

# **SOUTH SHORE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE**

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

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

2017 - 2018

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SOUTH SHORE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE BOARD MEMBERS

2017 - 2018

Henry W. Perrin, Ed.D.	Executive Director
Frank Hackett, Ed.D. Superintendent	Braintree Public Schools
Louise Demas Superintendent	Cohasset Public Schools
Dorothy Galo, Ph.D. Superintendent, Vice-Chairperson	Hingham Public Schools
Michael Devine Superintendent	Hull Public Schools
Jeffrey Granatino Superintendent	Marshfield Public Schools
Matthew A. Keegan Superintendent	Norwell Public Schools
Richard DeCristofaro, Ed.D. Superintendent	Quincy Public Schools
Thomas Anderson Superintendent, Chairperson	Randolph Public Schools
Ron Griffin Superintendent	Scituate Public Schools
Jennifer Curtis Whipple, Ed.D. Superintendent	Weymouth Public Schools

STAFF OF THE SOUTH SHORE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE

2017 – 2018

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
Meghan Ritchie	Payroll
Patricia Mason	Community Program Director
Gina Manzo	Program Secretary
Maureen Gattine	Mini School Program Director
Karen Thomsen	Program Secretary
Timothy Handorf	Clinical Director
Amy Norton	South Shore High School Director
Tara Sepeck	Program Secretary
Jennie Williams	Quest Program Coordinator
Lisa Penzo-Johnson	Program Secretary
Anne Rowland	Careers Program Coordinator
Abigail Mann	Program Secretary
Dawn Flaherty, OTR/L	Director of Ancillary Services
Anne Rowland	STARTS Program Coordinator

## **1. Letter of Introduction**

This annual report is submitted by 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 2017- 2018 school year.

The SSEC primary location is 75 Abington Street in Hingham, MA. During the 2017-2018 school year SSEC classrooms were also located at Hull and Randolph Public Schools. The Randolph High School location has worked well for a Mini School classroom and additional classrooms were offered in Randolph to provide space for the high school age students who attended school at the 40 Pond Park building. A goal has been to maintain the newer, larger building for students who will benefit from that location and place as many students as possible in public school settings. The public school setting offers students the opportunity for inclusion and interaction with typical peers. Having both options provides the ability to meet the individual needs of more students. We have achieved the goal of having students in a leased contemporary primary location for most of the students with all other students attending classrooms in the member districts. This provides inclusion opportunities for students and is cost effective to the SSEC.

The Community School for students with complex physical, medical and educational needs has seen an increase in enrollment for several years. Since the move into the newer building, specially designed classrooms, physical and occupational therapy area, bathrooms, and a therapeutic pool 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 this building and have access to improved technology infrastructure, classroom space, culinary center, greenhouse and gymnasium.

In accordance with the law governing collaboratives, the administration of SSEC has been working to meet the requirements of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The submission of detailed student and staff data for DESE to analyze instructional practices is an ongoing process that administrative staff at SSEC has been completing in a timely manner as required. Following the detailed steps outlined in the collaborative agreement during the year, Milton Public Schools was approved by DESE and the SSEC member districts and became a member district of SSEC effective, July 1, 2017.

A newly developed strategic plan has been approved and put into motion for 2017-2022. The leadership team of SSEC considers the goals and objectives that are included in the plan while building the budget and making decisions on all collaborative initiatives. A group of 38 people comprised of personnel from various programs and positions, board Chairperson, administrator of special education and parents met to review survey results and to discuss the future planning for SSEC. The long term strategic planning goals developed by the committee and approved by the board of directors focus on: sustainability, data collection, program development, organizational operation and benefits.

## **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, 2017-June, 2018.

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 2018 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 2018:

Braintree	Frank Hackett, Ed.D
Cohasset	Louise Demas
Hingham	Dorothy Galo, Ph.D.
Hull	Michael Devine
Marshfield	Jeffrey Granatino
Milton	Mary Gormley
Norwell	Matthew Keegan
Quincy	Richard DeCristofaro, Ed.D.
Randolph	Thomas Anderson
Scituate	Ronald Griffin
Weymouth	Jennifer Whipple, Ed.D.

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

The SSEC school and program information presented later in this report will clearly define the goals and outcomes of the programs while presenting a clear profile of the students served in each school. Each school and program operated by the SSEC provides a specialized educational setting for students who could not make adequate progress in 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. In 2016, a decision was made to reduce staff in some programs due to a decline in enrollment and to balance expenses with revenue in order to present a balanced budget for 2016-2017. The referrals and enrollments in the schools and programs began to increase allowing some employees to be reinstated for 2016-2017. As a result of the reductions in staff, increase in enrollment and relocation from 40 Pond Park the end of the year reflected a positive balance for fiscal year 2017 and a positive balance for fiscal year 2018.

A member/ non- member tuition rate schedule took effect in July 2017 to strive toward sustainability. This tuition structure generates additional income and provides a financial benefit to the collaborative members.

With the enactment of Chapter 43 of the Acts of 2012- *An Act Relative to Improving Accountability and Oversight of Education Collaboratives*, one of the areas to be included in the annual report is the cost effectiveness of 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 had an impact on the annual budget of \$20,812,859. for fy 2018.

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 2017-2018, SSEC leased one building at 75 Abington Street in Hingham and classroom space in Randolph and Hull. The classroom rentals in public schools are the most cost effective to the SSEC and also for the districts. The students from the district where a classroom is rented will save significantly on transportation and the families are pleased to have the students in their home town. However, the needs of the students who attend the Community School, Quest School, South Shore High School and Careers High School require a location with a different setting than a traditional school. The physical, medical and emotional needs of the students require a substantially separate location with the ongoing goal of considering the return to a traditional school whenever feasible. The SSEC schools are licensed by DESE and are able to compete with more costly private schools. We are located geographically where all member districts have access with a minimum transportation expense. This is a significant cost effective measure. The town of Hull is the furthest away, but leased 10 classrooms to SSEC in 2017-2018 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 18 tuition- \$69,152. (includes summer )

Private School-Perkins Watertown fy 18 tuition- \$112,458.

Private School- BC Campus School fy 18 tuition- \$87,561.

**Possible savings per student (122 students) w/o transportation = \$18,409. - \$43,306.**

SSEC Mini School- fy 18 tuition- \$67,809. (includes summer)

Private School- Boston Higashi fy19 tuition- \$76,718.

Private School- May Institute fy 19 tuition- \$97,657.

**Possible savings per student (60students) w/o transportation = \$8,909. - \$29,848.**

SSEC Quest School fy 18 tuition- \$49,405. (includes summer)

Private School- Brandon fy 18 tuition- \$56,570.

Private School- Walker fy 17 tuition- \$85,990.

**Possible savings per student (69 students) w/o transportation = \$6,920. - \$36,340.**

SSEC SSH and Careers fy 18 tuition- \$49,405. (includes summer)

Private School- Compass fy 18 tuition- \$56,395.

Private School- Home for Little Wanderers S.E. fy 18 tuition- \$68,531.

**Possible savings per student (94 students) w/o transp. factor = \$6,990. - \$19,126.**

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. The consulting company used this year was Titan Energy. The electricity bid results in a significant savings to the participants when comparing old price to the **24** month term of the contracts.

**The savings based on the comparison for electricity purchase: North River Collaborative- \$1,328., Scituate Public Schools-\$72,027.,Cohasset Public Schools-\$80,832., Town of Cohasset-\$125,403., Plymouth Public Schools- \$97,195., Town of Plymouth-\$82,753. for a total of \$459,538. savings for electricity.**

The natural gas bid also provides a significant savings during the **36** month term of the contracts. **The savings based on the Natural Gas purchase when comparing the old price to the new: North River- \$46,063., Scituate P.S.- \$197,206., Cohasset P.S.-\$161,414., Cohasset Town- \$25,771., Plymouth P.S.- \$258,806., Plymouth Town-\$146,487., Hull P.S.-\$77,686., SSEC-\$1875. for a total of \$915,308. Savings for natural gas.**



**In summary, a combined savings of \$1,374,846. for gas and electric over the term of the contract.**

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. Three cohorts of educators have participated in the program to date.

For many years, the SSEC operated a day program for adults with cognitive, physical and medical needs. Effective July, 2014, RTR assumed management responsibilities of the adult program. This released any financial liability to the districts for adult services that may not have received adequate funding and got SSEC one step closer to being in one leased building rather than two. The goal to get all programs into one leased location for cost effectiveness was accomplished during fy 18. SSEC was offered additional classroom space at Randolph public schools at a reduced rent. An eight room wing has been renovated with adjacent classrooms to be used by the Community and Mini Schools of SSEC. The goal was reached to have all classrooms occupied at 75 Abington Street building and lease classrooms in public schools at a reduced rate rather than another commercial location.

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

The SSEC continues to strive toward achieving the purpose and objectives as stated in the approved agreement. The schools and programs that comprise SSEC include students who are low incidence in the member districts. The merging of the Language Enhancement program with the Mini School is an example of responding to needs of the districts. 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 a third cohort of graduate students. Efforts to get a fourth cohort were made during this past year to no avail. 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 Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) courses. DESE approval was offered to SSEC to provide the required Sheltered English Immersion classes. SSEC has provided the classes at SSEC and has sponsored

courses in Norwell, Hingham, Barnstable and North River Collaborative at a savings to the towns and the collaboratives. 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 2017-2018 school year has been financially and programmatically successful. I would like to take this opportunity to thank The Board of Directors, Cinde Lindberg, Executive Secretary, Rick Reino, Business Administrator, program directors, coordinators and all personnel for the ongoing support and dedication to the students and families of SSEC. During the year, the Board reviewed credentials, interviewed and appointed internal candidates to prepare for a seamless transition upon my retirement on June 30, 2018. Mr. Richard Reino was appointed to be the executive director and Dr. Patricia Mason was appointed to be the director of student services. This restructuring of roles allows professional growth for two accomplished administrators and a positive leadership transition. With the promotions from within and restructuring of roles, there will also be a financial expense reduction for administration. The Board of Directors support of the strategic plan has allowed the SSEC to accomplish many goals. The development of the five year plan for 2017-2022 has been completed and will now serve as the guide for future development of SSEC. The directors' reports that follow provide specific detail and data related to the programs and schools of SSEC for the 2017-2018 school year. The program directors and coordinators present 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  
75 Abington Street  
Hingham, MA 02043

## **ANCILLARY SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018**

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

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

During the 2017-2018 school year, The South Shore Educational Collaborative employed a full-time Therapy and Assistive Technology services supervisor, a full time therapy services coordinator, nine physical therapists (eight full time, one part-time) , three full-time physical therapy assistants, fourteen occupational therapists (twelve full time, two part-time), one full-time certified occupational therapy assistant, and sixteen speech-language pathologists (fifteen full time, one part-time) . Therapists have conducted evaluations, and provided direct and consultative services for students in five Collaborative programs, three member school districts, and one non-member school district. Therapists have worked with students who have disabilities that include: intellectual impairment, communication impairment, physical impairment, sensory impairment (vision, hearing, deaf-blind), emotional impairment, neurological impairment, autism, specific learning disabilities, developmental delay, and other health impairments.

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

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

During the 2017-2018 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 one 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 2017-2018 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 2017-2018 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	.67%	.43%	12.59%
Accommodations/Modifications	.67%	.43 %	1.76%
Consultation	8.42%	7.36%	6.3%
*Direct therapy service in context	20.88.%	15.58%	4.79%
*Direct therapy service in and out of context	47.47%	56.71%	67.76%
*Direct therapy service out of context	21.89%	19.49%	6.8%

\*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.

