districts developed programs to meet the needs of the students that have reading and language learning needs. One of the goals of SSEC is to meet the needs of the member districts.

### **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 program 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 the 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 referring to SSEC.

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

Each year brings program and financial challenges as difficult decisions need to be made. Overall, this year has been very positive. The enrollments in the schools and programs have been steady throughout the year.

With the recent 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 the 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 have an impact on the annual budget of \$19,769,183. for fy 2015.

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 2014-2015, SSEC leased two buildings (75 Abington Street and 40 Pond Park in Hingham) and classroom space in Weymouth, Hingham, Scituate 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 school buildings 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, but leased 7 classrooms to SSEC in 2014-2015 allowing for minimum transportation costs for students enrolled. 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 the competing private school.

SSEC Community School- fy 15 tuition- \$63,963. (includes summer )

Private School-Perkins Watertown fy 15 tuition- \$108,880.

Private School- BC Campus School fy 15 tuition- \$75,520.

Possible savings per student (115students) w/o transportation factor = \$11,577. - \$44,917.

SSEC Mini School- fy 15 tuition- \$57,030. (includes summer)

Private School- Boston Higashi fy15 tuition- \$71,506.

Private School- May Institute fy 15 tuition- \$84,079.

Possible savings per student (62students) w/o transportation factor = \$14,476. - \$27,049.

SSEC Quest School fy 15 tuition- \$47,261. (includes summer)

Private School- Brandon fy 15 tuition- \$54,771.

Private School- Granite Academy fy 15 tuition- \$60,275.

Possible savings per student (60 students) w/o transportation factor = \$7,510. - \$13,014.

SSEC SSH and Careers fy 15 tuition- \$44,514. (includes summer)

Private School- Compass fy 15 tuition- \$54,601.

Private School- Home for Little Wanderers S.E. fy 15 tuition- \$48,667.

Possible savings per student (86 students) w/o transp. factor = \$4,153. up to \$10,087.

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 purchase program. The data collected by the consultant who coordinates the purchasing program on behalf of SSEC member districts and other municipalities indicates a significant savings.

An administrator licensure program with SSEC and Boston University has been approved by D.E.S.E. The program accepts qualified candidates from the south shore to participate in graduate level courses at a reduced tuition rate at the SSEC school building. The reduced tuition saves each candidate approximately \$8,000. by the end of the program. This program supports the local school districts to develop future administrators. Two cohorts of educators have participated in the program to date.

For many years, the SSEC has operated a day program for adults with cognitive, physical and medical needs. Many of the adults in the program graduated from the Community School. Others were placed in the program through the Department of Developmental Services. A



concern of the board and administration at SSEC was that the collaborative regulations that were approved in 2012 would not allow adult programs to continue to be operated by collaboratives. However, the oversight regulations of 2012 did allow the adult programs to continue under collaborative management. Even though the SSEC could continue the adult program, a decision was made to pursue other management options for the program. The executive director of SSEC met with the CEO of a private, local organization where the mission is to assist adults with disabilities, Road to Responsibility (RTR). Discussion and planning began for transferring the management of the Community Adult Program (CAP) to RTR. Effective July, 2014, RTR assumed management responsibilities of the CAP and cost shared at 50% all lease and maintenance expenses at 40 Pond Park. This releases any financial liability to the districts for adult services that may not receive adequate funding and gets SSEC one step closer to being in one building. With the new building approval, a goal was to get all programs into one location for cost effectiveness. The lease at 40 Pond Park ends on October 31, 2016. RTR has entered into negotiations to consider leasing the building. If RTR leases 40 Pond Park, SSEC could rent classroom space, if needed. The ideal is to have all classrooms in the new building, but if enrollment continues to increase the leasing of classrooms is an option. The owners of the building have been formerly notified that SSEC will not extend the lease.

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

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has approved the agreement with SSEC and all member districts have signed to accept the agreement.

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. The schools 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. Data is kept to measure students' progress. Students are 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 included 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 personnel strive to build trusting relationships and confidence with the public school representatives, parents and students to form a team that will provide a safe, respectful environment for educational and social success for all students.

The licensure program for school administrators enrolled the second cohort of graduate students. The licensure program was approved by DESE and is a partnership with Boston University. Professional development has also been offered in a cost effective manner for educators to participate in English Language Learner preparation such as the W.I.D.A. and proposed SEI course. Recent DESE approval was also awarded to SSEC to provide the required Sheltered English Immersion classes. Wilson Language and Reading certification was also

available this year. SSEC provides a Crisis Prevention Instructor (CPI) for districts to provide the mandated training. This course is provided at districts for a significantly lower rate than if staff had to attend corporate sponsored trainings. All of the SSEC direct care employees participate in Non-Aggressive Psychological and Physical Intervention (NAPPI). The SSEC has personnel approved to conduct the training at SSEC which is a significant savings.

The 2014-2015 school year has been challenging and exciting. The Board of Directors support of the strategic plan has allowed the SSEC to move forward. The directors' reports that follow provide specific detail and data of the programs and schools of SSEC for the 2014-2015 school year. The program directors and coordinators present the information that provides pertinent information and outcomes relevant to their respective programs.

Respectfully submitted,

Henry W. Perrin, Ed.D.  
Executive Director

South Shore Educational Collaborative  
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## **ANCILLARY SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015**

### STAFF AND STUDENT POPULATION:

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

During the 2014-2015 school year, The South Shore Educational Collaborative employed a full-time occupational therapist/ therapy supervisor, nine physical therapists (six full time, three part-time) , six full-time physical therapy assistants, thirteen occupational therapists (eleven full time, two part-time), and four full-time certified occupational therapy assistants, eighteen speech-language pathologists (fifteen full time, three part-time) . Therapists have conducted evaluations, and provided direct and consultative services for students in five Collaborative programs, and four member school districts. 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 ten member school districts. Services to outside school districts were provided based upon availability of staff.

During the 2014-2015 school year, the South Shore Educational Collaborative Center for Assistive Technology Team (CAT Team) consisted of a coordinator, two assistive technology specialists, and a speech/language pathologist. A network manager consulted on an as needed basis. The CAT Team worked together three and a half hours each week from September until June to conduct assistive technology evaluations and follow-up services for school districts. In addition, each CAT Team member was assigned to provide on-going consultation to SSEC programs and to school districts who requested this service.

### **SSEC Therapy and Assistive Technology Service Outcomes for 2014-2015 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 train 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 2014-2015 school year reflects the types of conditions/environment therapy services were delivered. Information sharing typically occurred during initial eligibility meetings, incidentally in the school setting or in the context of Response to Intervention.

**Figure 1**

Type of Therapy Service:	Occupational Therapy	Physical Therapy	Speech/Language Therapy
Information Sharing	4.68%	7.95%	0.31%
Accommodations/Modifications	6.61%	3.80%	4.34%
*Consultation	6.06%	6.92%	8.38%
*Direct therapy service in context	8.26%	20.40%	7.76%
*Direct therapy service in and out of context	53.19%	31.13%	56.83%
*Direct therapy service out of context	21.20%	29.80%	22.38%

\*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.

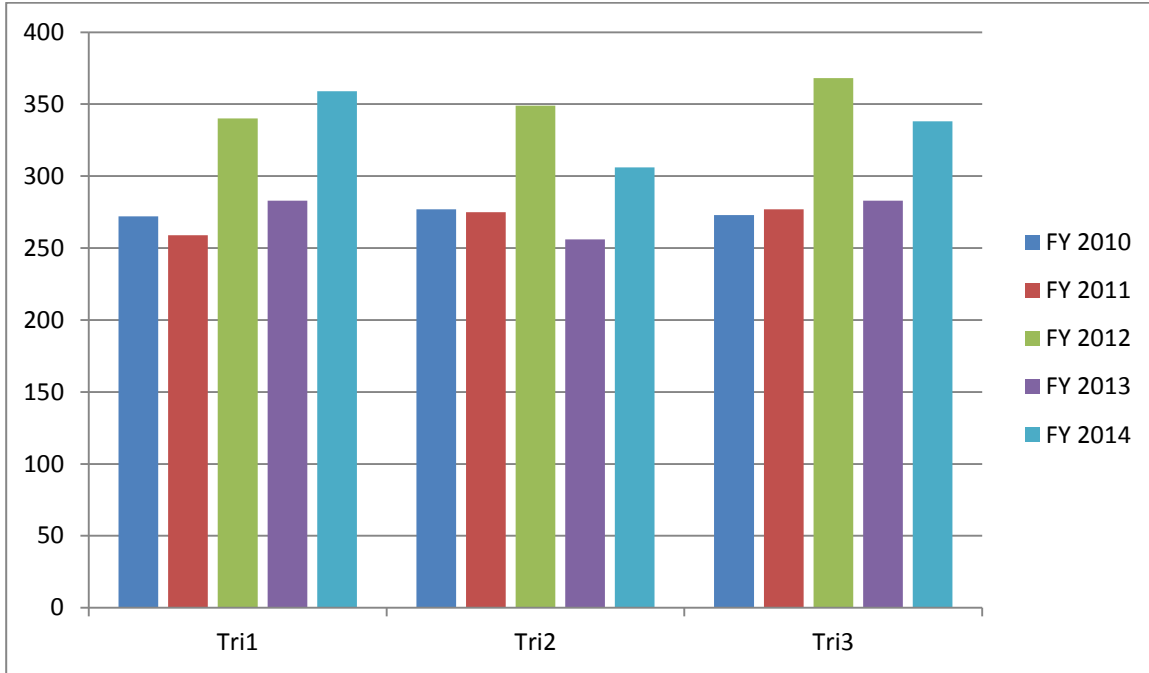
**Outcome #2**

Given Assistive Technology consultation, and availability of assistive technology tools/techniques, students will participate in classroom instruction to the greatest extent possible.

