

# **SOUTH SHORE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE**

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

## **ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COLLABORATIVE BOARD of DIRECTORS 2021 - 2022**

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**SOUTH SHORE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE BOARD  
MEMBERS**

**2021 - 2022**

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

**STAFF OF THE SOUTH SHORE EDUCATIONAL  
COLLABORATIVE**

**2021 – 2022**

Richard L. Reino	Executive Director
Arthur Sullivan	Treasurer
Cynthia J. Lindberg	Executive Secretary
Catherine A. Cole	Accounts Payable
Stacy Lemieux	Accounts Receivable
Diane Baiardi	Business Office Assistant
Kathleen Flaherty	Payroll
Patricia Mason, Ph.D.	Director of Student Services
Anne Rowland	Careers Program Coordinator
Abigail Glynn	Program Secretary
Jon Reynard	Community School Program Director
Gina Pardo	Program Secretary
Maureen Gattine	Mini School Program Director
Karen Thomsen	Program Secretary
Timothy Handorf	Clinical Director
Jennie Williams	Quest Program Coordinator
Lisa Penzo-Johnson	Program Secretary
Cheryl Jacques	South Shore High School Director
Tara Sepeck	Program Secretary
Dawn Flaherty, OTR/L	Director of Ancillary Services
Anne Rowland	STARTS Program Coordinator

## **1. Letter of Introduction**

This annual report is submitted by Richard Reino, Executive Director and the administrators of the schools and programs that comprise the South Shore Educational Collaborative (SSEC) to describe significant challenges, events and accomplishments that occurred during the 2021-2022 school year.

The SSEC primary location is 75 Abington Street in Hingham, MA. In addition, we have programs in both Hull and Randolph. As of October 4, 2021 we were able to return to Randolph High School thanks to sizable investments by the Randolph Public School system to improve some HVAC issues. We were able to hold classes in Hull as usual. All of our locations offered in person learning for the entire school year. Thank you to both the Randolph and Hull public schools for their continued support of our program. Once again as the school year progressed the effects of the pandemic became even more manageable than the previous year. Our most difficult challenge was and still remains finding enough staff to service the increased number of referrals. As we enter the “endemic” phase of the pandemic the severity of the complex learning challenges our students face has exacerbated this shortage. The need for social and psychological services has skyrocketed. As always the SSEC staff has more than risen to the occasion in spite of staffing shortages and higher than normal turnover rate.

We were able to end the fiscal year with a positive revenue balance largely due to an influx of one time money from the State of over \$600,000. Without these funds we would have been facing staff cuts during the year or ending with a negative revenue balance at year’s end.

As always our challenge going forward will be to remain financially solvent. The final FY23 budget was approved by the SSEC Board on April 8, 2022. The FY23 board approved budget of April 8, 2022 was implemented without revision for the start of FY23.

All of our programs experienced an increase in enrollment during the “21 – ‘22 school year. 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 our present building with specially designed classrooms, physical and occupational therapy area, bathrooms, and a therapeutic pool which remained closed during the school year we have greatly enhanced the learning opportunities and environment for the students who attend the Community School.

The three therapeutic schools, (Quest, South Shore High, and Careers High School) are also located at this building and have access to improved technology infrastructure, classroom space. We were able to offer once again the cafeteria/ kitchen and greenhouse course offerings which had been discontinued during the pandemic.

In accordance with the law governing collaboratives, the administration of SSEC has been working to meet the requirements of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The submission of detailed student and staff data for DESE to analyze instructional practices remains an ongoing process that administrative staff at SSEC has been completing in a timely manner as required. Starting with the 2018-2019 school year SSEC added the position of Director of Student Services. Serving in this position was Patricia Mason. Under her leadership we were able to better coordinate, enhance and increase professional development for our staff as well as monitor and utilize student achievement data to track their achievement. She has also enhanced our curriculum to more closely align with the state frameworks. She was able to continue this work during the school year.

Our strategic plan which was developed in 2017 continues to guide us in our planning. Due to the interruption of the pandemic we will be revising our strategic plan during the “22 – ‘23 school year for one year and intend to develop a five year plan during the summer of 2023.