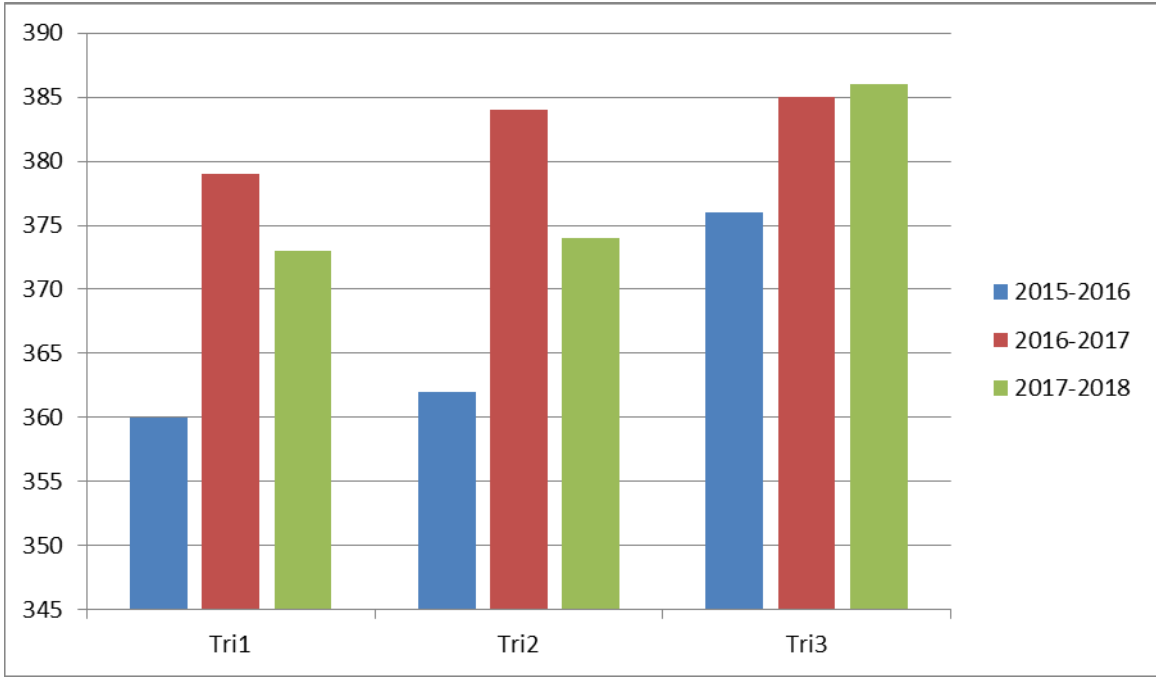
**Outcome #2**

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 2017-2018 school year, a slight increase was noted in the number of students who received consultation and used assistive technology tools in the classroom to access the curriculum during the last trimester when compared to the 2016-2017 school year.

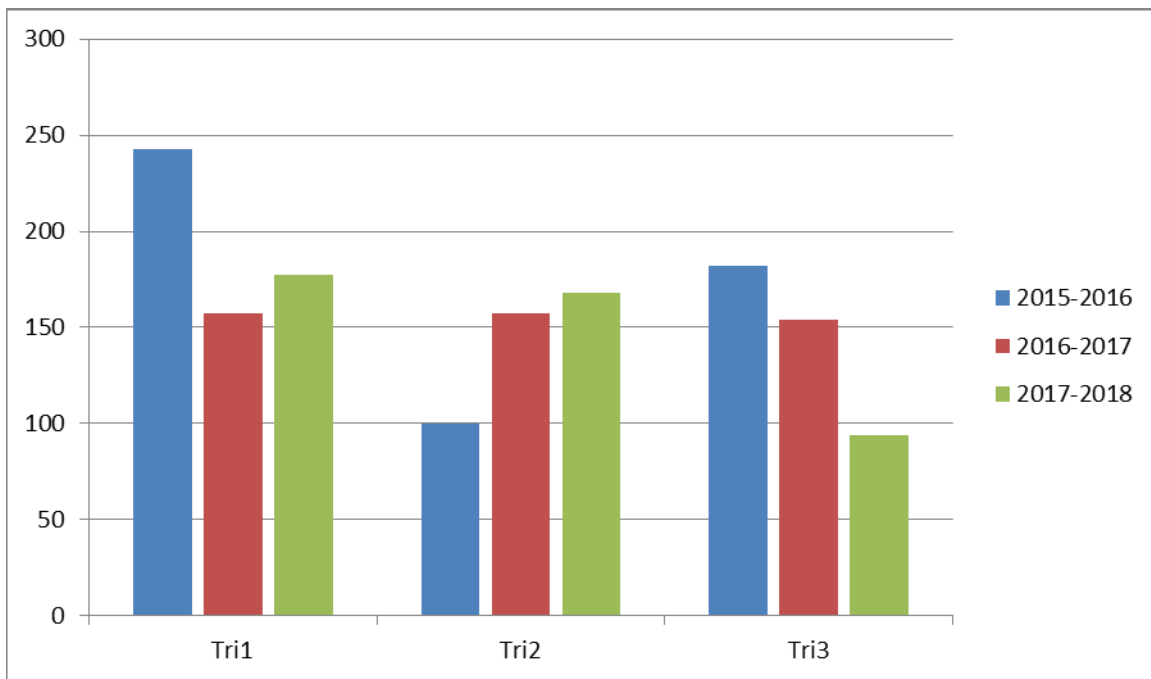
The majority of assistive technology consultation services occurred within the weekly blocks of contracted time for SSEC programs and school districts.

**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:**

- The CAT Team provided training for educators and parents in the use of Assistive Technology tools/techniques through workshops and trainings conducted in public schools and the South Shore Educational Collaborative. The majority of trainings for educators and parents occurred during the first two trimesters from September to March during the 2017-2018 school year. A reduction in trainings during the third trimester may have been due to a temporary decrease in staff coverage. Trainings conducted by the CAT Team included assistive technology topics such as Introduction to 3D Printing, iPad Apps, Clicker 7 Literacy Software, Book Share, Google Docs, Read Write Google Apps and Extensions, Assistive Technology and Low Vision, and Clear Touch Interactive Panels for the Classroom. In addition, the CAT Team coordinated trainings in conjunction with vendors from Prentke Romich Company, Saltillo Corporation, and Tobii Dynavox on alternative and augmentative communication devices and iPad communication applications such as Proloquo2go, TouchChat and LAMP Words for Life.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- The SSEC CAT Team participated in monthly SSEC Technology Planning meetings to address implementation of the SSEC Technology Plan and other technology needs in SSEC programs.
- Throughout the 2017-2018 school year, members of the SSEC CAT Team collaborated closely with speech language pathologists and parents to coordinate

AAC device trials for students 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.
- An SSEC CAT Team member and an SSEC South Shore High School teacher conducted a 3D Printing workshop at SSEC and the annual MassCue/M.A.S.S. Fall Conference. These trainings were a follow up from an Access and Opportunity Grant from the Massachusetts Attorney General's office that was implemented during the 2016-2017 year. In addition they have coordinated SSEC 3D Printing Lab activities and continued development of a student run business.
- 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 SSEC CAT Team 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.
- Occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech language pathologist staff participated in a caseload/workload time study to establish a baseline for all therapists working in SSEC programs and school districts. We hope to further determine needs in order to establish a more effective workload/caseload balance to support student participation.
- Occupational therapists, physical therapists and speech language pathologists met monthly and participated in in-service trainings on topics such as Educator Evaluation for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel, Transition Planning, Facilitating Communication with Families, Therapist Workload/Caseload, Executive Functioning, Social Thinking/Competency Model, Therapy Consultation and Visual Supports. SSEC therapists hosted a full day professional development workshop on An Evidence Based Approach to Standing & Walking for Children with Moderate to Severe Motor Dysfunction conducted by Ginny Paleg, PT. In addition, therapists have hosted live stream professional development webinars such as Narrative Intervention for Building Social-Emotional Skills and Self-Regulation in Children and Adolescents: Going Beyond Language and Literacy conducted by Carol Westby, SLP and Intensive Certification Training for Neuroscience & Self-Regulation Techniques for Kids with Autism, ADHD and Sensory Disorders conducted by Varleisha Gibbs, OTR/L.

#### SUMMARY OF ANCILLARY SERVICES:

During the 2017-2018 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 263 students. Physical therapy services were provided for 252 students. Speech/Language services were provided for 332 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**

2017 – 2018 School Year

Anne Rowland, Psy.D., Program Coordinator

### ***CHS Description***

The Careers High School is designed for high school students with severe emotional challenges who respond best when engaged in competency-based curriculum and projects.

CHS is therapeutic, collaborative, flexible, and focuses on helping students earn their high school diploma from their sending school districts. Most of the students who succeed in CHS had poor experiences 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 including credit-recovery, and the strong emphasis on preparation for transition to post-secondary experiences, especially opportunities to move from pre-vocational projects to entry-level jobs. Through increasing skills in social pragmatics and emotional regulation, greater time is then available to spend focused on academic and vocational endeavors, credit acquisition and employability.

### **Capacity**

Careers High School moved from a programmatic capacity of 37 to 40 students in 2015-16.

Since then, while the age range of the student population typically is from 13 through 18 years, older students have remained enrolled if the educational Team determines it meets the students’ needs. During the 2017-18 school year, 19, 20 and 21 year olds were enrolled. Also this past year, CHS filed 48- month Age Span Requests for Waivers for five classrooms, which were granted by DESE, due to the wide age span of students within a relatively small high school.

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

There are five academic classrooms in the Careers High School 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. While class size is dependent upon population need, it generally ranges between six and nine students. The fifth classroom is the Transition Classroom that is partially self-contained for the core academic classes except math. It too is staffed by a special education teacher and a paraprofessional, and can accommodate up to 12 students. The student population identified for this classroom tends to have greater difficulty with change and may have diagnoses that include Autism Spectrum Disorder (DSM-V), anxiety disorders and nonverbal learning disabilities. These are also typically the younger students enrolled in CHS. (Two 8<sup>th</sup> graders joined the Transitions Classroom in 2017-18). Students are encouraged to take one or more classes in the other four classrooms as their comfort level and skills increase.

### **Staffing**

All staff, comprised of Administrative Assistant, Transition Specialist & Assistant Transition Specialist, Speech and Language Specialist, Reading Specialist, OT and two clinicians work together with the teaching staff as a comprehensive, collaborative team committed to working with CHS students in navigating specific difficulties to then result in their successful completion of high school. This may be accomplished in any number of ways, such as within the classroom, in dyads, in the Greenhouse, through individual or group therapy situations, or social skills group, e.g. These sessions may be scheduled or on an as-needed basis. The clinical team 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-graduation goals.

Careers High School shares the Speech and Language Specialist (Ellen Bernier) with SSHS, who coordinates and runs groups focused on social pragmatic skills. The Transitional Specialist (Bobby Nelson, who is also shared with SSHS) is critical to facilitating most aspects of the students' goals and plans upon achieving their diplomas.

### **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 on or off site transitional-vocational projects during their school day. These include work study experiences, community service activities, paid positions in competitive employment situations, hands-on pre-vocational projects during school, and dual enrollment in college courses.

Students learned basic employment expectations, vocabulary and experience that translate directly to the work world. In addition, basic "soft" employment skills are built into the program to reinforce real world expectations. In the 2015-16 school year, one of the goals from administration for CHS was to sharpen the focus of the pre-vocational offerings so as to increase employability skills. As this transpired, Bobby Nelson designed tracking sheets and gathered data about the use of the various opportunities. Bobby develops and coordinates the vocational program, including monitoring the students' progress in competency level as measured by each Workplace Softskills Rubric. In 2017-18, an Assistant Transition Specialist (Tim Crump) was hired and is shared between CHS and SSHS.