This outcome will be measured by the number of students using assistive technology to participate in classroom activities.

**Figure 2**

**# Students per Trimester period:**



**Analysis/Discussion:**

During the 2014-2015 school year, there was an increase in the number of students who received consultation and used assistive technology tools in the classroom to access the curriculum each trimester when compared to the 2013-2014 school year.

The majority of consultation services occurred within the weekly blocks of contracted time for SSEC programs and school districts.

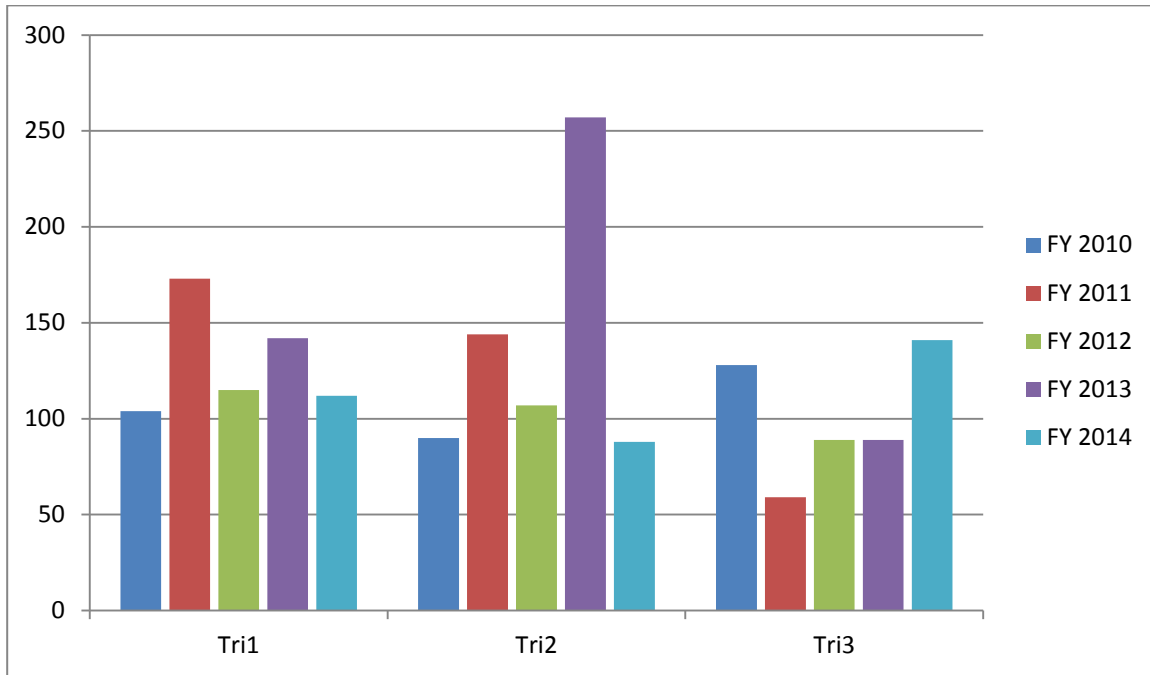
**Outcome #3**

Educators and parents will receive training so that they can incorporate Assistive Technology tools/techniques to promote student achievement in identified areas of need.

This outcome will be measured by the number of educators and parents who have received training from the CAT Team.

**Figure 3**

**# Educators and Parents per Trimester Period**



**Analysis/Discussion:**

During the 2014-2015 school year, the CAT Team provided training for educators and parents in the use of Assistive Technology tools/techniques through workshops, in-services, and one to one trainings conducted in public schools, and SSEC programs. Between December and March there was a significant decrease in the number of parents and educators who participated in trainings due to a high number of weather related school cancellations.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- The SSEC CAT Team conducted and/ or coordinated workshops and trainings in conjunction with vendors during the 2014-2015 school year on topics that included Alternative and Augmentative Communication devices (such as Nova Chat, AbleNet: Quick Talker Free-style, Accent 1400, Tobii C-12), Supports for Literacy (Anybook Reader), Tablets (iPad Mini), iPad Apps, and Google Docs for Education.
- The SSEC CAT Team participated in monthly SSEC Technology Planning meetings to address implementation of the new SSEC Technology Plan.
- Throughout the 2014-2015 school year, members of the SSEC CAT Team collaborated closely with speech language pathologists and parents to assist with steps for student trials and purchase of communication devices if deemed appropriate.

- The SSEC Center for Assistive Technology coordinated bulk Assistive Technology software, app and device purchases at reduced costs for SSEC programs.
- The SSEC Center for Assistive Technology has coordinated mobile device sharing systems for SSEC Programs using web-based applications.
- The SSEC Center for Assistive Technology set up, maintained Bookshare.org accounts for students, and provided training for teachers. Bookshare.org provides accessible books and periodicals for readers with print disabilities at no cost.
- The SSEC Center for Assistive Technology and Community School Therapists has facilitated trainings provided by vendors of a variety of augmentative and alternative communication devices, adaptive equipment, and educational software. In turn, these companies have loaned devices for trial use at no cost.
- The AT Team and frequently coordinated loan arrangements for specific assistive technology tools and devices from vendors for trial use. Opportunities for trial use has been greatly beneficial for determining the most appropriate assistive technology software, tool or device prior to purchase.

#### SUMMARY OF ANCILLARY SERVICES:

During the 2014-2015 school year, 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 314 students. Physical therapy services were provided for 292 students. Speech/Language services were provided for 394 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 children and adults with disabilities to technology systems that will increase opportunities in education, daily living, and employment.

**Careers High School Annual Report**  
2014 – 2015 School Year  
Anne Rowland, Psy.D. Program Coordinator

***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. The program 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 Careers HS had poor experience with schools in general and are reactive to traditional educational approaches. These students respond to the ‘family feel’ of the program, the individualized educational approaches and the strong emphasis on transition to successful post-secondary experiences.

**Capacity**

Careers High School has a capacity of thirty-seven students in grades eight through post-graduate. The age range of the student population is from thirteen through eighteen, although older students may remain enrolled if the educational TEAM determines it meets the students’ needs. The 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 ensured this happened. If the behavioral or emotional issues were too severe for success in a less restrictive environment, a student would remain in placement until high school graduation.

There are five academic classrooms in the Careers HS wing of the 75 Abington Street campus. Each class is taught by a special needs teacher with the support of a paraprofessional. Four of the classrooms emulate the traditional comprehensive high schools in the sense that the students move from content class to content class during the academic portion of the program. While class size is dependent upon population need, it generally ranges between six and nine students.

The fifth classroom is the Transition Room that is self-contained for the core academic classes. It too is staffed by a special education teacher and a paraprofessional, and can accommodate up to 12 students. The student population tends to have greater difficulty with change and may have diagnoses that include Autism Spectrum Disorder (DSM-V), anxiety disorders and nonverbal learning disabilities. Students are encouraged to take one or more classes in our mainstream as their comfort level and skills increase. This was the first year that Quest referred 8<sup>th</sup> graders to SSHS and to Careers HS. The Transitions classroom began with three 8<sup>th</sup> graders from Quest, and added two more as the year progressed. These students continued into 9<sup>th</sup> grade at Careers HS, and one returned to district.

**Staffing**

In 2014-15, Careers High School was staffed with five special needs teachers, five paraprofessionals and two full-time clinical therapists to support students as they accrue the concepts, skills and credits to graduate with a Massachusetts diploma issued by their sending school district. All staff work together as a comprehensive, collaborative team committed to



working with our students in navigating specific difficulties to then result in their successful completion of the program. This may be accomplished through individual and group therapy situations. These sessions may be scheduled on an as needed basis. This team works closely with classroom teachers, students' families, and outside collaterals. 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-graduate goals.

In addition, Careers High School shares the Transitional Specialist with SSHS. He and the transitional paraprofessional are critical to the developing transitions center for all SSEC students. Careers High School is also the home for the STARTS Coordinator who also serves as the Careers HS Program Coordinator.

### **Transition**

Originally, Careers High School developed a transitions program based on Jobs for American Graduate work standards. This program embedded these standards into the discipline system. Students' schedules have them participating in one of five on-site transitional-vocational projects during their school day. When their core academic subjects are completed, the students spend the remainder of their day on employment-oriented activities. This includes entrepreneurial activities, work study experiences, community service activities, paid positions in competitive employment situations, and dual enrollment in college courses.

In 2014-15, the on-campus opportunities to learn employability skills included Fundraising, Copy Center, Greenhouse, and Industrial Kitchen. Students can learn basic employment expectations, vocabulary and experience that translate directly to the work world. In addition, basic "soft" employment skills are built into the behavior management system of the program to reinforce real world expectations.

The part-time Transitional Specialist works with the students on employment and transition activities. This educator assists students in gaining access to employment opportunities as well as exploring college and other post-secondary education and training. The transitional specialist assists students with 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 and support in the pre and post phone calls are part of their efforts with students.