In 2022 we continued to contribute to our OPEB Trust fund, albeit not at the level we had intended. Our goal will be to increase this to pre-pandemic levels during the ’22 – ’23 school year.

Due to the pandemic our cumulative surplus decreased to 7.03% from 11.03% in FY21. We continue to be one to one in terms of the student to device ratio.

Just prior to the pandemic we were in the planning stages of offering an after school academic service for school phobics as well as for students who may need remedial assistance. The original idea was to have this service be in person. Now, however with our successful experience in remote learning we intend to offer this in a customized hybrid model. We were not able to do this during the ’21 – ’22 school year. We will attempt to implement this in the coming school year.

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

## **2. General Information**

The South Shore Educational Collaborative (SSEC) principal address is 75 Abington Street Hingham, MA 02043. The executive director and administrators for SSEC are available at

this location. The telephone number is 781-749-7518. This annual report provides a summary of the schools, services and programs for the academic and fiscal year July, 2021-June, 2022.

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

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

The SSEC is governed by a board of directors comprised of the superintendents from member districts. Each school and program has a director or coordinator who reports to the executive director. The program directors are responsible for daily operations. The board members and SSEC administrators for fiscal year 22 are listed elsewhere in this report.

The following member school districts/ committees have appointed their superintendents to serve on the SSEC Board of Directors for fiscal year 2022:

Braintree	James Lee,
Cohasset	Patrick Sullivan, Ed.D
Hingham	Gary Maestas (Interim)
Hull	Judy Kuehn
Marshfield	Jeffrey Granatino
Milton	James Jette
Norwell	Matthew Keegan
Quincy	Kevin Mulvey
Randolph	Thea Stovell
Scituate	William Burkhead
Weymouth	Robert Wargo
Whitman Hanson	Jeffrey Szymaniak

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

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

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

Each year brings program and financial challenges. For instance, 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. I am pleased to report that since that time our financial position has stabilized due to a combination of cost cutting measures and increased enrollment. FY22 saw us realize a positive operating balance for the sixth year in a row in spite of the pandemic.

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

The schools, programs and services offered at SSEC are specialized and focused to meet the needs of students with intense, complex learning profiles that include physical, medical, emotional cognitive and learning challenges. By the time a student is referred to SSEC, the public school has initiated interventions that have not been able to demonstrate that adequate progress can be accomplished. The SSEC mission states that the collaborative will provide innovative, fiscally sound high quality educational programs and services. Due to the level of specialized educational services required, the tuitions and fees must be reviewed annually to keep cost increases to a minimum. Each year, the Board of Directors and SSEC administrators review the budget and compare tuitions with collaboratives and private schools before approving annual costs. Negotiated salary increases, health insurance, utilities and lease expenses are required financial obligations that had an impact on the annual budget of \$24,106,580.54 for FY22.

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 2021-2022, 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 11 classrooms to SSEC in 2021-2022 allowing for minimum transportation costs for Hull students enrolled in the program. Situations where students travel long distances to attend a private school may cost a school district \$25,000 or more when a monitor is required.



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

SSEC Community School- FY 22 tuition- \$75,201 (includes summer)  
 Private School-Perkins Watertown FY 22 tuition- \$136,865  
 Private School- BC Campus School FY 22 tuition- \$100,354  
**Savings per student \$25,153 to \$61,664**

SSEC Mini School- FY 22 tuition- \$75,201 (includes summer)  
 Private School- Boston Higashi FY22 tuition- \$84,806  
 Private School- May Institute FY 22 tuition- \$128,243  
**Savings per student \$9,605 to \$53,042**

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

SSEC SSH and Careers FY 22 tuition- \$54,792 (includes summer)  
 Private School- Brandon FY 22 tuition- \$87,012  
 Private School- Walker FY 22 tuition- \$98,739  
**Savings per student \$32,220 to \$43,947**