The Transitional Specialists also assist students in exploring college and other post-secondary education and training, such as 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 the efforts with students, as well as assisting students' connections to other job/vocational agencies, such as MRC.

## ***Year in Summary***

### ***Student Population***

Careers High School 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 successful credit acquisition.

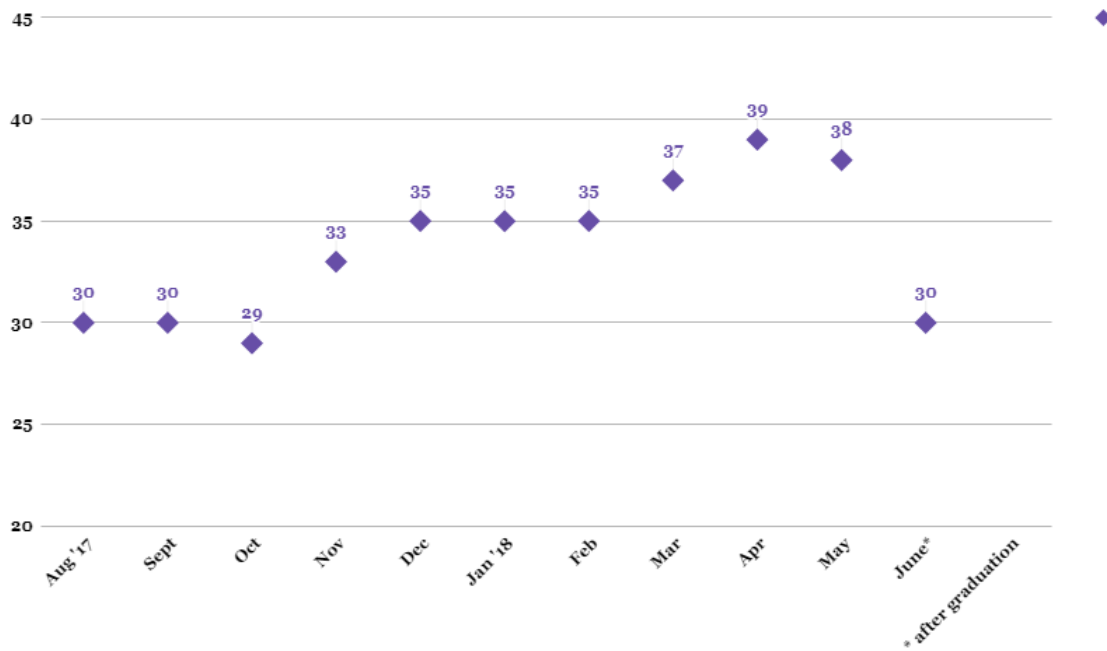
Careers High School began and ended the past year with a census of 30 students (Table 1).

Enrollment fluctuated throughout the year, as is typical, with a significant drop in census

after graduating eleven students in June. Additionally, two students progressed to South Shore vocational schools. CHS enrolled ten STARTS students throughout the year; eight remained in CHS after their evaluation. As stated previously, CHS submitted 48- month Age Span Requests for Waivers for five classrooms, which were granted by DESE, due to the wide age span of students within a relatively small high school.

Table 1

CHS STUDENT ENROLLMENT 2017-2018



***CHS Achievements***

The 2017-18 academic year at Careers High School consisted of an increase in: integration of students with SSH (6 CHS students to SSH, 2 SSH students to CHS), vocational development, DESE requirements, SEI coursework, Educator Evaluations, and more in-depth data collection and analysis.

Unfortunately there were no viable candidates to fill the Greenhouse Specialist position, which was a great loss for students and staff. By June 2018, however, a new hire was oriented and the 2018-19 year has begun with growth and enthusiasm in the Greenhouse. Below (Table 2) is a list of the twelve vocational experiences offered in 2017-18 (at 75 Abington Street and in the surrounding town), with the number of hours spent by students in that area. Hiring an Assistant Transition Specialist (who has a 7D license) enabled increased off-site opportunities (Old Navy and Bolt Depot) and on-site opportunities (Community and AIM classrooms).

Table 2

<u>Area</u>	<u>2015-16 Hours</u>	<u>2016-17 Hours</u>	<u>2017-18 Hours</u>
<i>On-Site</i>			
Greenhouse	1973	1934	0
Kitchen	1889	1138	1774
Audio Visual	1083	941	398
Copy Center	1013	1426	1327
Basketball Referee	716	627	705
Quest Intern (Art)	---	23	4
Quest Intern (Para)	---	57	50
Community Classroom	---	---	20
AIM Classroom	---	---	1.5
<i>Off-Site</i>			
Boston Bowl	85.5	58	75
Bolt Depot	---	---	52
Old Navy	---	---	26

Careers High School students comprise the majority of students who routinely go off-site, primarily because CHS is conducive due to its ability to be flexible with academics, credit recovery, and pace of work flow. Of 40 CHS students who utilized these opportunities during this past year, 53 % worked in two or more areas. As students remain longer at CHS, they have more time to try various areas. In terms of employability, 18 CHS students were able to move into entry-level jobs (Burger King, landscaping, Dunkin Donuts, e.g.) at various points during the year, and CHS issued work permits for seven students. During the academic year, one senior engaged in dual-enrollment with Quincy Community College while at CHS.

Careers High School again graduated a large class of 11 students: two went into a vocational program, four enrolled in college, two enrolled in a trade school, two sought employment, and one was undecided. At the time of graduation, seven of the 11 (64%) CHS graduates were employed.

***CHS “Firsts”***

Developed relationships with *two* off-site vocational opportunities (Bolt Depot and Old Navy) and placed two students in each setting.

Developed student internships in two more classrooms (Community and AIM) and placed one student in each setting.

CHS students attended a college fair and the Culinary Exhibition at the Seaport Convention Center.

Held a senior class trip and funded it through a bake sale.

Three CHS students were eligible to drive to/from school simultaneously.

Provided bi-monthly group supervision with all CHS paraprofessionals led by Tim Handorf, in addition to trainings with Lou Tozzi.

Identified and hired CHS Milieu Coordinator, and with SSH, an Assistant Transitions Specialist.

Implementation of Milieu Coordinator provided crisis intervention, attendance and family outreach, discipline decisions, and sharpened the effectiveness and efficiency of data aggregation and analysis for Transitions and IEP meetings, as well as to guide improved programming.

Six CHS students took classes at SSH, and two SSH students took classes at CHS.

Instead of CHS teachers running the classes, CHS provided Art Teacher-led class for students, and PE Instructor-led gym class for students.

CHS organized and compiled Safety Buckets for SSEC programs in Hingham, Hull and Randolph.

With three Safety Committee members being CHS staff members, we participated in building-wide, staff-led Synergy safety drill.

CHS enrolled its first EL student, and Copy Center translated documents (Handbook, e.g.) into Spanish for distribution.

Donated and repaired bicycle for student use.

### ***Plans for Future***

Continue to increase student vocational placements in the community.

Graph the progress on workplace soft-skills competency rubrics.

Transition team to track and graph outcome goals of the high number of graduates employed or employment ready, as measured on their progress through the workplace soft-skills rubric.

Outcome goals for CHS to include a continued high number of students graduating or returning to their sending districts, both being indicators of readiness for a lesser restrictive setting.

Implement and expand Consumer Science classroom vocational opportunity.

Continue integration of CHS and SSH, specifically staff overlap, course integration, and standardization of trainings.

## Community School Annual Report 2018-2019

### Description of School, Student Population & Staff

The **Community School** is a day school located at 75 Abington Street in Hingham & Randolph High School in Randolph that serves 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 the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks with a focus on the functional, developmental and academic needs of the students. Students enter the general education curriculum through access and entry points with some at or close to grade level. Through the use of an explicit curriculum based on thematic interdisciplinary units as well as standards based math and research based 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/recreation. Technology is an integral component within the program. It is embedded throughout all aspects and supports increased independence and participation. This includes the use of many advanced communication devices along with some of the latest technology to support our students and this ultimately allows them to have greater access to all environments.

During the 2017-2018 School Year, the director of the Community School (Dr. Patricia Mason) received an internal promotion to the position of Director of Student Services effective July 1, 2018. The position of Community School Director was filled by Jon Reynard who has been Teacher and Program Coordinator with the program for the past nine years. The timing of this allowed for an extended transition period which was beneficial to families, students and staff.

**AIM (Achieve, Inspire, Motivate):** In the three years since the development of the AIM program at the start of the 2015-2016 school year, it has grown from a single classroom with eight students to three classrooms serving twenty-seven students from the Community School and the QUEST school. The AIM program focuses on higher level academic content for students who would typically attend the Community School and more individualized modifications for the students who would typically attend the QUEST school. There is an integrated social skills curriculum as well as strong positive behavioral supports. This program also offers counseling based on individualized student needs. Additional non-academic activities include; art, music, gym, electives (special activities students may choose from on a weekly basis) and social skills groups. The program currently serves students in grades 1 through 9.

**Randolph High School:** In our second year with classroom space at Randolph High School, we continued to benefit from the greater school culture while continuing to provide our students with the individualized programming that they require. In January of 2018, renovations to a separate and more private section of the High School were made to better serve our students diverse needs. These renovations included excavation work and the

installation of an accessible ramp to provide the Community School its own entrance. It also included beautification to the interior through painting, replacement of ceiling tiles and modifications to restroom facilities. This dedicated space gives our students limited distractions and privacy when needed but also allows them to participate in the greater school community when appropriate. This includes opportunities to eat lunch in the RHS cafeteria, take part in a reading buddy program in the library, participate in weekly swimming, observe band practice in the auditorium, and attend annual events such as the pep rally. This location continues to allow increased opportunity to explore vocational and social opportunities and more readily generalize learned skills and address transitional needs and goals. This occurs within the school setting as well as in the local community. We currently have three classrooms with a total of twenty-four students at Randolph High School. This part of the Community School expands upon our strong commitment to both community referenced and community based instruction. Students explore various leisure and vocational activities and have frequent opportunities to engage in and practice skills with a strong focus on greater independence, safety and communication in the community. Students transitioning into adult services are fully supported. Team members assist in the process by sharing information during transition meetings, developing transitional supports such as social stories and accompanying students on visits to their new program in order to help prepare them for the significant change to their daily lives.

### **Community Classrooms:**

Early Childhood:	Three classrooms for students grades preschool through two.
Elementary:	Three classrooms for students grades two through six.
Middle School:	One classroom for students grades six through eight.
High School:	Six classrooms for students grades nine through 12+.
AIM:	Three classrooms for students grades one through nine.

### **Universal Design:**

The program embraces the principles of universal design through curriculum and environmental accommodations available to all students in addition to their individualized supports and accommodations. Through the use of this design, the students have consistent access to the environment as well as access to learning. Examples of such supports include but are not limited to; varied seating and seating supports (sensory input), multimedia instruction, varied low and high tech technology and assistive technology, broad based sensory supports available to all students, flexible overlapping curriculum, movement, sensory and cognitive breaks, sound dampening ceiling panels, sensory sensitive lighting, consistent tangible symbol sets used in every common area, language accessible environment and materials and additional common augmentative and alternative communication supports available at all times.

### **Evidenced Based Methodologies:**

Applied behavioral analysis methodology is used and integrated based on the individualized needs of the student. ABA methodology includes discrete trial training followed by opportunities to generalize and apply skills in natural settings. ABA is embedded into the

routines and instruction. Essential learning skills are integrated into all aspects of the day including imitation, turn-taking and joint attention. These skills are worked on through varying degrees of complexity and are central to the learning process.