### ***Year in Summary***

#### ***Student Population***

Careers HS students have serious mental health, emotional and behavioral issues. Our 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 credit.

#### ***Interventions***

Throughout the 2014 - 2015 school year, a total of 50 students were enrolled in the Careers High School. Seventy four percent of the students were on daily medications and 28% of our students experienced psychiatric hospitalizations during the course of the school year. 23% of enrolled students were involved with Department of Mental Health (DMH) and

32% of our students were involved with the Department of Children and Families; 29% of our students were involved with the court system. (please see Table 1) These interventions represent a slight decrease from the previous year, except for a slight increase in DCF involvement.

*Table 1. Interventions*

Medication	74%	DCF Involvement	32%
Psych Hospitalization	28%	DMH Involvement	23%
Court Involvement	29%		

*Mental Health Diagnoses*

The 2014-2015 student population in Careers HS had a variety of mental health diagnoses, including Depressive Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, PTSD, Anxiety Disorders, Substance Abuse and Schizophrenia. There were no significant increases or decreases in the numbers of students with these various disorders. There is a continued gradual trend from the prior year of fewer students in Careers HS who exhibit behavioral aggression and more students who carry diagnoses on the Autism Spectrum and present with anxiety and depression.

*Programmatic Changes*

Various changes that developed throughout the 2014-2015 year included weekly Educators Evaluation teacher meetings with the Program Director as they developed and calibrated rubrics utilizing Academic Merit as a measurement tool for student learning. This has become the base for the student growth goal. In a parallel process, the teachers began year one of a two-year growth plan in their own evaluations. Also, along with other programs in SSEC, Careers HS implemented a data system, MMS. This has been cumbersome but will be an effective and efficient method to track student information, including but not limited to student grades, progress reports, and attendance. We began the year with a new Administrative Assistant, Abby Mann, and without a science teacher. One of the paraprofessionals, Ryan Cirillo, began to intermittently cover the science class. It became clear that he had skill and strengths in this area, so he pursued his initial licensure with DESE and was then able to be hired as a science teacher late in the year.

## Community School Annual Report 2014-2015

### **Description of Program, Student Population & Staff**

The **Community School** is a day school located at 75 Abington Street & 40 Pond Park Road in Hingham, serving students ages 3-21 with multiple disabilities who may also have complex medical needs or behavioral challenges. The program uses a standards based curriculum which is linked to the Federal Common Core and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. It integrates a functional, developmental and academic curriculum which has been aligned with the Federal Common Core. Students enter the general education curriculum through access and entry points with some at grade level content. Through the use of an explicit curriculum based on thematic interdisciplinary units as well as standards based math and reading instructional programs, the students are able to access the general education curriculum while working on skills related to communication, activities of daily living, academics, social/emotional development, behavioral management, vocational and leisure/recreational. Technology is an integral component within the program. It is embedded throughout all aspects which supports increased independence, partial participation and greater access to the world around. This includes the use of many advanced communication devices along with some of the latest technology available to support our students. The program embraces the principles of universal design through curriculum and environmental accommodations available to all students in addition to individualized supports. Through the use of this design, the students have consistent access to the environment as well as access to learning. Applied behavioral analysis methodology is used and integrated based on the individualized needs of the student. ABA methodology supports discrete trial training followed by opportunities to apply skills in natural settings. ABA is embedded into the routines and instruction.

**40 Pond Park Road** currently houses the Community Transitional High School program. There is a strong commitment to community based and community referenced instruction. Students explore various leisure activities, vocational internships; and engage in a variety of skills to practice greater independence in the community, with a strong focus on safety and communication. There is an integrated transitional curriculum which is coordinated across the middle and high school classrooms. Students transitioning into adult services are supported in visits to their new program in ease this significant change in their daily lives. The greenhouse and adaptive book & lending library are located at this facility.

**Curriculum:** The Community School uses a number of specialized curricula to support student learning. Individualized accommodations and modifications are applied based on student need with extensive use of assistive technology to improve access. Some of the formalized curricula includes;

1. Equals Math (access points to grade level along with extensive online materials)
2. Number World (elementary grade level hands on math program)
3. Ablenet STEM program (differentiated into three levels with additional online adapted books)

4. ALL(Accessible Literacy Learning) reading program (adapted reading program for students using picture symbols or combinations of pictures and words).
5. Animated Literacy Reading Program
6. Reading A-Z (online program)
7. First Author writing program
8. Writing Without Tears
9. Unique Learning Systems differentiated fully adapted integrated units
10. News 2 You adapted readers

In addition to these structured programs, the teachers supplement with a variety of thematic integrated activities to enhance student learning and support more effective progress.

### **Community Based Instruction Content**

All students given parental/guardian permission are eligible to participate in the expansive community based instruction programming. Beginning in preschool, students attend regular field trips related to the curriculum with focus on additional skills such as 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 for the school & school store
2. Leisure based opportunities
3. Multiple vocational internships are provided for high school students
4. Banking

**Program staff & services include;** special education teachers, reading specialist, vision, deafblind, orientation & mobility services, direct assistive technology services, paraprofessionals, speech, physical & occupational therapists, two fulltime registered nurses, a licensed practical nurse, social worker, adaptive physical education teacher, music therapist, fulltime BCBA, fulltime masters level behaviorist and a part-time masters level behaviorist. We also offer yoga, therapeutic swimming and therapeutic riding.

The program offers additional services including; onsite wheelchair/equipment repair and ordering, splinting and other equipment needs including free trials prior to purchase. The Children's Hospital Communication Enhancement Clinic holds clinics at the school to work more closely with each student's team. 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.

Program hours from August/September to June are 9:00am to 3:30pm. with the exception of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of each month which are early dismissals at 12:00pm. This provides times for professional development programs. The program follows a public school calendar from September to June with the addition of a 7-week summer program.

## Home Based Services:

The Community school provides direct home supports for students deemed eligible through their individualized educational planning process. These include but are not limited to;

1. Direct behavioral supports including individual ABA services.
2. Intensive Toilet Training (Preschool through 21 years)
3. Parent training
4. Transition supports which may focus;
  - a. Safety in the home and community
  - b. Independent living skills in the home
  - c. Behavioral supports & functional communication training
  - d. Social skills supports
5. Vision services
6. Orientation & Mobility services
7. Direct home programming on a case by case basis

## Program Outcomes

1. The Community School will provide increased professional development time and support to teachers around MCAS Alternative Assessment preparation and data collection by scheduling work based meetings with secured laptops away from the classrooms, times for data review, organization times and peer mentoring opportunities.
  - a) Meetings were successfully scheduled through the school year where teachers were able to leave their classrooms, use the reserved laptops and receive administrative/supervisory support to work on the MCAS Alt. Teachers reported positive feedback on this practice. It will be continued in the next school year.
  - b) The Community School Program Coordinators provided additional support and data review at preplanned checkpoints. This led to better MCAS Alt. preparation and supported finalizing the portfolio for the earlier administrative submission date set by the School administration.
  - c) Teachers had planned opportunities to consult with each other around student data and collection of evidence.
  - d) These additional supports made the information received from the Statewide MCAS Alt. training more easy to implement and integrate into classroom practices.
2. The Community School will trial the new teacher evaluation system using TeachPoint from start to finish.
  - a) TeachPoint trainings were provided at the beginning of the school year with updates throughout.
  - b) DESE licensed professionals had both group and 1:1 meetings throughout the year to assist in goals setting as well as to monitor progress.
  - c) The appropriate number of observations was completed based on the assessment track assigned.

- d) Professionals were able to upload artifacts to the TeachPoint system to provide evidence towards goal attainment.
- e) Data from the evaluations was used to target programmatic and goal areas for the upcoming year including an ongoing priority on consistent collection of student data.
- f) Overall staff was timely in submissions and follow through on all aspects of the evaluation system.

3. Progress note tracking system will be put into place to improve efficiency of the overall process as well as dissemination to all appropriate parties.

- a) After each IEP meeting, the teacher completes the tracking form which notes progress reporting periods, changes to the draft IEP and any other information requiring follow-up.
- b) Progress reporting changed to follow IEP cycle to more accurately reflect student progress.
- c) Formal yearly tracking system in place to ensure proper dissemination.

4. The Community School will have a successful Coordinated Program Review by DESE and implement all appropriate changes as needed.

- a) Community School had a total of 3 partially implemented indicators which were corrected immediately.
- b) Over 200 trainings were provided to staff as documented in the review during one school year which included both paraprofessionals and professionals.
- c) As a result of the review, we have new tracking systems in place to better prepare for future responses;
  - a. Improved behavioral tracking overall and updated systems in place and implemented prior to changes in regulations.
  - b. Formalized tracking of trainings by category and targeted audience.

5. The Community School will expand inclusion opportunities in collaboration with our districts and other Collaborative programs to support varied educational opportunities and to support returning to the district when appropriate.

- a. Collaboration with districts with creative scheduling to support integration into the local school while providing intensive therapies at the Collaborative.
- b. Integration into the QUEST program to support grade level access for Community Students.
- c. Integration with 1:1 support provided by the Community School into the district for access to typical peers, socialization and grade level content.