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

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

<b>Electric</b>	<b>Savings</b>	<b>Gas</b>	<b>Savings</b>
Plymouth Public Schools	\$77,168.52	Plymouth Public Schools	\$173,971.98
Town of Plymouth	\$64,281.36	Town of Plymouth	\$95,982.12
Cohasset PS	\$42,916.38	Cohasset PS	\$97,750.38
Cohasset Town	\$50,943.36	Cohasset Town	\$16,649.10
Scituate	\$63,221.34	Scituate	\$128,186.76
North River Collaborative	<u>\$943.80</u>	North River Collaborative	\$27,548.82
		Hull	\$35,434.62
		SSEC	<u>\$1,132.56</u>

**Total electric Savings            \$299,474.70    Total gas savings                    \$576,656.34**

**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. Another example is the after school academic service that will be developed as we emerge from the pandemic. As stated previously in this document we are continuing to develop this opportunity for sending districts and their students.

Our programs offer academic and therapeutic services in a safe environment at staff to student ratios where students are able to achieve success in a setting near their community. The educational services are provided with state of the art technology in a respectful environment. During FY22 we continued the process of standardizing our data collection methods across all programs which was interrupted by the pandemic. Towards that end all programs continue to input data in the Risk Eraser software package. All staff have and will participate in training programs to help facilitate consistent and standardized data collection. In addition, due to the new Medicaid reporting requirements we have customized our student information software, School Brains to seamlessly interface with the new requirements thereby eliminating the need for duplicate entry. Both of these initiatives are ongoing and continue to be refined and improved as we move forward. The need for accurate Medicaid reporting will allow districts to submit proper Medicaid reimbursement requests to the federal government. SSEC has always kept student data for all students. Employing Risk Eraser will not only standardize the process but will help us to consistently analyze that data. Once that data is gathered and analyzed; this will help us in formulating individual student learning plans. Students will then be able to learn at their own pace with instruction that is presented at a level that is challenging, yet attainable.

During the '21 – '22 schoolyear we piloted Mursion Software as part of our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. This proved to be a successful endeavor and beginning in FY23 this software will be implemented. The software provides.... “immersive, simulated practice for essential skills in the workplace powered by humans and assisted by artificial intelligence.” This will be a long term, ongoing process.

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

Professional development has also been offered in a cost effective manner for educators to participate in English Language Learner preparation such as the W.I.D.A. and Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) courses. Unfortunately we were only able to offer internal

training on digital media tools, writing I.E.P 's. and E.L.L. due to the pandemic. As we go forward we will be attempting to broaden these initiatives.

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

The 21-22 school year was successful both financially and programmatically. The credit for which should go to the dedicated front line and administrative staff that I have been blessed to work with. Without them none of this would be possible. The work that goes on here on a daily basis is truly remarkable. I am honored and humbled to be part of this amazing group of people.

The Board of Directors support of the strategic plan has allowed the SSEC to accomplish many of its goals. The development of the five year plan for 2017-2022 has been completed and now serves as the guide for the future development of SSEC. The directors' reports that follow provide specific detail and data related to the programs and schools of SSEC for the 21-22 school year. They present information that provides pertinent information and outcomes relevant to their respective programs.

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard L. Reino".

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

**Director of Student Services**  
**Annual Report**  
**2021-2022**

**Programming Overview**

SSEC programs ran on a much more typical basis this past year, looking at resuming in a systematic manner all pre-COVID activities while looking at ways to expand our curriculum and programs overall. One significant expansion targeted our English Language Services. SSEC hired a part-time ESL instructor to support students. In addition two staff members are in the mentoring process to become licensed ESL teachers. Over the course of the year SSEC was able to establish more consistent services and structures to support those who either required or could benefit from ESL services. For many of our students, there is the presence of a language/communication based disability in addition to having English as a second language. Additional curricular content and materials were acquired as well as modeling for teachers and therapists in how to better support both the student and their families. ESL services were also provided for homebound students as well as part of our home visitation provided as needed or per request of the family. This has all been a successful expansion and will continue to be a focus.