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

Behavioral supports and interventions include such practices as; antecedent based intervention, varied reinforcement procedures, functional communication training, replacement skills training, modeling, formalized prompting, naturalistic intervention, exercise and visual supports. This also includes more formalized curriculum such as [Minute Moves](#) and [GoNoodle](#).

Social skills training integrates many of the methodologies discussed here in addition to specific social groups using the Social Thinking content, social stories, social scripts and self-management supports such as the zones of regulation or the five point scale. Structured play groups are provided for younger students including the development of all play levels and individual play skills.

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

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

**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. Ablenet STEM program (differentiated into three levels with additional online adapted books)
3. ALL(Accessible Literacy Learning) reading program (adapted reading program for students using picture symbols or combinations of pictures and words).
4. Reading A-Z (online program)
5. Writing Without Tears
6. Unique Learning Systems differentiated fully adapted integrated units
7. News 2 You adapted readers
8. Social Thinking
9. Zones of Regulation



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

### **Community Based & Community Referenced 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 a focus on generalization of learned skills and acquisition of novel skills related to safety, communication, socialization and overall independence. Community based instruction is expanded throughout each grade with increased focus on functional life skills. Examples include;

1. Weekly shopping for the school & school store
2. Leisure based opportunities
3. Multiple vocational and vocational related opportunities
4. Academic/content theme based outings

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

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

The program offers additional services including; onsite wheelchair/equipment repair and ordering, splinting and other equipment needs including free trials prior to purchase for equipment which would be considered school based. 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 six week extended school year program.

**Extended School Year Program:** This is a seven week program which is offered to both current students attending the Community School as well as those who attend different programs throughout the typical school year. Students are engaged in thematically based academic, therapeutic and leisure activities which change weekly over the course of the seven week session. Special electives are offered throughout the summer. Each student is able to choose which elective they would like to attend each week. Vocational activities and both community referenced and community based instruction continue throughout the year. Field trips and on-site activities are planned throughout the summer. This is in addition to students participating in therapeutic riding and Access Sail in Duxbury Harbor. Students are

able to buy ice cream from the ice-cream truck once a week and there are many other special activities brought to the main campus. These activities vary each year. Staffing ratios during the summer remain the same 1:2. The professional and paraprofessional staffing during the extended school year is predominantly the permanent staff present during the regular school year. This is supplemented by staffing made up of college students studying in a related field (education, nursing, occupational/physical/speech therapy etc.). The program is fortunate to have many returning staff each year. The temporary extended school year staff must complete NAPPI training each year to continue their employment.

### **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. Continue to acquire new resources & opportunities for additional professional development for professionals and paraprofessionals in the area of behavior management.
  - a. Staff will be assigned to these trainings based on classroom assignment and needs of students served.
  - b. Focus of differentiation between behavioral needs, supports and strategies in the traditional Community classrooms vs. AIM classrooms.
  - c. Continue development of reporting tools and standardization of reports and plans in order to ensure consistency and ease of understanding across staff and families.
  - d. Hold monthly behavior department meetings to plan and address issues and concerns.
  - e. Assign behavior personnel to classrooms vs. students to address on-going and emerging behavioral concerns.

2. The Community School and the QUEST School will continue to meet the student population served in the AIM program and expand as needed and possible.
  - a. A new High School AIM classroom will be introduced for the 2018-2019 school year.
  - b. AIM will cover grades 1-12.
  - c. Continue to address the needs of the students who are best served by the AIM programming model and allow for the placement of additional referrals.
3. The Community School and the Quest School will increase social skills and behavioral trainings for all four classrooms by assigning a dedicated AIM behaviorist and dividing social worker/counseling duties across the two full time social workers.
  - a. Continue increased social skills groups for each of the 3 AIM classrooms and introduce groups to the new high school classroom.
  - b. Additional therapeutic support available daily to meet both expected and unexpected needs by dividing responsibility between two program social workers.
  - c. Increased communication with families to collaborate on specific concerns.
4. The Community School will continue fundraising efforts to support community trips, classroom materials, technology and special events for the students.
  - a. The Community School successfully ran its third annual “Crafting Winter Wishes” fundraiser in December 2017.
5. First annual open house at Randolph High School aimed at increasing parent/guardian awareness of this location and ultimate acceptance of this location as students reach high school age.
  - a. First Annual Open House was held in May 2018.
  - b. The students and staff successfully transitioned to our new space in Randolph High School in January 2018.
  - c. Expansion of classroom space and increase in the number of students attending at RHS allows the Community School to continue to grow in enrollment in order to meet our district needs.
6. Use of temporary paraprofessionals to support program needs including 1:1 support for specific students.
  - a. Many temporary staff have successfully transitioned to fulltime status.
  - b. Temporary staff received full training and was required to become NAPPI certified as well as meet all performance expectations of permanent staff.
  - c. Temporary staff are eligible to apply for a permanent position after 750 hours of satisfactory employment. 3 temporary staff people were eligible at the end of the school year.
  - d. Staff who do not meet expectations are released and the agency responds with new resumes. Our ongoing relationship has led the agency to better know our needs and select staff that are a better match resulting in greater consistency.

## **MINI SCHOOL PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT**

Maureen M. Gattine, MS., BCBA, LABA  
Program Director  
School Year 2017-2018

Established in the early 1970's as part of an initiative of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to start "mini-schools" for special needs students throughout the state, the Mini School program has served students on the autism spectrum, joining the South Shore Educational Collaborative in 1987. During the 2017-2018 school year, the Mini School provided educational services to 62 students in classrooms located in Hull at the Jacobs Elementary School, Memorial Middle School, Hull High School and in Randolph at Randolph 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. We had eleven students who were mainstreamed successfully in 1-2 classes that would include music, technology, art, gym and math.

SSEC Mini School students require a multi-disciplinary team teaching approach with a high staff/student ratio. Each student's daily programming focuses on teaching skills he/she needs in order to be as independent as possible. Students receive the following services from specialists as needed: Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Assistive Technology and Adapted Physical Education. This school year we also had four professional staff trained to be a Drums Alive instructor in the area of Ability Beats. Drums Alive is an all-inclusive, comprehensive, multi-generational, culturally diverse Brain and Body program for all ages and abilities that empower participants to achieve healthy lives through research based fitness and wellness applications. This evidence based program encompasses music, rhythm, psychological, educational, emotional, physical and social skills. Every classroom at the Mini School is participating in this one time per week. The Mini School hours are 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM, Monday through Thursday and 8:30 AM – 2:45 PM on Friday, totaling 36.25 hours per week of direct instruction. The program follows the public school calendar of the town in which each class resides. Summer programming runs for six weeks, Monday through Thursday, 8:30 AM – 2:45 PM. Staff trainings and professional development are held on Thursday's during the school year, following early dismissal, once to twice 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. Staff also received training in DESE physical restraint regulations. They also received annual trainings in policies, procedures, health care, emergency drills, child abuse and neglect and bullying intervention and prevention, MCAS standard and alternate testing and First Aide/CPR training. Other specific trainings covered topics such as "Family Sensitivity; Understanding Families and

Engagement”, “Specialists: Who Are We?” and guest speaker, Jessica Minahan presented “Children with Anxiety; Related and Oppositional Behavior”. Para professionals received training through workshops held by the Mini School BCBA staff person and by Lou Tozzi.

## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

<b>Position</b>	<b>FTE</b>
Program Director	1.0
Assistant Program Director	1.0
Parent Home Consultant	.77
Teachers	9.0
Clinician	1.0
Occupational Therapists (2)	1.43
OT Assistants (1)	1.0
Physical Therapist	.07
Speech Therapists	3.0
Adaptive PE Teacher	1.0
Nurses	1.38
Para Professionals	20.0
Substitute Para Professionals	2.5
<b>Total:</b>	<b>43.15</b>

Traditionally, the Mini School has served students on the autism spectrum who present with developmental delays from ages 5 -22 years old. Over the years the Mini School has expanded to serve students on the autism spectrum in grades K-8 who function at or close to their grade level, but do not possess the socialization and self-regulation skills necessary to be educated in their home districts.

Mini School curriculum emphasizes language based programming, positive behavior management techniques, social skills training and acquisition of functional life skills. Instructional methods include prompt hierarchies, systematic instruction, task analysis, incidental teaching and discrete trial training. Emphasis is also placed on the acquisition of academic skills: reading, English Language Arts, mathematics, social studies and science. Students learn at their developmental level following the Curriculum Frameworks. Students are assessed for MCAS each year by either standardized testing or by portfolio assessment at their chronological grade level according to the state model. The three Mini School high school classrooms and one middle school classroom focuses on transitional skills to include vocational training, functional academics, life skills, social skills and communication. The students at the high school have vocational opportunities within the classroom, school environment and the community.

Students with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder display challenges in many areas which impact their ability to access the general curriculum. These challenges include

delays in the ability to communicate effectively, develop social skills, interpret sensory input, and understand and control their emotions. Although about 40% of students with the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder have average or above average intellectual abilities, the remaining exhibit cognitive deficits and will need some level of support throughout their lives. At the Jacobs Elementary School, the Mini School uses an extra classroom space for de-escalation. In using the Zones of Regulation the room is designed to help students that enter the Yellow Zone (starting or feeling like losing control) and Red Zone (lost control, dangerous behaviors). Since using this intervention we have seen a decrease in maladaptive behaviors and an increase of students using tools to help regulate their behavior and return to the classroom which is the Green Zone (ready to learn).

During the 2017-2018 school year, seventeen Mini School students participated in standard MCAS in grades 3-8 with accommodations. The Mini School uses Computer Based Testing for grades 3-8. All computers were updated to meet the requirements needed to test. Students were tested in ELA and Math and the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders used the Paper Based Test for Science and Technology. Nineteen Mini School students participated in MCAS testing by alternate assessment. Students with a significant cognitive disability are eligible to participate in MCAS-Alt in all content areas. Completed portfolios were submitted to the Department of Secondary and Elementary Education in the spring of 2018. Student work can receive a score of incomplete, awareness, emerging and progressing. The Mini School has been aligned with state averages for MCAS-Alt scores. Scoring was based on a rubric that the teachers scored.

During the 2017-2018 school year, the youngest Mini School students (grades K-5) attended school in four classrooms at the Jacobs Elementary School in Hull. At this school, students are given the opportunity to eat in the cafeteria, attend school functions, use the library and gymnasium, and 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 and schedules is provided throughout the school day. Visual schedules, timers, topic boards 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 Read Naturally Live as well as instruction in phonics and spelling.

Two middle school classrooms are located at the Memorial Middle school in Hull. Students at this age continue their academic learning as well as beginning instruction in pre-vocational and functional life skills. 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. We also have a group that attends a weekly fitness class at the YMCA.

Planning for transition to adulthood is a major component of the curriculum for our high school students. During the 2017-2018 school year, twenty-one high school students attended the Mini School classrooms. We had two classrooms located at Hull High School and one classroom at Randolph High School this. Emphasis is placed on helping students

prepare for adulthood with a focus on transitioning. Students receive educational, speech and occupational therapy services which are directed toward building independence in social pragmatics, leisure activities, recreation and exercise, vocational skills, personal hygiene, self-advocacy, finances and daily chores. Vocational opportunities were offered both in the school and community settings. Students worked with job coaches at Papa Gino's, Cohasset Community Center, Senior Elder Services, Holly Hill Farm and the Salt Water Diner. Students at Hull High School operated a school store. Community and social experiences are an integral part of the high school curriculum. Students go to the Hanover YMCA two afternoons a week and use the fitness rooms in the school. Our Randolph students attend the YMCA in Stoughton once a week and focus on activities of daily living within a kitchen as well as fitness and health. Community based experiences to stores, restaurants, bowling, etc. happen on a weekly basis. Four Mini School students turned 22 during the 2017-2018 school year. Mini School staff work closely with parents and adult service providers to ensure a smooth transition from school to adult programming. All four students transitioned to adult agencies at work programs and day habilitation centers.