**MINI-SCHOOL PROGRAM  
ANNUAL REPORT  
Mary Scott, Program Director  
2014-2015**

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 for forty years, joining the South Shore Educational Collaborative in 1987. During the 2014-2015 school year the Mini-School provided educational services to 67 students in classrooms located at the Chapman School in Weymouth, Scituate High School in Scituate, at the Collaborative main building in Hingham and in Hull at the Jacobs School, Memorial Middle School and Hull High School. 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.

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, adapted physical education, and yoga. Students also attend a swim program on Tuesday mornings in Weymouth at the Connell Pool every other week from October – May. The Mini-School hours are 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM Monday – 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 – Thursday, 8:30 AM - 2:45 PM. Staff trainings are held on Thursdays during the school year, following early dismissal, once a month. At the beginning of the school year, all staff received training in NAPPI (Non-Abusive Psychological and Physical Intervention) to de-escalate behavioral issues both before and when they occur in a safe, humane and effective manner.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

**Delineation of Mini School Staff**

Position	FTE
Program Director	1.0
BCBA/Assistant Program Director	1.0
Assistant Program Director	1.0
Parent Home Consultants (2)	1.6
Teachers	12.
Clinician	1.0
Occupational Therapists (2)	1.6
OT Assistants	1.0
Physical Therapist	0.61
Physical Therapy Assistant	0.61
Expressive Therapists (2)	0.40

Speech Therapists (3)	2.71
Adaptive PE Teacher	1.0
Paraprofessionals	22.0
Nurses	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>44.84</b>

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Traditionally, the Mini-School has served students on the autism spectrum who present with developmental delays. Over the past 10 years the Mini-School has expanded to serve students on the autism spectrum in grades 1 – 11 who function at or close to their grade level. Last year, a class was added to the Mini-School to accommodate high school students who, although they are able to complete grade level work, do not possess the socialization skills necessary to be educated in their home districts. This new classroom, located at the Collaborative main building in Hingham, served 5 students during the 2014-2015 school year. Three students were given the opportunity to attend some classes at South Shore High School. At the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, the Language Enhancement Program, located at the Chapman School in Weymouth, became part of the Mini-School program. The Language Enhancement Program served 9 students with severe language and learning disorders. Students have been diagnosed with disorders such as Asperger’s Syndrome, Dyslexia, Language Based and Non Verbal Learning Disabilities. Many students carry a secondary diagnosis related to anxiety, depression, and social difficulties as well as medical and psychiatric disorders. A clinician was added to the Mini-School staff to work with these students as well as other students attending the Mini-School.

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 Massachusetts core curriculum. Students are assessed for MCAS each year by either on demand testing or by portfolio assessment at their chronological grade level according to the state model. Students on the autism spectrum 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. Although about 40% of students on the autism spectrum have average or above average intellectual abilities, the remaining students exhibit cognitive deficits and will need some level of support throughout their lives. During the 2014-2015 school year, 14 Mini-School students participated in MCAS testing by alternate assessment. Students with significant cognitive disability are eligible to participate in MCAS-Alt in all content areas. Completed portfolios were submitted to the Department of Secondary and Elementary Education in the spring of 2015. Student work can receive incomplete, awareness, emerging and progressing scores. The Mini-School has consistently exceeded state averages for overall progressing MCAS scores. Twenty-four Mini-School students also participated in on demand testing with accommodations in grades 3 – 10.

During the 2014-2015 school year, the youngest Mini-School students (grades 1-5) attended school in four classrooms at the Jacobs School in Hull. At this school, students are given the opportunity to eat in the cafeteria, attend school functions, use the library and gymnasium, be included in computer, gym, music and some academic classes with support from Mini-School



staff. 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 is provided throughout the school day. Visual schedules, timers, topic boards, positive behavior programs and social stories help organize the students' day as well as remind them of classroom expectations. Mathematics is 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 Reading Naturally Live as well as instruction in phonics and spelling. A highlight of the school year occurred in April when students from the Jacobs School were able to attend the Big Apple Circus presentation geared for students with autism. This trip was made possible by a grant from the Evan Henry Foundation.

Middle school classrooms continue to be located at the Chapman School in Weymouth and 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. Students went to the cafeteria on a daily basis as well as the gymnasium for adapted physical education classes. Some students were mainstreamed for gym, science, mathematics, social studies and music classes. At Memorial Middle School, Mini-School students performed the recycling tasks for the school on a weekly basis. Eighth grade students in the Language Enhancement class located at the Chapman School participated in field trips two times a month which emphasized functional life skills such as shopping for clothes and groceries, going to a restaurant, and learning how businesses run.

Planning for transition to adulthood is a major component of the curriculum for our high school students. During the 2014-2015 school year, 23 high school students attended the Mini-School classrooms in both Hull High School and Scituate High School. Emphasis is placed on helping students prepare for adulthood. 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. Students worked with job coaches at Stop and Shop, Papa Gino's, Roche Bros., Cohasset Community Center, Holly Hill Farm and Road to Responsibility. Students at Hull High School operated the school store and greenhouse. Community and social experiences are an integral part of the high school curriculum. Students go to the Hanover Y two afternoons a week and use the fitness rooms in both schools. Field trips to stores and restaurants occur weekly. A highlight of the school year occurred in May when the Mini-School held its annual walkathon and barbeque for high school and middle school students. Six Mini-School students turned 22 during the 2014-2015 school year. Three of these students completed their entire educational career at the Mini-School, starting at age 3 and graduating on their 22<sup>nd</sup> birthdays. Mini-School staff work closely with parents and adult service providers to ensure a smooth transition from school to adult programming.

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

**QUEST PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT FY 2015**  
**Jennie Williams, Program Coordinator**  
**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 issues. 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 grow and diversify. 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 disorder as a primary or secondary diagnosis. Anxiety disorders (post-traumatic stress disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, school phobia, and obsessive compulsive disorder) as well as mood disorders (bipolar disorder and depression) comprise other prevalent disorders. These disorders, along with diagnosed specific learning disabilities, make learning a challenge for the majority of our students. Many students struggle to attend school on a daily basis. Once in school, the inability to remain focused combined with mood swings 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 a functional, remedial and academic curriculum which has been aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and integrated with the Common Core.

The Quest Program increased from having 7 to 8 classrooms permanently for the 2014-2015 school year. The number of classrooms had increased from 7 to 8 in the spring of 2014 and, given enrollment, remained at 8 classrooms for the school year. In addition to having students in eight classrooms, five eighth graders also transitioned to either South Shore High or Careers for their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year in the fall of 2014. The students who transitioned continued to require a therapeutic school setting, but no longer required the intensive behavioral support provided in the Quest Program. This transition has been positive for the students and also created openings for new students with significant emotional and behavioral needs.

Along with transitioning some 8<sup>th</sup> graders, in the spring of this school year, we were again referred several students in kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The Quest Program was full at that time, but we recognized the need for these young students to be in a safe and supportive school setting. In April, Quest opened a classroom that served four grade K and 1 students for the remainder of the school year. With some creativity and flexibility on the part of the Quest staff, these students were able to access the therapeutic, academic, and behavioral supports

available to all Quest students. This classroom was very successful and we were pleased to be able to meet the needs of these students and their sending districts. All four of these students continued to be part of the Quest Program past the end of the school year. We operated at 9 classrooms through the end of the school and went back to 8 Quest classrooms for the 2015-2016 school year.

There were some changes made this school year regarding **program staff and service**. For the 2014-2015 school year our staff included: 7 full time certified special needs teachers, 2 part time certified special needs teachers, a part-time PE/Health teacher, 9 classroom aides, 2 part time reading teachers, 3 full time and one 0.8 time school based clinicians, a clinical psychology intern, a social work intern, a part time occupational therapist, a full time speech and language therapist, and a part time assistive technology teacher. Quest also continued to access the services of two certified art teachers and a music therapist on a part time basis. The behavioral needs of the students were served by a behavioral team comprised of a full time milieu coordinator and four behavioral aides. An administrative assistant, a full time and a part time school nurse, clinical director, a food service director and two food service aides are shared with two 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 September to June are 8:30am to 2:50pm. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Every Wednesday, students are dismissed at 12:50pm. This provides times 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 loss of previously learned skills.

### **Program Development for the 2014-2015 School Year**

This year, the Quest Program continued to implement and expand upon the initiatives begun during previous years. We welcomed a new doctoral psychology intern and a social work intern. This stability in staffing and in programming allowed us to build on the positive changes implemented the year before. We have continued to offer Health, PE, art and music which has allowed us to create a more well-rounded education for Quest students. These additions also continued to provide Quest classroom teachers consistent planning and consultation time. This time served two very important purposes. It has provided teachers with time to plan and prepare lessons as well as allowed teachers the necessary time to consult with therapists and other related services providers. Quest staff members have commented that this time to collaborate has allowed both teachers and specialists the space and time to talk about students and focus lessons and interventions on individual student needs.

### **Data Collection**

In our ongoing effort to demonstrate efficacy in our program, we have continued to devote considerable resources to data collection. More specifically, we again collected all of our data into the Google Docs format. We are using Google forms to collect data in a variety areas including time on task, use of sensory breaks, behavioral interventions, and student's IEP

goals. In doing so, we have increased our abilities to analyze and synthesize our data. Providing this data has allowed all disciplines (educators, therapists and behavioral staff) to tailor and to focus their approaches and interventions with our students. Importantly, at our IEP meetings we have been able to present collected data in a visually and readily understandable format for parents and district colleagues. Lastly, adopting more stringent data collection measures has enabled us to keep pace with the current emphasis in the Massachusetts Professional Development Initiative.