Community based instruction and transitional activities resumed and were gradually increased over the year with full expectation that this will continue to be a high priority for FY23. This includes college/career focus, leisure/recreation, part-time jobs/internships as well as functional life skills. For transition aged students, this community based instruction is tied directly to their transition plan with specific goals as well as the vision statement which is developed with the student across all ages but tied more directly to goals during the transition period.

**Expansion of Math Curriculum**

SSEC completed a 90 day trial of Stemsscopes Math in the spring across programs. This particular program and content is structured in the exact same format as our Stemsscopes science. For those who were already using the science content, the math program was easy to access and use quickly. The math content addresses PreK through Algebra 1. SSEC made a decision to adopt the math portion of Stemsscopes which is now fully integrated into the science content. All programs to varying degrees are using the content with hands on materials.

**Expansion of ELA with focus on diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA)**

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

consideration for how the content will be explored. Books are acquired throughout the year and will remain a high priority going into next fiscal year.

### **Critical Thinking Content & Instruction**

SSEC implemented initial critical thinking content within the QUEST, South Shore High and Career’s High School programs. This was facilitated by Dr. Marc Hauser who is under ongoing contact with SSEC to support data and some of our educational initiatives. The “Life” course was run.

### **ACES curriculum Implemented**

The Mini School and Community School implemented the ACES (Autism Curriculum Encyclopedia) across multiple classrooms (matched based on student need). This is software program based on the principles of applied behavioral analysis. Through this 1:1 programming, students are able to develop identified skills which lay the foundation for increased access to school content including functional life skills and skills associated with executive functioning.

### **Curriculum Equity Reviews**

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

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

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

<b>Content</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Grades</b>	<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Equity, Inclusivity, Diversity Review</b>
Math	Business Math – McGraw Hill (Hybrid)	9-12+	South Shore High & Careers	Completed FY22

<b>Content</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Grades</b>	<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Equity, Inclusivity, Diversity Review</b>
Math	Reveal Math	9-12+	Careers	Scheduled for FY23
Math	Stemscopes Math	K- Algebra	Community/Quest AIM; QUEST, Mini, South Shore High, Careers	Scheduled for FY23
Social Studies/ELA/S cience	Benchmark Curriculum (added Hybrid)	K-8	QUEST, Community, Mini	Completed FY21
Social Studies:	McGraw Hill (Hybrid)	8-12	Quest, SSH, Careers	Completed FY21
Science/ELA	Panorama Science - Hybrid (National Geographic: Cengage)	K-6	QUEST, Community, Mini	Completed FY21
Science	Stemscopes (Accelerated Learning)	K-12	QUEST, Mini, AIM, SSH, Careers	Completed FY22

### **Evidenced Based Reading Programs**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Grade(s)</b>	<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Equity, Inclusivity, Diversity Review</b>
Reach Reading (Hybrid): (National Geographic: Cengage)	Prek-6	QUEST	FY23
Wilson Foundations	Prek-1	QUEST, Community, Mini	FY23

<b>Name</b>	<b>Grade(s)</b>	<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Equity, Inclusivity, Diversity Review</b>
Wilson	2-12+	QUEST, Community, Mini, Careers, SSH	FY23
Spire Reading	K-12	QUEST	FY23
SIPPS : Systematic Instruction in phonological awareness, phonics & sight words (Benchmark)	K-12	QUEST	FY23
Reading A-Z	K-12	Community, QUEST, MINI	Completed FY21

**Additional Literature (ongoing reviews)**

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

## **Equity Review Outcomes**

### **Text reviews of fiction, non-fiction**

Some of the texts reviewed focused in on friendships across cultures and struggles associated with transitioning to higher grades (middle, high school) and the impact on those friendships and maintain these relationships. Other texts reviewed looked at the Black Lives matter movement and history as well as struggles with immigration. These were written from the point of view of the teenager which assisted in making greater connections to some of these realities even if they were not their personal stories to be told. They created (along with other topics) opportunities to explore different lived experiences while opening up the conversation to their own even when they were quite different. The texts have expanded (both fiction and non-fiction) much deeper into real-world situations and the impact these have on a person their age or close to. There has been a substantial addition of texts and biographies on people with disabilities. This was the result of action taken on our first equity review in FY21. In addition, racially diverse biographies were added to the collection. It will be important that the next step focuses in on diverse autobiographies to hear from the individual's perspective vs. someone else's interpretation of their story. This would make for a wonderful unit where both were compared and looked at critically by students and staff as part of the critical thinking classes. Reading A-Z and Benchmark Learning has texts in French and Spanish as well as additional English language supports and language proficiency modifications.