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

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Maureen M. Gattine, MS, BCBA, LABA  
Program Director  
Mini School – South Shore Educational Collaborative

# QUEST PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT FY 2018

## Quest Mission Statement

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

## Description of Program, Student Population and Staff:

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

Our **student population** continues to 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 hyperactivity 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 referred to the Quest Program struggle to attend school on a daily basis. During the 2015-2016 school year, we expanded the program to also provide programming for students with more severe special needs who have concurrent social skills and mental health challenges. Once in school, the inability to remain focused combined with mood lability and/or weak social skills make academic progress a daily struggle for many of our students. It is only with comprehensive academic, behavioral, and therapeutic support that our students are able to make progress toward their IEP goals. The program integrates an academic curriculum which has been aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and integrated with the Common Core. Where needed, students are also provided with a functional, remedial curriculum.

The Quest Program continued to have 11 classrooms during the 2017-2018. Eight classrooms are traditional Quest classrooms and three of the classrooms continue to be a joint venture with the SSEC Community Program. These classrooms, given the name AIM (Achieve, Inspire, Motivate), are designed to meet the needs of students that required the therapeutic and behavioral support of the Quest Program but required modifications to the academic programming and social skills instruction typical of a Quest classroom. In these areas, the students require programming more similar to what was available at the Community Program. In conjunction with the Community School, the three AIM classrooms served 30 students (11 enrolled in the Quest Program) over the course of the



school year. The classrooms are led by a Special Education teacher with the support of 3-4 paraprofessionals in each classroom. A full time social worker works with all students in the AIM classrooms to provide counseling and social skills instruction. This social worker is a part of the Quest clinical team and is supervised by a licensed social worker working in the Quest Program. Further support was provided by Occupational Therapists and Speech Language Pathologists from the Community Program as well as Reading Teachers from the Quest Program. The classrooms accessed both the Quest Art and Gym teachers and the APE teacher from the Community Program. Behavioral support was provided by both programs as needed. Students in the AIM room were able to participate in electives, field trips and Field Day with the Quest Program while also taking part in trips and outings with the Community Program. Students were also able to access the therapy pool, sailing and horseback riding programs through the Community Program. Staff continue to learn the best ways to work together to serve this diverse group of learners. These classrooms are truly a part of both the Community and Quest Programs. Most importantly, SSEC continues to be able to meet the needs of 30 students with challenging and unique needs. Without the continued growth of the AIM classrooms, it is likely these students would have had to travel farther from home to attend school daily. The AIM classrooms provide a model for collaboration and flexible programing designed to meet the changing needs of our students and sending districts. Given the success of this classroom, AIM has expanded to include a fourth classroom serving high school students for the 2018-2019 school year.

In addition to the AIM classroom, there were some changes made this school year regarding **program staff and service**. For the 2017-2018 school year our staff included: 11 full time certified special needs teachers, a full time PE/Health teacher shared with 2 programs, a part time Art teacher, 17 classroom aides, 3 part time reading teachers, 5 full time school based clinicians, 1 clinical psychology intern, 2 social work interns, a full time occupational therapist, a full time speech and language therapist, a full time administrative assistant and a part time assistive technology teacher. Quest also continued to access the services of a music therapist on a part time basis. The behavioral needs of the students were served by a behavioral team supervised by a Program Coordinator and comprised of 4 full time and 1 part time behavioral aides. Two full time school nurses, a clinical director, a food service director and 3 food service aides are shared with the other school programs in the building. Quest also shared one part time board certified child and adolescent psychiatrist with the other SSEC programs.

Program hours from September to June are 8:30am to 2:50pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Every Wednesday, students are dismissed at 12:50pm. This provides time for professional development and staff meetings. During the summer, Quest provides a 6-week extended school year program for those students whose IEP includes a longer school year to prevent substantial loss of previously learned skills. Students enrolled in the Quest AIM classrooms follow the Community Program schedule and calendar. Their program hours from September to June are 9:00am to 3:30pm daily. Two Mondays each month, students are dismissed at 12:00pm. Quest AIM students also have a 7-week extended school year program. whose

## **Program Development for the 2017-2018 School Year**

This year, the Quest Program continued to implement and expand upon the initiatives begun during previous years. The most notable change was the addition of a full time Program Director. From 2012-2017, the Clinical Director also served as the Program Director for the Quest Program. Given the expansion to 11 classrooms and resulting increase in staffing, it was determined that the Program Director should be a full time position. Jennie Williams, Program Coordinator, assumed the role of Program Director. Rosanna Warrick was hired to be a full time Program Coordinator responsible for supervising the behavior team, managing the milieu, supervising paraprofessionals, data collection and running the program in the absence of the director as well as other duties as needed. Tim Handorf continued to be an important part of the Quest Program as the Clinical Director. The Behavioral Specialist position was eliminated as the Program Coordinator assumed that role in addition to other duties.

The Quest Program maintained the expansion of the AIM classrooms as described above. We welcomed a new doctoral psychology intern and two social work interns. Stability in staffing and in programming allowed us to build on the positive changes implemented in previous years. We have continued to offer Health, PE, art, music and instruction in assistive technology which has allowed us to create a more well-rounded education for Quest students. This also allows 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 and to be compliant with DESE regulations, we have continued to devote considerable resources to data collection. More specifically, we continued to utilize the services of consultant Marc Hauser and his Educata system to track student behavior. This system allows the staff to track a wide variety of data and the program also helps to manage reporting requirements with regard to time out and physical intervention. Providing this data has allowed all disciplines (educators, therapists and behavioral staff) to tailor and to focus their approaches and interventions with our students. 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. During the 2017-2018 school year, the Quest Program continued to have a Data Team, which consisted of staff from all disciplines, including a teacher, paraprofessionals, speech language pathologist and a clinician. This team was led by the Program Coordinator and met weekly to review trends in the program data and solve any issues related to data collection or the Educata system. Adopting more stringent data collection measures has enabled us to keep pace with the current emphasis in the Massachusetts Professional Development Initiative. Increasing efficiency in data collection as well as improving our ability to utilize collected data continues to be a point of emphasis in the Quest Program.

## **Classroom Pods**

At the core of service delivery in the Quest Program is the “pod” model. Each of the 11 classrooms has a “pod” or comprehensive team of staff that work together to provide the services enumerated in each child’s IEP. Each pod consists of the teacher, the classroom aides, a clinician, a behavioral aide, and any other staff (occupational therapist, speech and language therapist, intern) that work with the students in the classroom. Pods meet weekly to discuss any individual or classroom issues that arise. This can include drafting an individual behavior plan, addressing classroom management issues, drafting IEP’s, planning social skills groups, and sharing information gained through case management. Pod members also share information with our consulting psychiatrist, prior to a student’s appointment, through structured online communication forms. Now in its eighth 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 4 “settling” rooms, 2 quiet study rooms, a sensory room, a comfort room, an office for the Program Coordinator and an office for the behavioral aides. The behavioral space in our school building was designed to be safe and away from a main hallway. This has allowed students and staff the privacy and space needed to help students settle and be ready to return to class. 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 4,900 times during the course of the year (3,499 sensory/motor breaks and 1,446 self-time outs). Students were able to take a teacher directed break within their classroom 2,026 times and required teacher directed time out of class 1,898 times during the 2017-2018 school year.

The Quest Program also continued to benefit from the shift made four years ago from CPI to 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 implementation of NAPPI, along with minimal turnover of the program’s behavioral staff, has continued to help us decrease the use of physical restraint in the Quest Program. The most frequently utilized physical intervention is a NAPPI assist. The assist is used to safely move students from one

location to another. During the 2017-2018 school year, we had 45 physical restraints that were not assists as well as 334 assists. This is a 26% reduction in restraints from the 2016-2017 school year (76 physical restraints that were not assists, 434 assists). The presence of a full time Program Coordinator supervising the milieu and providing supervision and in the moment support to paraprofessionals and other staff was likely a factor in helping to reduce the need for physical intervention. Also, the data team has been consistently meeting and providing feedback on program wide interventions, allowing administration to better utilize available staff. Reducing the need for physical restraint continues to be an important goal of the Quest Program even as we expand the program and service students with some of the most challenging behaviors.

### **Social Skills Curriculum**

As a program, we adopted the Social Thinking® Curriculum in 2010 and the language and concepts of the curriculum continue to be used program wide. The Social Thinking Curriculum was developed by Michelle Garcia Winner, a Speech and Language Pathologist, through her work with school age students on the autism spectrum. This curriculum, which is both evidence based and practice informed, is a social cognitive approach to social skills instruction designed to teach perspective taking and social thinking skills to students with a variety of social challenges. The goal is to help students better understand how their words and actions impact the thoughts and feelings of others around them making them better able to share space effectively with others. All Quest students have at least one direct instruction group based on this curriculum each week. Staff continued to receive regular training on Social Thinking both in the program and at conferences led by M.G. Winner and her staff. The Quest Speech and Language pathologist continues to incorporate Social Thinking measures into formal and informal assessments of students, better allowing us to assess this important aspect of communication often missed in standardized assessment tools. The behavioral staff continues to use Social Behavior Maps to guide processing of behavioral incidents with students. Throughout the program, students are learning to match the size of their reaction to the size of the problem. In addition, weekly planning time is built into the schedule to allow time for the clinicians, speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist, and classroom staff to plan cohesive group lessons. This time has allowed staff to create a bank of lessons that have been used successfully. Social Thinking group lessons are also discussed in pod meetings and teaching and behavioral staff continue to participate in classroom groups. Social Thinking is not only taught during classroom groups, it is being taught and reinforced by all staff throughout the school day. Clinicians in the middle school classrooms have also begun to utilize other cognitive therapy approaches, including Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and mindfulness strategies in conjunction with Social Thinking. All of these evidence based approaches teach students to be mindful of the cognitive processes driving their social interactions and emotional experiences.

### **Responsive Classroom**

In July 2015, the Quest teachers, clinicians and SLP participated in a week long training in the Responsive Classroom method. The Responsive Classroom website describes this as an approach to 'teaching (which) emphasizes academic, social, and emotional growth in a strong school community. This approach stresses that how children learn is as important as what they learn, and that academic success is inextricably tied to building social-emotional competencies. This approach provides K-8 educators with practical training and resources

to help create safe and joyful classrooms and schools where children can thrive.’ All of the Quest classrooms continue to incorporate the Responsive Classroom methods. There is a morning message posted in each class and, at 9 AM daily, each class holds a Morning Meeting. The clinicians and SLP frequently co-lead these meetings and use the activity to reinforce previously taught Social Thinking lessons. In addition, teachers are using the Responsive Classroom methods and rubric to evaluate their own practices. Teachers are incorporating academic choice and a wider variety of behavioral interventions. The Responsive Classroom method has dovetailed well with Social Thinking and Collaborative Problem Solving providing even more cohesiveness and consistency across the Quest classrooms.

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

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

1. A professional development plan was established for all staff
2. A K-8 curriculum on bullying was adopted for all of our students
3. Staff who witness or had knowledge of any bullying incident were required to report it
4. Investigation and disciplinary policies were instituted for the act of bullying
5. When criminal charges were appropriate, law enforcement was notified
6. Resources and information was made available to students, parents and guardians including curricula, the dynamics of bullying, online safety, and cyber-bullying. This topic is covered in the classrooms during Health classes and Social Thinking Groups.