### **Classroom Pods**

At the core of service delivery in the Quest Program is the “pod” model. Each of the eight 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 aide, 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 drafting 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 psychiatrists, prior to a student’s appointment, through structured online communication forms. Now in its fifth year, the pod model has evolved to incorporate the data collection completed by all 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 four “settling” rooms, two quiet study rooms, a sensory room, a comfort room, an office for the milieu coordinator and an office for the behavioral aides. The behavioral space in our school building was designed to be safe and also 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. Behavioral data collected throughout the year generated very positive trends. Quest students continued to take advantage of the available sensory strategies, Quiet Study and spaces for self-time outs in order to help them remain in class using these rooms more than 3,000 times during the course of the year.

The Quest Program also continued to benefit from the shift made three years ago from CPI to the NAPPI, Int. NAPPI stands for Non-Aggressive Psychological and Physical Intervention.

The primary reason the program switched to NAPPI is that their program's floor restraint is safer for students and staff. This program also provides more staff training in de-escalation and psychological intervention than previous programs. The switch to NAPPI, along with minimal turnover of the program's behavioral staff, has coincided with a significant decrease in the use of physical restraint in the Quest Program. The total number of physical restraints was reduced from 110 in 2011-2012 to 16 during the 2014-2015 school year. However, we continued to utilize the NAPPI assist 289 times to safely move students from one location to another. Despite these positive trends, reducing the need for physical restraint continues to be an important goal of the Quest Program even as we service students with some of the most challenging behaviors. In an effort to meet this goal, and also comply with the upcoming changes to DESE's regulations regarding the use of physical restraint, three members of the Quest staff attended training in March 2015 on the new guidelines.

### **Social Skills Curriculum**

As a program, we adopted the Social Thinking® Curriculum in 2010 and the language and concepts of the curriculum continued 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 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. 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 at conferences led by M.G. Winner and her staff. The Quest Speech and Language pathologist has also begun 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 and students throughout the program are learning to match the size of their reaction to the size of the problem. In addition, weekly planning time was 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 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.

### **Bully 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 was discussed at one of the Parent Support Group Meetings and was covered in the classrooms during Health classes and Social Thinking Groups.

In addition to meeting the requirements of the bullying prevention law, staff continues to work with students to identify both potential targets and potential bullies. We address this issue in social skills groups, in individual therapy sessions, and in IEP goals to ensure that Quest is a safe and respectful environment for all students.

### **Student Activities & Learning**

Quest teachers continued to present lessons that integrated functional, remedial and academic curriculum which has been aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and integrated with the Common Core. 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. This music program was very successful and will be continued during the upcoming school year. Not only did students participate in a weekly music class, our music therapist helped organize students from Quest and other programs to sing holiday carols at a local nursing home. Quest was also pleased to provide an opportunity for students from the Community Program to be included into our classrooms for both academic instruction and social skills groups.

Quest students participated in an educational field trip to the Franklin Park Zoo in September and visited a corn maze and pumpkin patch during October. Quest students were also able to participate in Halloween activities organized by our South Shore High School Program. In November, we held our annual Thanksgiving Feast, which was attended by over two hundred parents and extended families this year. As usual, the teamwork of the entire staff made this a great success. The entire Quest community takes an active role in either preparation of the food, decorating the gym or helping cleanup afterwards. Students and staff from South Shore High and Careers also help with serving the meal. The sense of community is carried over to the interactions with the parents and their extended families. Many parents have commented on how welcome they feel at this event and look forward to it each year.

Quest students went caroling at a local nursing home for the winter holidays and then celebrated the Winter Solstice with a brunch here at school. We also held a Holiday Bazaar in the gym. This project was a fundraiser for the Quest Student Fund while also providing an opportunity for students to do holiday shopping for their families. Several activities and field trips planned in the winter and early spring had to be cancelled this year due to the number of snow days. Snow days and then the MCAS testing made it challenging to plan activities out of the building until warmer weather arrived. However, the Quest staff organized activities within their classrooms and we also had program wide activity days at the school. Individual classes took trips to the "Art of the Brick" in Boston and the Plymouth Monument. Another classroom held a fundraiser for Water for South Sudan. One class had the students use prediction and measurement skills to predict when the snow would finally melt from in front of the school building!

In the spring, our 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders participated in a ropes course to build relationships and trust among our current middle school students. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade students also took a trip to Providence to celebrate their graduation from middle school. Field Day was attended by most Quest students. Our gym teacher and the staff organized games and noncompetitive activities, such as tie-dying t-shirts. Again the entire Quest community was involved in the field day activities. This year's graduation of 8 eighth grade students was attended by the entire school as well as the student's family and friends. The graduation was held in the gym and was another opportunity to showcase the progress our students make throughout the year.

Quest also continued our relationship with Holly Hill Farm, with students visiting weekly to learn about growing organic vegetables and caring for the farm animals. A farmer from Holly Hill also visited our school and helped our 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders plant their own garden and learn how to compost. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class also hatched chickens this spring. These are just some of the learning opportunities and activities available to Quest students this year.

### **Summer Program:**

The 2014 Summer Program was very successful, with 58 students enrolled. This was a significant increase from 46 students the previous summer. Students participated in a variety of field trips as well as spending time in the classroom reviewing skills they had learned the previous school year.

### **Home and Community Involvement:**

This year we continued to place an emphasis on parent involvement. Daily communication logs were sent home and returned with a required parent signature to strengthen the communication between home and school. Classroom pod members also had weekly phone 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 to the weekly communication, parent council meetings were held.

This school year we again offered a Quest Parent/Guardian Support Group. The group was co-facilitated by two clinicians. The purpose of this group is to keep parents informed of the happenings at Quest, such as the new social skills curriculum, as well as provide a forum for parents to get support and share strategies and resources. Childcare was provided which increased participation.

In addition, families were included in the Thanksgiving feast and graduation as described above.

### **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 begun to provide in-home behavioral services to current and former 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.

### **Coordinated Program Review**

During the course of the 2014-2015 school year, SSEC underwent a Coordinated Program Review with DESE. The Quest Program participated fully in this process. As the CPR is a new process for collaborative schools, this process was challenging but also quite informative and rewarding. It provided a good opportunity to fully review policies and procedures while also showcase the quality work being done in the program. We were pleased to be able to show our visitors from DESE the excellent teaching and learning that is happening in Quest. Teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators and a therapist all took part in interviews during the site visit. We were also pleased to that our visitors were able to observe academic instruction as well as a Social Thinking group. The findings of the CPR were incredibly positive, with only three areas to be addressed. In cooperation with DESE, the Quest Program plans to address all findings by the end of the school year.

### **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 was given an iPad to use for instruction, data collection and accessing teach point and working on the DESE evaluation. Students continue to use iPads to support their learning. A set of 9 student iPads continues to be shared among the classrooms. A schedule was created and teachers were able to sign out the iPads for classroom use. Teachers utilized the iPads for interactive lessons and classes also read books on the iPads using Bookshare. Staff were given time to swap useful sites and apps with each other. Each Quest classroom continues to have an interactive white board along with at least two desktop computers. Students are able to access the computer lab several times a week as well as a set of laptops that can be used in the classrooms. Teachers had access to an Instructional Technology consultant who was available to provide 1:1 support and training. Members of the Tech Committee also provided training in available technology to interested staff members.

### **Quest School Handbook:**

A school handbook was revised before school reopened in the fall of 2015. 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. The handbook is included in this report.



## Year in Summary

In total, the Quest Program serviced 79 students in total this school year. We began the school year with 55 students and ended the year with 67 students. The 79 students that we serviced came from a total of 30 different school systems.

We serviced 21 S.T.A.R.T.S. students (45 day assessments). One student returned to their sending school after the assessment period, three students required different school setting and 17 students remained at the Quest Program for the remainder of the school year. One of these students was able to return to their sending district for the start of the 2015-16 school year.

During the school year 1 student required a more restrictive setting and 11 moved to more appropriate day school settings. Over the course of the school year, 8 students returned to their sending district. In June we graduated eight 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Of the 8 students, 4 students attend South Shore High School and 1 student attends the Careers Program at the South Shore Educational Collaborative. Two students returned to their sending district for high school and one returned to a less restrictive setting. In total, 11 students (14 percent of those serviced) were able to return to their sending district from the Quest Program.