### **McGraw Hill Business Math**

There was strong representation of diverse populations within the text and example problems. This was also evidenced in the vocabulary utilized and the names of people and places. Representation of diverse cultures and gender was not stereotypic. There is limited detail in the text around many of the ratings from the CRE. Some of this may be based on the focus of math. That being said, there is diverse visual and textual representation. Word problems were constructed in an inclusive manner. There is not a direct equity focus in the word problems/examples. This is something that could be supplemented with additional math content or extended across other disciplines to enrich the content overall.

### **Stemscopes Science**

Typical gender roles were noted in the pictures. There was no evidence of varied gender identity. This is something to look at more closely in how we supplement content as it does not represent the student at SSEC or the broader world. There is variation noted in the Global Climate Change unit in how it discussed the impact of human activities and dependence on natural resources. There were consistent examples of multi-racial and varied cultural representations in the photos and video which created opportunities to discuss a variety of science topics within US as well as other countries. This could easily be related to local context to make stronger connections with the students while broadening their understanding of how various topics impact society on a broader level.



## **Equity Review Summary**

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

## **Stonehill Partnership**

FY22 was the second year SSEC participated in the Stonehill College Teacher Residency Program. SSEC accepted four participants three worked as paraprofessionals in Quest and one teacher from South Shore High School who was seeking a second license. Students participating in this program continue to receive a special tuition rate from the college and have an opportunity to finish their degree and license in one year (moderate Prek-8 or 5-12). We anticipate offering this opportunity again in the FY23 school year.

## **Professional Development**

Professional development focused in on data collection systems and analysis as well as increased consistency in how the benchmarking tools (iReady) were used to better understand student learning. This remains an ongoing priority for SSEC across programs.

## **Benchmark & Screening Assessments**

### **Dyslexia & Dyscalculia Screening**

**iReady:** IReady was implemented in each program during the FY21 school year and continued into FY22. The second year is allowing for more focused work as the teaching staff and the students are both more familiar with the format. The interventions supports are available to teachers as needed in both the areas of reading and math. The testing remains difficult for some of our students due to frustration, regulation and other needs which may take priority at any given moment. It is hoped that over time, this tool will become more familiar and just part of the typical routine throughout the year similar to IXL which remains in use across content areas as a form of formative assessment and skills/concept reinforcement.

**Dyslexia Screening:** SSEC implemented the Shaywitz Dyslexia Screener for grades K-3 in FY21 and has now completed a second year of implementation. This is used in combination with i-Ready information to make initial judgments around possible reading based disabilities as well as to monitor those who have been identified. SSEC is currently looking into the adolescent version of this tool to expand our screenings across all grades.

### Summary of Evidenced Based Benchmarking & Screening Tools

Content	Title	Grades	Implementation	Next Steps	Equity, Inclusivity, Diversity Review
ELA & Math	iReady (includes ELA & Math intervention plans)	K-12+	Broader implementation in FY21 was expanded in FY22	Continue to offer training and support	FY23
IXL	ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies	K-12+	Broad use during FY21; continued use in FY22	Continue use for FY23	FY23
Dyslexia Screening	Shaywitz	K-3	Fully implemented in FY21	Continue use	FY23

#### **DESE Summer 2022 FC523-525-527**

SSEC was one of 60 Collaborative/School Districts who received the summer ESY grant for \$100,000 for summer 2022 and it is anticipated that another \$100,000 will be available to SSEC for the summer of 2023. With this money, SSEC was able to substantially improve high quality hands on STEAM materials across all programs including but not limited to; Lego building and coding systems, updates to our 3-D printing technology, math manipulatives, and an extensive expansion of science materials. In addition there was focus in expanding the diversity of our texts to continue our commitment to improving belonging and equity. Community based experiences were well supported by the grant. Students had weekly trips for leisure & vocational exploration. Additional activities were brought to campus to provide additional access to varied experiences. For the summer of 2023, more extensive planning and budgeting will be conducted as the initial awards came in on May 5<sup>th</sup> giving a little less time to assess how ESY could be enhanced.