In addition to meeting the requirements of the bullying prevention law, staff 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. Staff have received training through the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) at Bridgewater State University and the curriculum developed by MARC is incorporated into health classes as appropriate.

### **Student Activities & Learning**

Quest teachers continued to present lessons that integrated functional, remedial and 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. A certified PE teacher leads all health and gym classes.

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. In November, we held our annual Thanksgiving Feast, which was attended by over 200 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. The staff in the SSEC kitchen assists in preparing the meal and 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.

In the winter, we had a brunch and Pajama Day to celebrate the Winter Solstice. Other field trips and activities included a trip to a roller skating rink and as well as a live animal demonstration at the school. Quest students also held a can drive to benefit a local food pantry and the middle school students organized a Spirit Week for the entire program. In the spring, the students had a field trip to the New England Aquarium.

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade students also took a trip to Dave and Buster's to celebrate their graduation from middle school. Field Day was attended by most Quest students. Our gym teacher and the staff organized games, noncompetitive activities and art activities. Again the entire Quest community, including all the students in the AIM classrooms, was involved in the field day activities. This year's graduation of 15 eighth grade students was attended by the entire school as well as the student's family and friends. This was the first year that AIM students participated in the graduation ceremony. 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 a farmer from Holly Hill visiting our school several times a month to help our 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders plant their own garden and learn how to compost. Middle school students also volunteered in the cafeteria, art room and gym over the course of the year. These are just some of the learning opportunities and activities available to Quest students this year.

### **Summer Program:**

The 2017 Summer Program was very successful, with 66 students enrolled. 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. Students also had therapies and reading instruction to prevent substantial regression of skills.

### **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 or email contact with parents. This enabled us to share positive accomplishments with parents on a regular basis as well as to quickly address concerns. In addition to the weekly communication, parent council meetings were held. 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 continued to provide in-home behavioral services to Quest students to help them generalize the social and self-regulation strategies learned in the Quest Program. These services are included on a student's IEP and provided before or after school hours at the request of the sending school district.

### **Technology**

The Quest Program, in line with the SSEC Strategic Plan, continues to be dedicated to increasing the availability and usability of both assistive and instructional technology for students and staff. Each professional staff member has been given an iPad or laptop to use for instruction, data collection and accessing teach point and working on the DESE teacher evaluation. Students continue to use iPads, laptops and Chrome Books to support their learning. A set of 9 student iPads continue to be shared among the classrooms. A schedule was created and teachers were able to sign out the devices for classroom use. Teachers utilized the devices for interactive lessons and classes also read books on the iPads using Bookshare. Students also have access to assistive technology, such as Clicker 7 and Read, Write, Google, to help them access the curriculum. 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. To meet the needs of students and the mandate for computer based testing detailed below, six of the 8 Quest classrooms now have a set of Chromebooks for students to use throughout the school day. They are then able to take the MCAS on the device they have been using throughout the school year. Teachers continue to have 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.

Given the availability of devices and students' comfort using technology in school, all Quest students in grades 3-8 took the MCAS 2.0 Computer Based Test (CBT) in the spring of 2018 for the ELA, Math and STE tests.

### **Quest School Handbook:**

A school handbook was revised before school reopened in the fall of 2017. 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.

### **Curriculum**

Instruction in the Quest Program follows the MA Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core for all subject areas. Given that all classrooms are self-contained and students are coming from more than 20 districts, planning lessons that are appropriately rigorous and differentiated at the same time can be challenging for the teaching staff. To support the teachers in their planning and instruction, Quest teachers continued to have a curriculum group this year. Two teachers meet monthly after school to research curriculums being used by our sending districts. They contacted publishing companies and reviewed the sample materials sent. These teachers periodically updated their fellow teachers and provided materials for all to review. With the support of a Director of Student Services for

the current school year this process is already moving forward at a fast pace. The goal is for the Quest Program to have a Math, ELA and Science/Technology curriculum that will meet the needs of the majority of our students.

### **Year in Summary**

In total, the Quest Program serviced 81 students this school year. We began the school year with 67 students and ended the year with 75 students. The 81 students that we serviced came from a total of 24 different school districts.

We serviced 14 S.T.A.R.T.S. students, providing them with an extended evaluation. One student required a different school setting, 2 were mid evaluation at the end of the school year and 11 students remained at the Quest Program for the part or all of the remainder of the school year.

During the 2017-2018 school year, 4 students required a more restrictive setting and 4 moved to more appropriate day school settings. Over the course of the school year, 3 students returned to their sending district and 1 moved to a less restrictive setting. One student left the program due to an emergency termination. In June we graduated 15 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Of the 15 students, 11 students moved to a South Shore Educational Collaborative high school program. Eight will attend South Shore High School, 1 will attend Careers and 2 will attend the AIM/Community School. One student will return to their sending district for high school, 1 will be attending South Shore Vocational Technical High School and 1 will attend another school programs. In total, 5 students were able to return to their sending district from the Quest Program.

Quest enrollment remained steady over the course of the school year. The enrollment was at capacity by the end of the school year. The census remained consisted over the summer of 2018 and Quest began the 2018-2019 school year with 62 students.

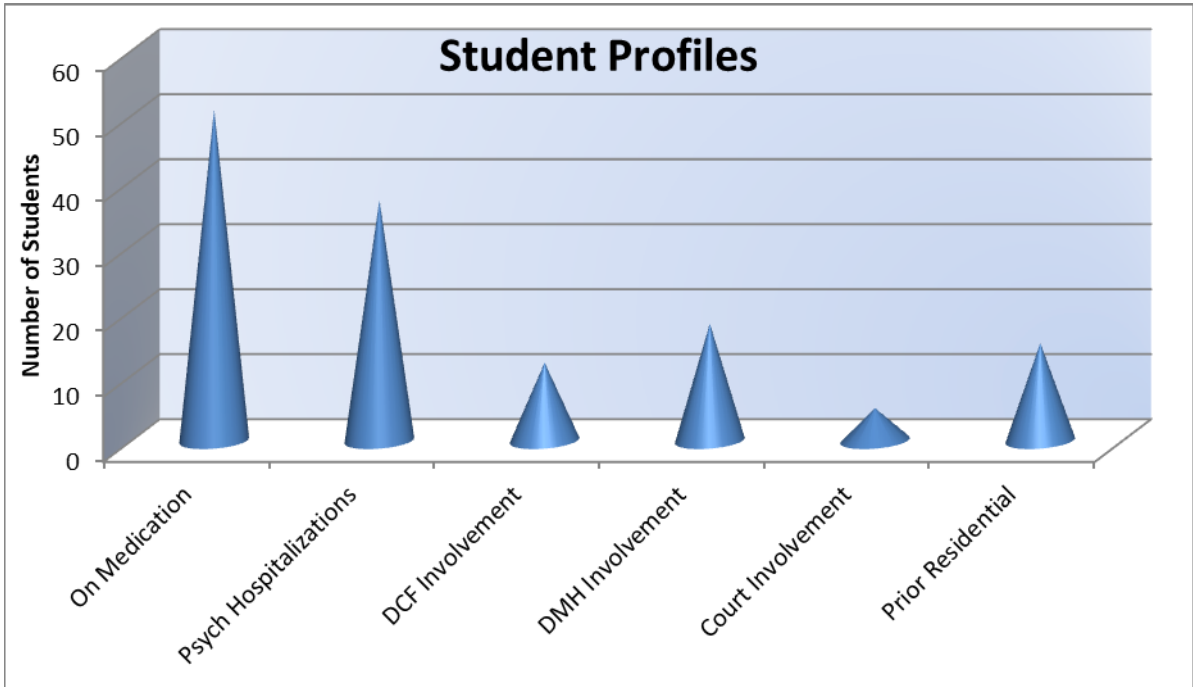


**REPORT FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR  
SOUTH SHORE HIGH SCHOOL  
2017-2018**

**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. Many students have complicated lives, sometimes with community-based agencies involved in their treatment. Table One provides a visual representation of the services represented by our students. Eighty-nine percent of this year's students are prescribed medication to help them manage their diagnoses. Sixty-five percent have received treatment in a psychiatric hospital. Twenty-one percent of this year's students have DCF involvement and thirty-two percent have DMH involvement. Nine percent of this year's students have court involvement, predominately due to CRA petitions. Nine percent of students have prior or current out-of-home placements.

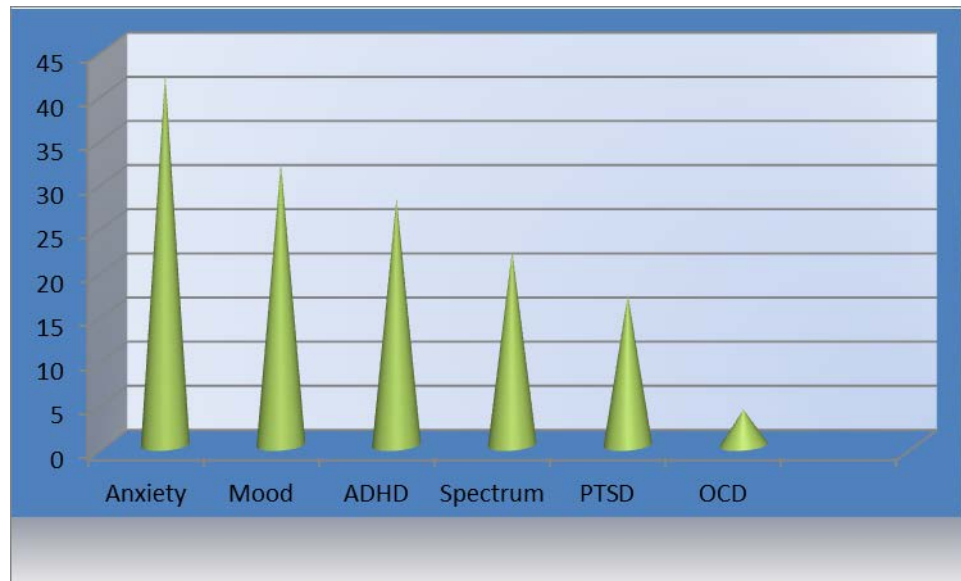
Table 1  
Student Profiles at South Shore High School



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 (seventy-four percent), coupled with a mood disorder (fifty-six percent). Major depression is a common diagnosis, along with dysthymic disorder and

generalized mood disorder. The primary diagnosis for forty-nine percent of our students is attention deficit. Thirty-nine percent of our students are diagnosed with a spectrum disorder with social communication disorders describing the great majority. The percentage of students at South Shore High who are diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder is thirty percent. Seven percent of our students have been diagnosed with obsessive compulsive disorder. 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. More than fifty percent of the 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 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 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.