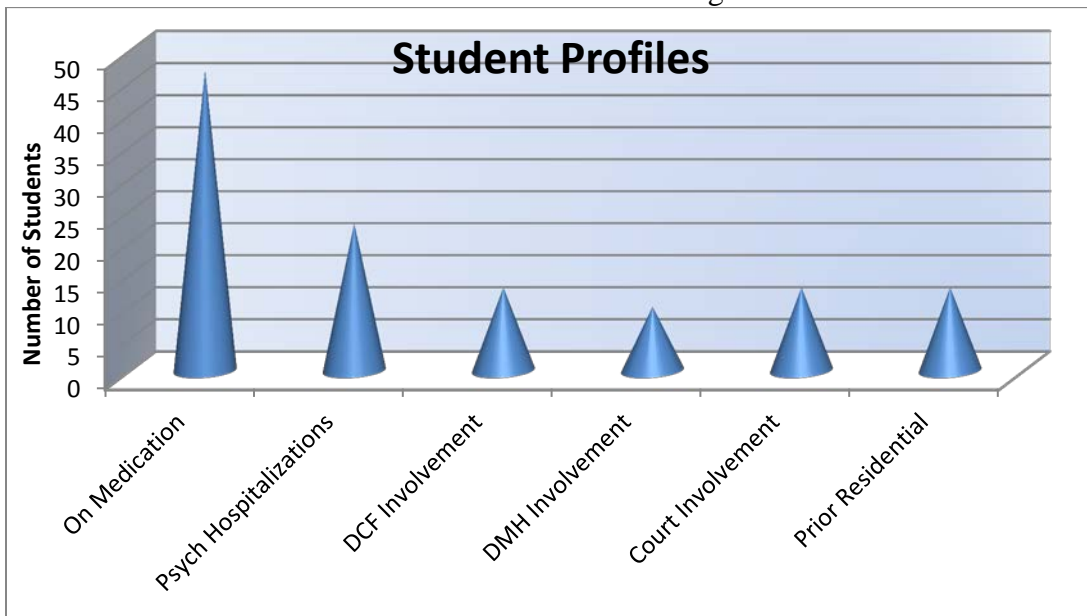
Quest had a steadily increasing enrollment over the course of the school year. The enrollment was at capacity by the end of the school year even with the addition of another classroom. Numbers continued to grow over the summer of 2015 and Quest began the 2015-2016 school year with 67 students.

**REPORT FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR  
SOUTH SHORE HIGH SCHOOL  
2014-2015**

**Program Description, Students, and Staff**

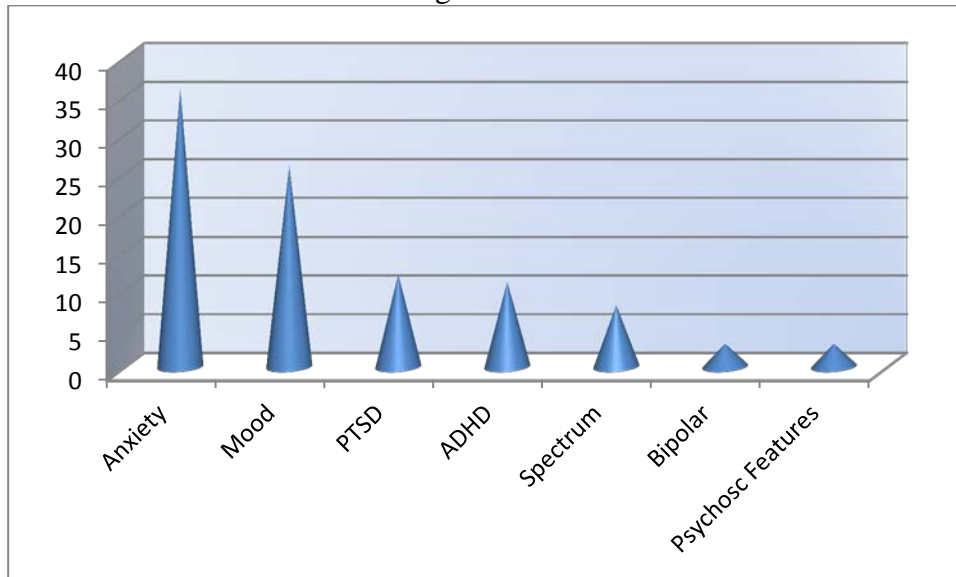
Students referred to South Shore High have emotional, behavioral, and academic problems that make it difficult for them to function in a larger, less structured environment. All of the students have special needs as defined by Chapter 766. Most students have complicated lives with a number of agencies involved in their treatment. Table One provides a visual representation of the services represented by our students. Ninety-three percent of this year’s students are prescribed medication to help them manage their diagnoses. Fifty-three percent have received treatment in a psychiatric hospital. Twenty-six percent of this year’s students have DCF involvement and twenty-five percent have DMH involvement. Twenty-three percent of this year’s students have court involvement, predominately due to CHINS petitions. Twenty-one percent of students have prior or current out-of-home placements.

Table 1  
Student Profiles at South Shore High School



The great majority of the students at South Shore High have one or more major diagnoses which impact their ability to learn in a less restrictive setting. Most students carry a diagnosis of anxiety (sixty-five percent), coupled with a mood disorder (forty-six percent). Major depression is a common diagnosis, along with dysthymic disorder and generalized mood disorder. The primary diagnosis for twenty-one percent of our students is post-traumatic stress disorder, while nineteen percent carries a diagnosis of attention deficit disorder. The percentage of students at South Shore High who are diagnosed with disorders on the autism spectrum is fourteen percent. Five percent of our students have been diagnosed with a bipolar disorder and five percent are diagnosed with psychotic features. A visual representing these statistics follows in Table 2.

Table 2  
Student Diagnoses at SSHS



The teaching staff (see Table 3) is all certified in their subject areas and the majority is certified in special education. Many students from South Shore High attend college after graduation so the teaching staff must be strong in their subject areas. They are trained to be aware of various learning styles and in methods of differentiating instruction. In addition the staff participates in workshops to enhance their skills. South Shore High has implemented a Transition Skills curriculum that begins in grade nine and that instructs students in developing the skills base to successfully transition after high school graduation. South Shore High offers behavioral support through the active development of a positive student climate. A doctoral level clinical psychologist supervises the milieu staff and works with the staff and the student population to increase the range of effective coping strategies to improve student functioning. The program offers formal and informal therapeutic support to students during the school day provided by LICSW therapists, as well as medication oversight by a board certified child and adolescent psychiatrist.

Table 3  
Staff of SSHS

Number of staff employed by discipline:

- 1 program director
- 1 Behavior Specialist/Assistant Program Director
- 8 Teachers
- 2 academic paraprofessionals
- .6 transition specialist
- .3 clinical director
- 3.2 therapists
- 6 milieu paraprofessionals
- .3 nurse

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Students:

A total of 57 students were in placement for all or part of this school year. Average monthly enrollment was as follows:

Table 4  
Monthly Enrollment

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South Shore High	
September 2014	53
October	52
November	46
December	48
January 2015	49
February	49
March	50
April	52
May	53
<b>June</b>	<b>52</b>

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This is an alternative educational and therapeutic program designed to meet the special needs of its student population. Principles of both CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) and CPS (Collaborative Problem Solving) are used in the work done with students. When a student exhibits struggles, the staff works with the student to determine what underlies the behavior, and to help the student understand triggers and effective coping strategies. A vital component of the school is teaching verbal communication skills. Students learn to accept constructive criticism and share feelings and emotions. They learn skills in conflict resolution and negotiation. A school-to-work component trains students in job readiness skills and assists in placing students at volunteer and paid employment sites.

Students are assigned courses designed to meet the graduation requirements from their sending school system. They are placed in classes according to their ability levels. Classes are small (8:1), with the majority of students “mainstreamed”, changing classes by subject. The curriculum at South Shore High is designed to model that of their public schools, as closely as possible considering the small size of the setting. In addition, students are offered options to take classes through online curriculum (Virtual Learning Academy), through independent study classes designed between the student and the teacher, or to take community-based college classes through dual enrollment or through a setting such as the MFA. Students use these options for credit recovery, to pursue a particular academic interest, or to bridge the skills needed to transition to post-secondary education. All students are encouraged to return to their sending school before graduation, but the severity of problems often makes South Shore High the least restrictive educational setting. Upon meeting the

graduation requirements of their sending school system, students graduate with a diploma from their sending school.

One of the classes at South Shore High is designed to work more with students who experience deficits in social pragmatics. The design of this classroom is more self-contained. The students remain in the classroom for three of their academic subjects, and they travel as a group, with the classroom paraprofessional, to their other three classes. This classroom generally serves students with significant social comprehension difficulties, generally students who have spectrum disorders. The class is called the Transition Room, as the focus is preparing students to transition into more mainstreamed classes as they demonstrate readiness.

### Program Outcome Evaluation

A review of this year's outcomes indicates that approximately between eighty-seven and ninety-seven percent of our students have been able to achieve the goals outlined in our program outcomes. Important in understanding the statistical outcomes is the fact that the students referred to South Shore High were experiencing significant difficulties in these identified areas before placement, often receiving failing grades, refusing to attend school, earning numerous suspension days, and/or spending significant periods of time in a psychiatric setting. Many students who do not reach the desired level of attendance and credit are still achieving significantly higher standards than they were before placement. The strong attendance outreach component has contributed to the number of students meeting program outcomes.

### Program Evaluation and Outcomes

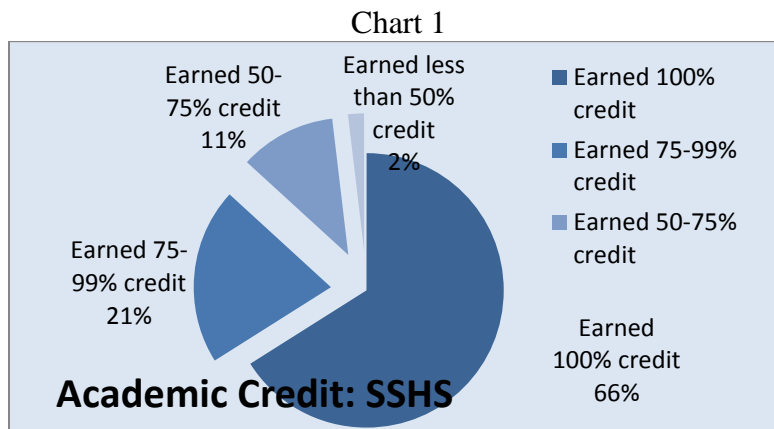
In line with the school's Mission Statement, student progress is monitored by the following program outcomes:

- The student will receive passing grades and earn academic credit in courses.
- The student will maintain at least 80% attendance.
- The student will receive the supports and interventions necessary to avoid receiving out of school suspensions.
- The student will demonstrate clinical stability by maintaining or improving their functioning as determined by the GAF (Global Assessment of Functioning).