#### **FY22 Professional Presentations & Representation on Professional Organizations**

##### **Learning Disabilities of America Massachusetts Chapter:**

- Assist in formation of the Massachusetts Chapter (completed)
- Current Treasurer

**New England Educational Research Organization (NEERO):**

- Co-Strand Director for Curriculum & Instruction
- Assist in annual conference

**MACTE (Massachusetts Association of Colleges for Teacher Education) Spring 2022 Presentation**

Project Solve: using both the quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data mined from the national study to focus in on Massachusetts, this session examined burnout as an overarching factor with those who chose to leave the field, may persist and/or desire to stay within the field and those teachers who emerged as innovators.

“New England Teachers Pandemic Experiences: Changing Commitments to the Profession”

**New England Educational Research Organization: Presentation 2022:**

Second year research findings: Project Solve: initial qualitative analysis of interview data. (New England Data)

“Voices from the Classroom: A National Study of Teachers’ Pandemic Experiences”

**American Association of Colleges For Teacher Education (AACTE) 2022 National Presentation:**

Project Solve: The session highlighted the perspective of teachers surrounding technology use before, during, and after COVID-19, based on a multi-year national study.

“Teaching While Learning: How Educators' Pandemic Pedagogy and Technology Preparedness Should Inform Teacher Education”

## **ANCILLARY SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022**

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

Occupational/Physical/Speech Therapy Services-  
During the 2021-2022 school year, The South Shore Educational Collaborative employed a full-time Therapy and Assistive Technology Services supervisor, a full time Therapy Services coordinator, ten physical therapists (eight full time, two part-time) , three full-time physical therapy assistants, thirteen full-time occupational therapists, one full-time occupational therapy assistant, and seventeen speech-language pathologists (fourteen full time, three part-time) . Therapists have conducted evaluations, and provided direct and consultative services for students in five Collaborative programs, four 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 2021-2022 school year, the South Shore Educational Collaborative Center for Assistive Technology Team (CAT Team) consisted of a Therapy and Assistive Technology Services supervisor, Therapy coordinator, two assistive technology specialists, and a speech/language pathologist. The SSEC Technology Coordinator consulted on an as needed basis. The CAT Team assistive technology specialists and speech language pathologist worked together three and half hours each week from September through June to conduct assistive technology evaluations and follow-up consultation services for school districts. In addition, each CAT Team member was assigned to provide on-going Assistive Technology consultation to SSEC programs and to school districts who requested this service.

### **SSEC Therapy and Assistive Technology Service Outcomes for 2021-2022 School Year:**

#### Outcome # 1:

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

#### Evaluation Design:

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

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

Analysis/Discussion:

The data collected during the 2021-2022 school year reflects the types of conditions/environment therapy services were delivered. In-person learning was available to all students attending SSEC programs in the 2021-2022 school year. However, service delivery also included remote learning via individual, small group or live stream classroom formats for students who were not able to attend school in-person due to medical/health conditions as determined and documented by a physician.

**Figure 1**

Type of Therapy Service:	Occupational Therapy	Physical Therapy	Speech/Language Therapy
Information Sharing (only no other service)	0%	0%	0%
Accommodations/Modifications (only no consult or direct service)	3%	0	0%
Consultation	10%	10%	8%
*Direct therapy service in context	5%	13%	5%
*Direct therapy service in and out of context	63%	62%	67%
*Direct therapy service out of context	19%	15%	20%

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

#### Outcome #2

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

**Figure 2**

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

#### Analysis/Discussion:

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

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech language pathologists who work in SSEC programs continued to utilize a comprehensive documentation tool to develop therapy intervention plans for students, track student attendance and service delivery, record therapy session notes, collect data on student IEP goals/benchmarks for monitoring student progress, complete School-based Medicaid billing documentation and therapy outcomes. In addition, therapists completed required remote learning and telehealth documentation as indicated.