Table 3  
Staff of SSHS

Number of staff employed by discipline:

- 1 program director
- 1 Behavior Specialist/Assistant Program Director
- 8 Teachers

.6	transition specialist
.6	transition assistant
.6	speech/language clinician
.3	clinical director
3.2	therapists
1	milieu coordinator
5	paraprofessionals
.6	nurse
.85	secretary

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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 2017	48
October	48
November	46
December	45
January 2018	46
February	45
March	47
April	47
May	49
<b>June (after graduation)</b>	<b>37</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 classrooms 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 four of their subjects, and they travel as a group, 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 ninety and ninety-five 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**

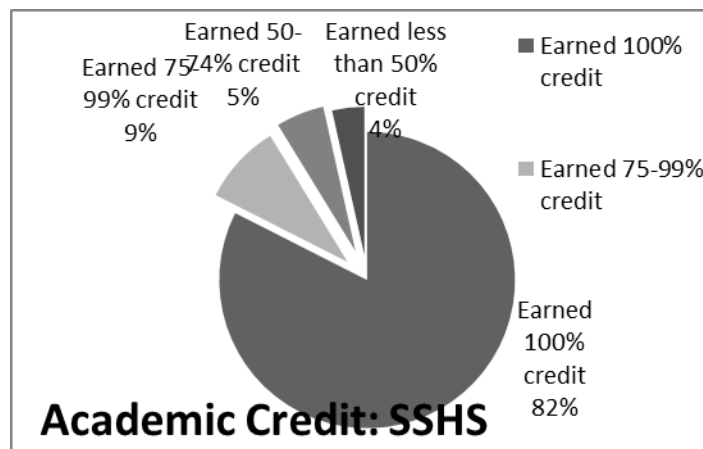
In line with the school's Mission Statement, student progress is monitored by the following program outcomes:

- The student will receive passing grades and earn academic credit in courses.
- The student will maintain at least 85% 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:

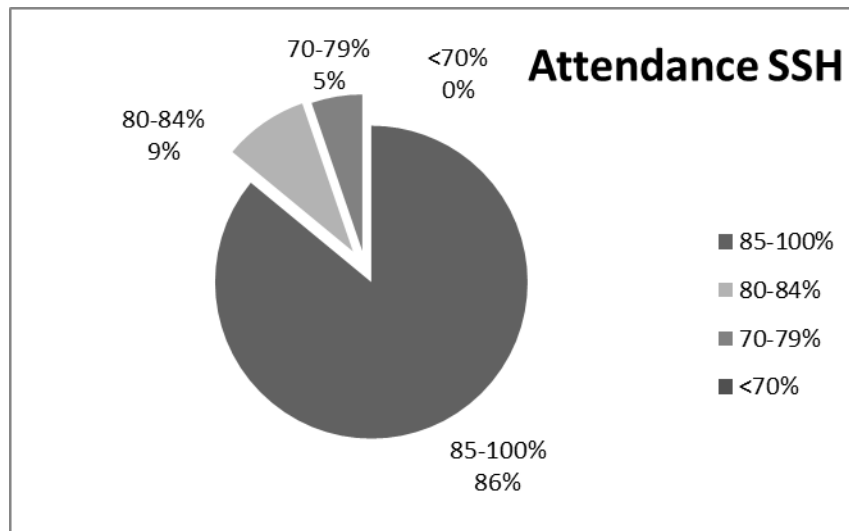
- Outcome One: The student will receive passing grades and earn academic credit in courses.
- See Chart 1 for a delineation of this outcome. Performance on Outcome One is strong as indicated by data from final report cards, showing mastery of Outcome One. Eighty-two percent of the students earned 100%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

Chart 1



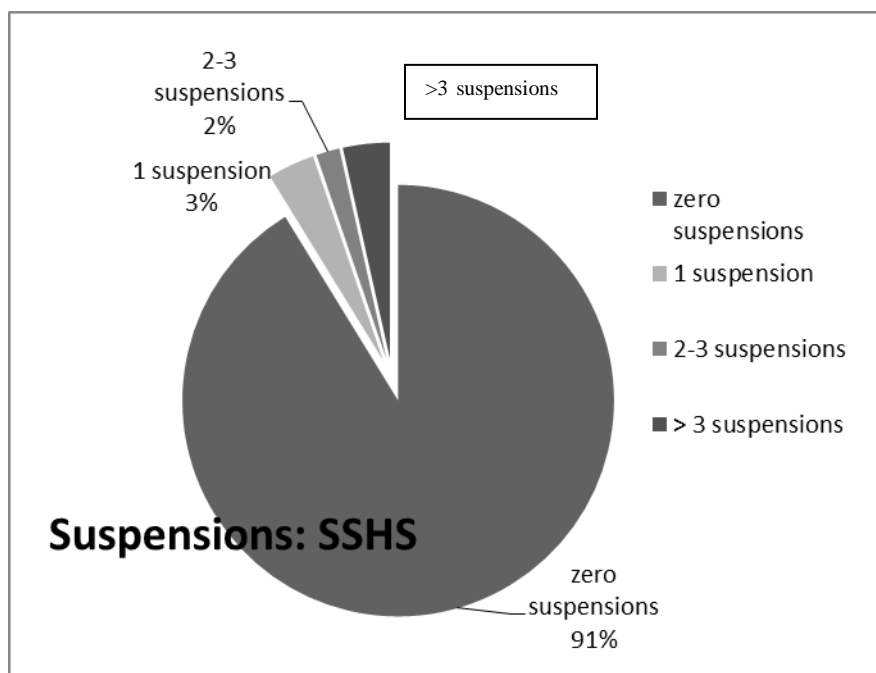
- Outcome Two: The student will maintain at least 85% attendance.
- See chart 2 for a detailing of this outcome. School attendance records yield the data regarding attendance. Performance on Outcome Two at South Shore High is strong, with eighty-six percent of the student population able to meet the stated outcome. The records indicate that eighty-six percent of the student population showed an attendance rate of 85% or higher. Nine percent of the students attended between 89 and 85% of the time. Five percent attended between 70 and 79% of the time. The Team decision for most of these students was that they required a more restrictive level of service. 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 occasional in-home interventions for truant and school phobic students.

Chart 2



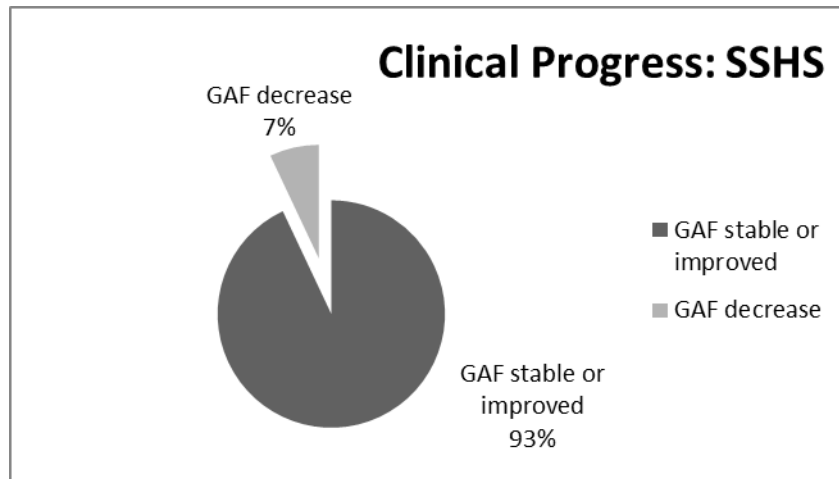
- Outcome Three: The student will receive the supports and interventions necessary to avoid receiving out of school suspensions.
- See Chart 3 for a depiction of this outcome. The data on Outcome Three indicates that ninety-one percent of our students were able to meet this goal. Four percent of the students received one suspension day, two percent received two or three suspension days, and three percent of the students received greater than three 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). 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 ninety-three 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:

- Of the thirteen graduates, nine went directly on to college (including UMass Amherst, Hawaii Pacific University, George Washington University, Massasoit Community College, Quincy College, Landmark College, and Cape Cod Community College), two enrolled at JobCorps, one entered the work force, and one continued at a transition program on the South Shore. Twelve of the thirteen had been referred to and met with an MRC counselor before graduating.
- Five students enrolled in the First Year Seminar course at Quincy College, while other students took a variety of other classes through Quincy College including Statistics, Mandarin, Biology, and Chemistry. The addition of a transition assistant allowed for several aspects of the program to grow, including the establishment of a relationship with Old Navy in the Hingham Shipyard. One student completed a ten week retail internship that resulted in a job offer, and the relationship continued through the summer, when Old Navy invited students to participate in an orientation visit. Two South Shore High School students are in the process of applying for another round of internships. In addition to visits to Massasoit Community College, Quincy College, and Porter & Chester Institute, student-based trips also included the New England Food Show, SnapChef, and trips focused on developing a deeper understanding of public transportation. The transition team developed and began implementing a comprehensive transition rubric to assess students' baseline and growth in regards to transition planning. This new tool will allow for more targeted seminars, trips, and other activities to maximize our impact on students' needs.



- A number of students were able to supplement their SSH classes with online curriculum (through VLA). Courses ranged from credit recovery classes to language classes to AP classes. This allowed students to expand their knowledge base beyond the offerings in a small therapeutic setting, as well as practice the skills that will help them be successful as they continue with post-secondary education. It also provided another avenue for credit recovery to students who had lost ground during high school.
- Our summer program followed a Coastal Ecology theme and was designed to focus on transition readiness activities, incorporating a workshop, project-oriented curriculum, and offering a number of field trips to sites along the coast.
- We began a partnership with VistaPrint that will provide an opportunity for our students to learn about the myriad of jobs available in a global corporation, and that will bring much-needed equipment for our graphic arts program through a corporate grant.

### **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 contacted 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)  
 The Asperger/Autism Network (AANE)  
 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.

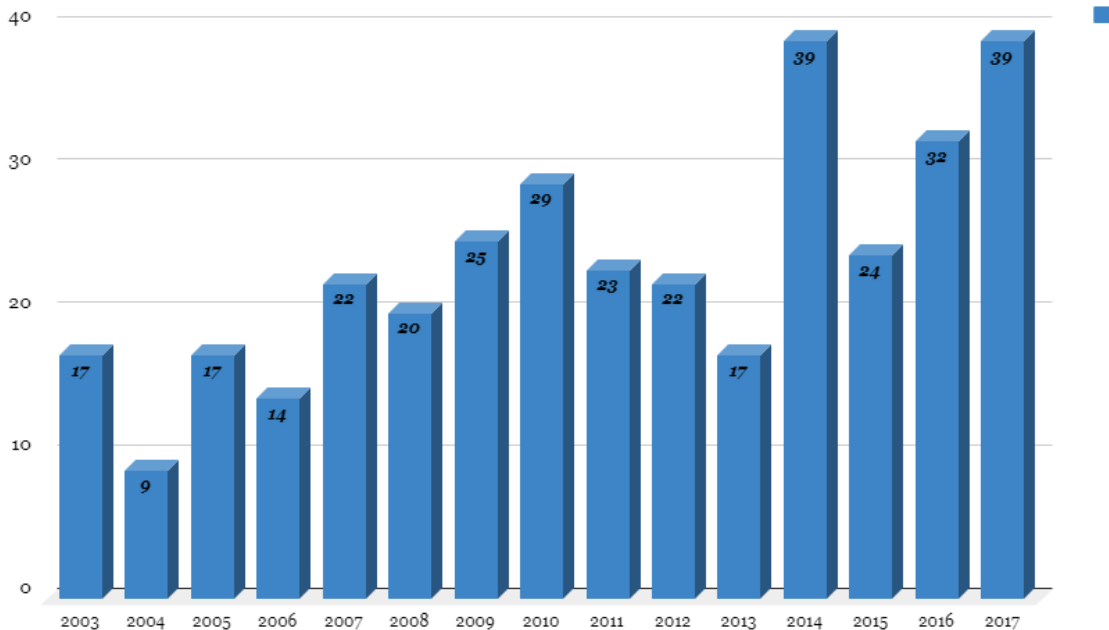
## ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018 Anne Rowland, Psy.D. Program Coordinator

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

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

Table 1

### STARTS ENROLLMENT 2003- 2017



2017-2018 was the 14th operational year of STARTS. As seen in Table 1 above, 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 were enrolled; year eight, 29 were enrolled; year nine, 23 were enrolled; in year ten, 22 were enrolled; in year eleven, 17 were enrolled; in year twelve, 39 were enrolled; in year thirteen, 24 were enrolled; in year fourteen, 32 were enrolled; and this past year 39 were enrolled. This is the second year that STARTS has reached a census of 39.