Analysis and Discussion of Evaluation By Outcome:

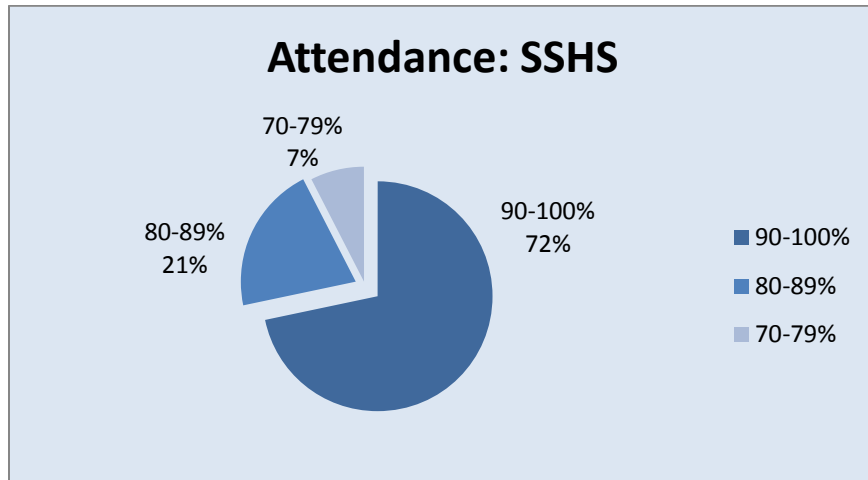
- Outcome One: The student will receive passing grades and earn academic credit in courses.
- See Chart 1 for a delineation of this outcome. Performance on Outcome One is strong as indicated by data from final report cards, showing mastery of Outcome One. Sixty-six percent of the students earned 100% of their academic credit. Twenty-one percent earned 75-99% of their credit, 11 percent earned 50-74% of

their credit and two percent earned less than 50% of their credit. As would be expected, student performance on this outcome is closely correlated with their attendance rate. The low staff to student ratio and the myriad of interventions available to students at South Shore High allow students who have previously been unsuccessful academically to experience academic success and to find hope for their futures.



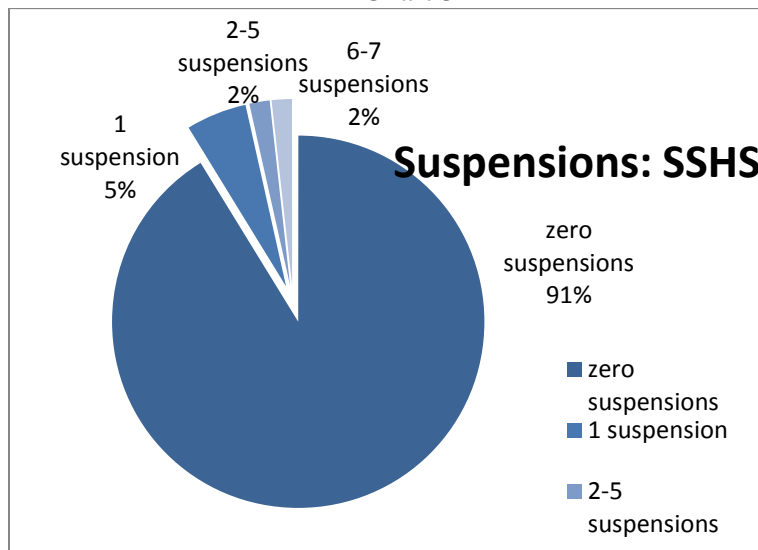
- Outcome Two: The student will maintain at least 80% attendance.
- See chart 2 for a detailing of this outcome. School attendance records yield the data regarding attendance. Performance on Outcome Two at South Shore High is strong, with ninety-three percent of the student population able to meet the stated outcome. The records indicate that seventy-two percent of the student population showed an attendance rate of 90% or higher. Twenty-one percent of the students attended between 80 and 89% of the time. Seven percent attended between 70 and 79% of the time. Many students enrolled at SSHS demonstrated chronic truancy before entering placement. The results of this data are in large part due to the aggressive and comprehensive attendance outreach program that involves daily calls and in-home interventions for truant and school phobic students.

Chart 2



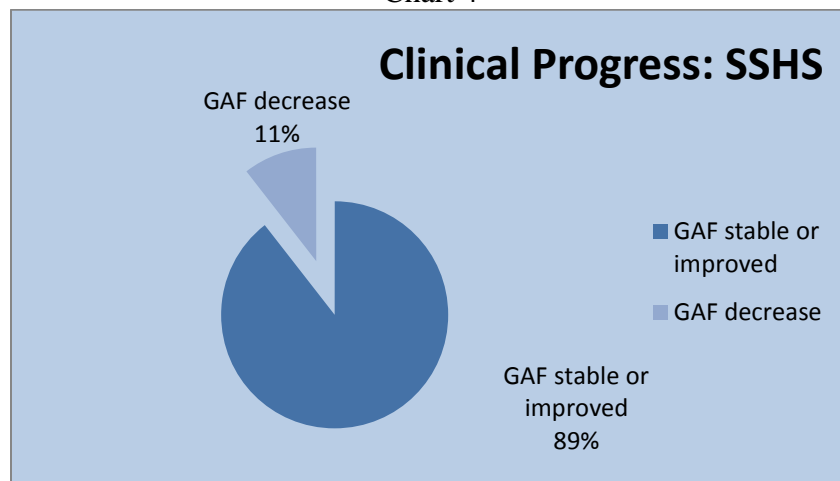
- Outcome Three: The student will receive the supports and interventions necessary to avoid receiving out of school suspensions.
- See Chart 3 for a depiction of this outcome. The data on Outcome Three indicates that ninety-one percent of our students were able to meet this goal. Five percent of the students received one suspension day, two percent received two suspension days, and two percent received seven suspension days. An analysis of the data regarding suspensions indicates that the majority of suspensions occur during the initial months of placement, when students are still learning to trust that staff will be able to assist them in problem solving. The great majority of suspensions are for actions taken due to difficulty finding effective coping strategies. There is a significant decrease in suspensions when a student has been in placement long enough to learn their triggers and better responses.

Chart 3



- Outcome 4: The student will demonstrate clinical stability by maintaining or improving their functioning as determined by their GAF score.
- Data in Chart 4 supports that Outcome Four was met. In order to assess the clinical progress of students enrolled in South Shore High School, the Global Assessment of Functioning Rating Scale is used. The GAF scale is the accepted measurement tool for functioning within the mental health field and is contained in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV-R). In September each student is assigned a GAF score. At the conclusion of the school year the Clinical Team reconvenes, re-evaluates functioning level, and assigns a revised GAF score. Data indicates that this year eighty-nine percent of the student population demonstrated stability or improvement in their GAF score.

Chart 4



### **Significant Achievements for the Year**

This has been a year of significant growth at South Shore High School. The following notes highlights of the year:

- South Shore High fully embraced the use of positive behavioral strategies, and saw a continued decrease in the number of suspensions earned by students. This year there was one significant incident where a student received a seven day out of school suspension. With this one exception, only three other students earned suspension days and these were served in school, allowing the students to receive all services during their suspension. Staff works hard to ensure that they develop strong, supportive relationships with students so that they are able to assist students in exploring their triggers and developing the strategies that help them solve their difficulties without engaging in problem behaviors.
- This year South Shore High teachers incorporated the Six Traits of Writing program across the curriculum, integrating this best practice writing program into all content



areas and beginning to assess student growth in the important area of written expression by using a common language and school-wide rubrics. Teachers engaged in professional development, improving their skills in instructing the writing process, and our students began to show substantial growth in the essential area of written communication.

- Thirty percent of the South Shore High student population either earned their high school diploma or returned to their sending schools last year.
- Nine students successfully completed assessments placements at South Shore High during the 2014-2015 school year, a significant increase in numbers from previous years.
- The transition programming provided for students increased during the past year. The range of transition skill classes presented grew and students were offered a wider scope of shadowing and community service opportunities within the school day. During the summer session a group of students were offered a full day transition curriculum that involved developing a small business from the initial stages of planning, surveying needs, ordering and production to evaluation.
- During the 2014-2015 school year there was increased collaboration between the programs at SSEC. Students in the Mini School and in the Careers Program took classes at South Shore High when it would be a good fit and would expand their educational opportunities.
- The science teacher applied for and received a grant which allowed the building and development of a Wellness Garden. This project was incorporated into the Botany curriculum and provided students with the experience of planning and implementing a garden project, maintaining it through the summer session, and harvesting in the fall. Students were involved in use of the produce through our culinary arts program and had the pleasure of enjoying the harvest along with the many compliments they received.
- Two teachers at South Shore High were trained in developing online curriculum and developed courses to be offered through the Virtual Learning Academy during the 2015-2016 school year.
- Three staff members chaperoned a trip to the 911 Memorial in New York City for the senior class. It was a meaningful trip and many seniors spoke of it as the highlight of their high school years. The senior class also managed several fundraising projects which helped with the funding of this trip and with the costs associated with their senior prom, held on the Spirit of Boston.
- SSEC completed the Coordinated Program Review in the spring of 2015. While the preparation and process took considerable time and energy, it was an opportunity to

showcase the wonderful work done in our program and staff felt very proud of their work.