- On a monthly basis, all SSEC occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech language pathologists met in-person and virtually via Google Meet to discuss topics related to therapy service delivery, intervention planning and implementation of School-based Medicaid Program directives.
- SSEC assistive technology specialists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech language pathologists conducted evaluations for all referred students in-person and virtually if applicable.
- The SSEC CAT Team collaborated closely with the SSEC Technology Coordinator to assess and implement use of appropriate technologies to support simultaneous in-person and remote instruction for students.
- The SSEC CAT Team coordinated access to online learning resources and provided Google Classroom/ Google Tools online training for SSEC staff, students and families.
- Throughout the 2021-2022 school year, members of the SSEC CAT Team collaborated closely with team members to coordinate AAC device trials for students and acquisition of communication devices if deemed appropriate.
- The SSEC Center for Assistive Technology coordinated bulk Assistive Technology software, app and subscription purchases at reduced costs for SSEC programs.
- SSEC Center for Assistive Technology and SSEC Therapists continued to assist in the coordination of repairs, adaptations, and ordering of new adaptive equipment through meetings, email and phone communication with the families and vendors. Trials for new speech devices were completed to ensure the students have access to the most appropriate communication device. The assistive technology team and therapists wrote funding letters and letters of medical necessity for any necessary adaptive equipment. Additionally, SSEC continued to loan adaptive equipment to support access for students who attended school via remote learning due to medical/health conditions as determined and documented by a physician.

#### SUMMARY OF ANCILLARY SERVICES:

During the 2021-2022 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 298 students. Physical therapy services were provided for 242 students. Speech/Language services were provided for 288 students.

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



# Careers High School - Annual Report

2021 – 2022 School Year

Anne Rowland, Psy.D., Program Coordinator

## *CHS Program Description*

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

### **Capacity**

Careers High School moved from a programmatic capacity of 37 to 40 students in 2015-16. Since then, while the age range of the student population typically is from 13 through 18 years, older students have remained enrolled if the educational Team determines it meets the students’ needs. In 2021-22, the age range was 13 - 19, and one waiver request was required (and granted).

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

There are five academic classrooms and one Greenhouse Lab in the Careers High School wing of the 75 Abington Street campus. Classrooms are staffed by certified special education teachers with the support of paraprofessionals. Four of the classrooms emulate the more traditional comprehensive high school model in the sense that the students move from one content class to another content class. While class size is dependent upon population need, it generally ranges between six and nine students.

The fifth classroom is the Transition Classroom that is partially self-contained for the core academic classes (with some exceptions). It too is staffed by a special education teacher and a paraprofessional, and can accommodate up to 12 students. The student population identified for this classroom tends to have greater difficulty with change and

may have diagnoses that include Autism Spectrum Disorder (DSM-V), anxiety disorders and nonverbal learning disabilities. These are also typically the younger students enrolled in CHS. Students are encouraged to take one or more classes in the other four classrooms as their comfort level and skills increase.

### **Staffing**

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

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

### **Transition Programming**

Originally, Careers High School developed a Transitions Program based on Jobs for American Graduate work standards. This program embedded these standards into the daily schedule. Students' schedules have them participating in on and/or off site transitional-vocational projects during their school day. These include work study experiences, community service activities, paid positions in competitive employment situations, hands-on pre-vocational projects during school, and dual enrollment in college courses.