Of the 39 students enrolled in STARTS this year, 31 were males and eight were females. As in all past years, there were significantly more males than females. Referrals came either from districts' mainstream classrooms or their alternative classrooms within mainstream buildings. Ten evaluations were completed within SSHS, 14 were completed in Quest, and ten were completed within the Careers HS. Also during this past year, four evaluations were completed in the Mini School, and one in Community School.

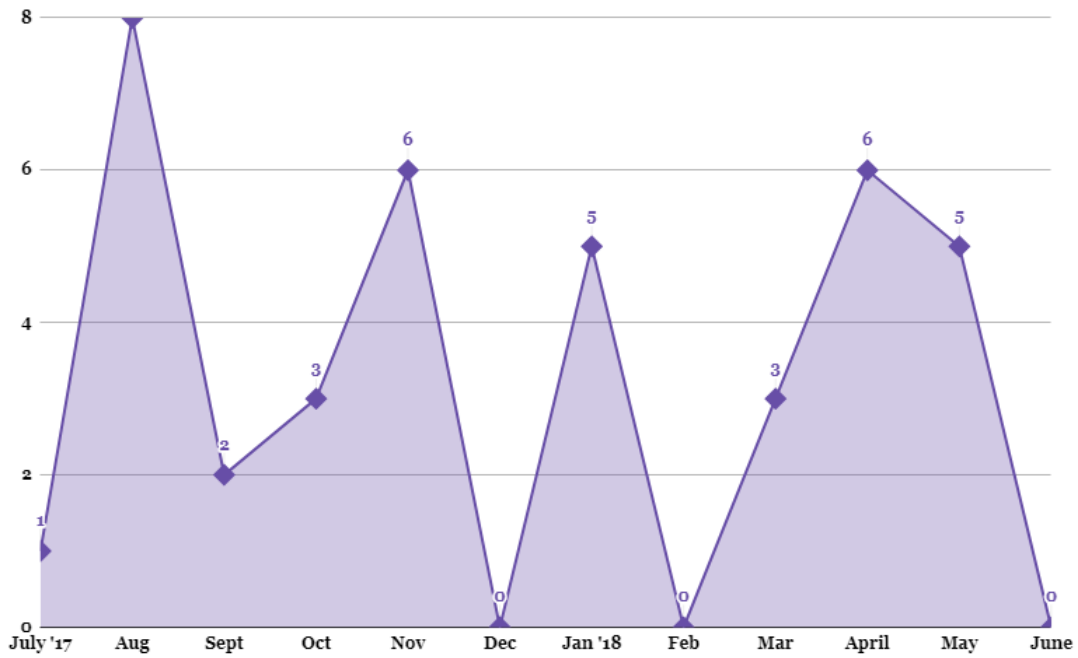
This was the twelfth year that a pre-doctoral psychology intern was placed at SSEC via the South Shore Mental Health internship program, which allowed STARTS to continue to assess elementary age students for evaluation. Within Quest, the intern, Kim Zito, completed nine evaluations and two within Careers HS.

Clinicians Alli Mitchell completed 12 evaluations (six in SSHS, five in Careers HS, and one in Quest), Katelyn Hagan completed one in SSH, Donna Levine completed one in SSHS, and Kathleen Madaus, Stephanie Spencer and Lauren Brierley each completed one in Quest. Tim Handorf and Jenn Stanton each completed one evaluation in SSH, and Shannon Sullivan completed two in CHS, one in SSH, and one in the Mini School.

This year stands out in that we had nine clinicians completing STARTS evaluations simultaneously in the spring. In prior years, typically it would be three or four at most simultaneously. We added two new clinicians (Shannon Sullivan and Stephanie Spencer) who stepped in to complete evaluations.

Table 2

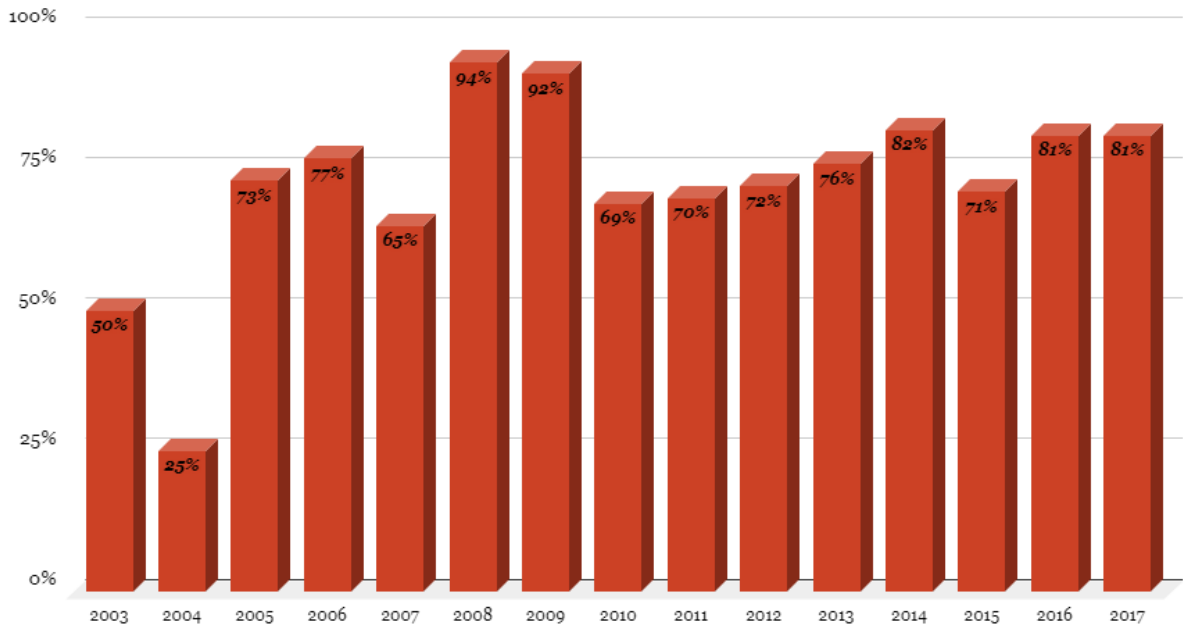
**STARTS Number of Students Beginning Assessment by Month 2017-18**



In the 2016-2017 annual report, the total number of enrollments per month throughout the year were graphed. This year, the graph shows the number of STARTS students who began each month in order to give a more accurate visual of peak and ebb times of referrals. There were peaks at the beginning of the school year, in November, and in April.

Table 3

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



This year, upon completion of the STARTS assessment, two students returned to their district school. One went to a comparable school, three went to specialized schools for ASD, and one student went to a more restrictive program from their STARTS assessment. The remainder (81%) continued in SSEC in the program in which they were assessed.

Percentages of students remaining at SSEC programs from STARTS (Table 3) went from 50% in year one, 25% in year two, 73% in year three, 77% in year four, 65% in year five, 94% in year six, 92% in year seven, 69% in year eight, 70% in year nine, 72% in year ten, 76% in year eleven, 82% remained in year twelve, 71% remained in year thirteen, and in the past two years, 81% remained in SSEC programs after their STARTS evaluation.

Table 4

Primary and Secondary Diagnoses of Students  
( DSM-V)

<u>Primary and Secondary Diagnoses:</u>	<u>Number of Students/Year</u>					
	<u>'12-'13</u>	<u>'13 - '14</u>	<u>'14-'15</u>	<u>'15-'16</u>	<u>'16-'17</u>	<u>'17-'18</u>
Bipolar Disorder	0	1	1	2	0	0
Learning Disorder (Intell Dis)	3	1	3	2	0	1
Anxiety Dis/Social Phobia	6	5	10	10	11	20
PTSD(Specd Trauma)	2	2	5	3	4	7
ODD (DMDD)	7	6	7	5	9	4
Conduct Disorder	0	0	1	3	1	1
Substance Abuse	2	0	3	2	2	2
ADHD /ADD	5	2	12	9	8	5

PDD/Asperger's(ASD)	3	6	9	4	12	9
OCD	0	1	2	0	0	0
Mood Disorder/Dep'n	8	1	6	2	3	10
Personality Dis Traits	0	1	0	0	0	0
Social Comm'n Dis	n/a	n/a	2	1	1	3
Unspec'd Neuro Dis	n/a	n/a	1	0	0	0
Reactive Attachment Dis	0	0	0	0	2	1

The primary and secondary diagnoses are listed in the statistics chart (Table 4).

All students presented with multiple diagnoses. Since most STARTS students 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. Since 2015-16, only DSM-V diagnoses are being used.

Despite the changes in diagnostic criteria between the DSM-IV and V, just looking at the categories of disorders, one can see there is an increase in disorders related to Anxiety and Mood Disorder/Depression. Part of this increase in anxiety diagnoses can be attributed to an increase in students with ASD because those students tend to also carry anxiety related diagnoses.

Table 5: Number of Students Enrolled by District Annually

	<u>'12-'13</u>	<u>'13-'14</u>	<u>'14-'15</u>	<u>15-'16</u>	<u>'16-'17</u>	<u>'17-'18</u>
Abington	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Braintree</b>	4	1	3	2	6	4
Bridge/Rayn	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Cohasset</b>	2	0	0	2	0	1
Easton	0	0	1	2	0	1
East Bridgewater	0	0	0	0	0	1
Foxboro Charter	0	0	1	0	0	0
Foxboro Reg Dist	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hanover	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Hingham</b>	1	0	4	2	1	4
Holbrook	1	0	0	0	2	1
Holliston	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Hull</b>	1	3	5	5	4	2
King Philip RSD	0	0	0	1	0	0
Mansfield	0	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Marshfield</b>	0	0	1	0	0	0
Middleboro	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Milton</b>	1	1	1	1	2	3
Needham	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Norwell</b>	0	1	5	2	0	3
Pembroke	0	0	1	0	1	0
<b>Quincy</b>	1	1	3	1	3	3
<b>Randolph</b>	1	0	1	0	1	0
Rising Tide Charter	0	0	0	0	0	1

Rockland	0	0	0	1	1	0
<b>Scituate</b>	1	3	0	3	1	4
Sharon	0	0	1	1	0	0
Silver Lake RSD	2	2	1	0	2	1
South Shore VoT	0	0	1	0	0	0
Stoughton	3	0	1	0	0	0
Taunton	0	0	0	1	0	0
Walpole	0	0	1	0	1	0
Wareham	0	0	0	0	0	1
Westwood	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Weymouth</b>	1	3	6	0	5	3
Whitman/Han	0	1	0	0	0	1

### STARTS OUTCOMES

Again this year, STARTS had multiple repeat enrollments (both within this year and from previous years) from districts (Table 5), indicating a level of satisfaction through meeting these goals for the districts. Referrals continue to come from member districts (69%), with the top three towns being Braintree, Hingham and Scituate this year. Evaluations were completed with students from three districts (Foxboro Regional, Needham, and Rising Tide Charter) who were new to the STARTS program.

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

The opportunity to integrate STARTS students into other SSEC programs enriches the assessment process and final product; the small team setting provides quick, frequent and thorough communication between staff, as well as creativity and flexibility of programming to meet the myriad needs of students and demands of districts. Additionally, immersion in other programs and utilizing multiple clinicians as evaluators enables STARTS to accept a greater range of students, thus more immediately meeting the needs of the districts. As planned, STARTS built upon its service of providing greater consultation within the districts by increasing the number of classroom visits (three to Hingham by a STARTS evaluator in each of the last two years).

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. As always, the psychiatric evaluations completed by Dr. Jeff Turley are instrumental in providing critical recommendations in addition to comprehensive differential diagnostic assessment.