### **Home and Community Involvement**

Parents are encouraged to take an active part in their children's education. Regular communication by email, phone, and mail is maintained throughout the school year. Parents are called on a weekly basis, if not more frequently, for their input and to share information about progress and any concerns. Parents participate in yearly educational planning and are involved when changes occur in their child's educational program. An annual Open House is held, providing an opportunity for parents to experience their son/daughter's schedule. In addition parent conferences are held twice a year, in November and in February when parents are given an opportunity to meet the program teachers, therapists, and aides to discuss their child's performance.

Regular communication is maintained with the student's sending school system. School liaisons are kept informed on the progress and struggles of their students.

Many of our students are involved with outside agencies. It is important for the school, parents, and community agencies to support each other and coordinate efforts to better serve our students. Some of the agencies involved include:

Department of Children and Families  
Department of Mental Health  
Division of Youth Services  
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission  
South Shore Mental Health  
Hingham, Quincy, Brockton, Plymouth, Dedham Courts  
MARC (Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center)  
Norfolk County Sheriff's Department  
BayState Community Services  
Career One Stop  
Various treatment centers and hospitals throughout the region

**S.T.A.R.T.S. PROGRAM**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015**  
**Anne Rowland, Psy.D. Program Coordinator**

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The S.T.A.R.T.S. (Short-Term Assessment and Return to School) Program is an Alternative Interim Educational Setting (A.I.E.S.) which provides educational, psychological and psychiatric assessment for students who are having serious difficulties in their school and require evaluation to better understand their problem behavior and learning styles. It now accommodates students in grades K-12, for up to 45 school days, after which recommendations for future educational and psychiatric supports are made. For high school age students, STARTS Program students have been assessed while in small classrooms (8-10 students) within the South Shore High School (SSHS) or the Careers High School. Elementary and middle school age students are assessed while in small classrooms (7-8 students) within the Quest Program. In the past, some students have been evaluated while in the Mini School at Hull's Jacob's Elementary School, but this year there were no referrals appropriate for that program. STARTS students participate in and have access to all the activities and learning that are provided for all students within each age appropriate program. For example, opportunities for job interest exploration (graphic design and greenhouse, e.g.) are available through the Careers High School and are incorporated into the assessment. Careers 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. This was also the first year that Careers HS and SSHS began with an 8<sup>th</sup> grade class, thus being able to accommodate 8<sup>th</sup> grade STARTS referrals (five students) within the high schools.

The STARTS Program significantly increased its enrollment this year to 39 students for assessment; 27 males and 12 females. There continues to be significantly more males than females referred to STARTS over the years. Nine evaluations were completed within SSHS, 21 were completed in Quest, 8 were completed within the Careers High School Program, and one in Community Program. As evidence of the effort to share services within the building, four students began in one SSEC program and moved to another program in an effort to complete a more effective evaluation and better meet the students' needs. This was the beginning of greater collaboration between programs, a movement which has dramatically increased throughout the summer and into the fall of the 2015-16 academic year.

This was the ninth year that a pre-doctoral psychology level intern was placed at SSEC via the South Shore Mental Health internship program, which allowed STARTS to continue to assess elementary age students for evaluation. Within Quest, the intern, Arianna Body, completed 15 evaluations, Eric Steeves, LICSW completed one, and Lauren Brierley, PsyD, completed a partial evaluation (an agreement was made with the district that there would be no summary report written). Within Careers HS, Katelyn Hagan, LICSW, completed five evaluations and Mark Hall, LICSW, completed three. JP Riesman completed one evaluation within SSHS. This was the first year we added a part-time STARTS clinician

(P/T SSHS and P/T STARTS), Alli Mitchell, LCSW. She completed eight evaluations in SSHS, three in Quest, and two in Careers HS.

Referrals came either from districts' mainstream classrooms or their alternative classrooms within mainstream buildings (one came from being home schooled and one from a private school). This has been the twelfth operational year of the STARTS Program. In year one, 17 students were enrolled; year two, 9 were enrolled; year three, 17 were enrolled; year four, 14 were enrolled; year five, 22 were enrolled; year six, 20 were enrolled; year seven, 25; year eight, 29 were enrolled; year nine, 23 were enrolled; in year ten, 22 were enrolled; in year eleven, 17 were enrolled, and this year 39 were enrolled. This significant increase was most attributable to the addition of clinician Alli Mitchell and an increase in referrals.

This year, upon completion of the STARTS assessment, four students (10%) returned to their district school. Two students were referred to more restrictive programs after their STARTS assessment, one student transferred to a different Collaborative, and the remainder (82%) continued in SSEC in the program in which they were placed for evaluation (Quest, Careers, SSH), except for two who moved to the Mini School.

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, and this year 82% remained in SSEC programs after their STARTS evaluation.

Table 1  
Primary and Secondary Diagnoses of Students  
(DSM-IV and DSM-V)

<u>Primary and Secondary Diagnoses:</u>	<u>Number of Students/Year</u>			
	<u>'11-'12</u>	<u>'12-'13</u>	<u>'13 - '14</u>	<u>'14-'15</u>
Bipolar Disorder	0	0	1	1
Learning Disorder (Intell Dis)	3	3	1	3
Anxiety Dis/Social Phobia	7	6	5	10
PTSD(Spec'd Trauma)	2	2	2	5
ODD (DMDD)	10	7	6	7
Conduct Disorder	1	0	0	1
Substance Abuse	5	2	0	3
ADHD/ADD	6	5	2	12
PDD/Asperger's(ASD)	3	3	6	9
OCD	0	0	1	2
Mood Disorder/Dep'n	6	8	1	6
Personality Dis Traits	1	0	1	0
Social Comm'n Dis	n/a	n/a	n/a	2
Unspec'd Neuro Dis	n/a	n/a	n/a	1

The primary and secondary diagnoses are listed in the statistics chart (Table 1). All students presented with multiple diagnoses. Since most STARTS student receive an extensive psychiatric evaluation and diagnosis completed by Dr. Jeff Turley, there is consistency in the procedure. Of note, however, is the APA's publication of the DSM-V, which includes changes in diagnostic categories. The past two years have been transition years of utilizing both DSM-IV and DSM-V diagnoses; next year will utilize only DSM-V diagnoses only.

Despite the changes in diagnostic criteria between the DSM-IV and V, just looking at the categories of disorders, one can see there is a notable increase in PTSD, Anxiety and ADHD related disorders.

Table 2  
Enrollment by District

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>NUMBER of STUDENTS ENROLLED</u>				
	<u>'10-'11</u>	<u>'11-'12</u>	<u>'12-'13</u>	<u>'13-'14</u>	<u>'14-'15</u>
Abington	1	0	0	0	1
Barnstable	0	1	0	0	0
Braintree	6	5	4	1	3
Bridge/Rayn	0	1	0	1	0
Canton	3	0	0	0	0
Cohasset	0	1	2	0	0
Easton	3	0	0	0	1
Foxboro Reg Charter	0	0	0	0	1
Hanover	0	0	1	0	0
Hingham	1	0	1	0	4
Holbrook	0	0	1	0	0
Hull	2	3	1	3	5
Mansfield	0	0	0	0	1
Marshfield	0	1	0	0	1
Middleboro	0	1	1	0	0
Milton	1	1	1	1	1
Norwell	1	1	0	1	5
Pembroke	0	0	0	0	1
Plymouth	1	0	0	0	0
Quincy	1	0	1	1	3
Randolph	2	0	1	0	1
Scituate	2	2	1	3	0
Sharon	0	2	0	0	1
Silver Lake	0	0	2	2	1
South Shore VT	2	0	0	0	1

<b>Stoughton</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Walpole</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Westwood</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Weymouth</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Whitman/Han</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Wrentham</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**PROGRAM 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.

Again this year, STARTS had multiple repeat referrals (both within this year and from previous years) from districts (Table 2), indicating a level of satisfaction through meeting these goals for the districts. Referrals continue to come from member districts (27) and other surrounding towns (12) similar to previous years, including two districts/schools (Mansfield and Foxborough Regional Charter School) that had not referred to STARTS previously. Different this year was the need for the referring district to fund optional the psychiatric evaluation completed by Dr. Jeff Turley (instead of the family’s insurance being billed by South Shore Mental Health). Nearly all the districts requested the evaluation despite the increase cost.

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 enables STARTS to accept a greater range of students. This year included more cross-program sharing of resources than in past years, within the 75 Abington Street building.

There was significantly more opportunity to complete STARTS evaluations this year due to the increase in hours of a part-time STARTS clinician, as well as due to more STARTS referrals. Additionally, the transition of the two clinicians in Careers HS from South Shore Mental Health to SSEC employees allowed greater time and therefore more availability for them to complete STARTS evaluations.

As STARTS referrals continue to become more complex and demanding 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.