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

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

## ***2021-2022 Year in Summary***

### **Student Population**

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

### **COVID-19 Pandemic (Year Two)**

The 2021-22 academic year was still memorable for the pandemic, but in different ways than the past two years. Classes and the schedule were able to be run similar to pre-pandemic years, but maintaining the necessary staffing level to effectively run the classes was the greatest challenge this year. In fact, for the first time, as with other SSEC programs, CHS reached out to an agency (Maxim) to hire a paraprofessional. Unfortunately she left after two days. CHS incurred three significant staff leave of absences, including the Greenhouse Teacher who was out for two separate elongated periods throughout out the year, and our Administrative Assistant was on leave for five months doing student teaching. Fortunately CHS was permitted to hire Densie Rugman again to cover the void at the front desk. One of our paraprofessionals never returned from her maternity leave, and another one had to be let go due to issues around chronic absence and tardiness.

As part of the DESE Accelerated Learning initiative, CHS did engage in some new pursuits and activities in 2021-22. The teachers implemented regularly scheduled assessments (such as iReady) in an effort to support and increase student learning; in an effort to build feelings of belonging and community, surveys were sent out in fall and spring to parents and to students to gather feedback and involvement. The most prevalent feedback from the parents who responded included their feeling connected through frequent two way communication. Students commented on their liking the addition of a Student Council this year, and the subsequent activities that the students helped to organize (Fall field day, Color Wars, Scavenger Hunt, e.g.). CHS began to acknowledge and celebrate student birthdays, handed out treats at Halloween to the Quest students, continued interacting with the Healthy Hints Whiteboard in the center of the CHS hallway, created T-shirts, and made inspirational cards for their staff and peers who

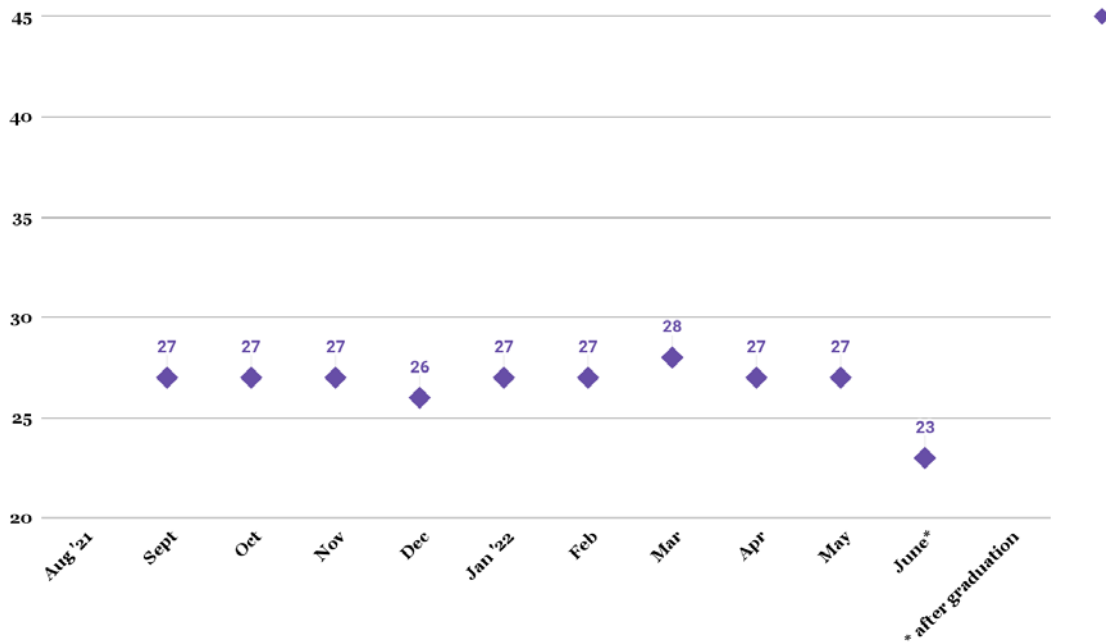
were on leave to help them feel connected. And, one of the positives of COVID-19 includes the continuation of walking laps outdoors or within the building; CHS student and staff Walking Group averaged .86 miles per day!

Another addition to CHS this year was incorporating the Critical Thinking class (which we titled Perspective Taking) with Marc Hauser. During the two fall terms, he joined Mark Lemieux’s Health class, and during the two Spring terms, he joined Carolyn Ray’s class. Both were successful in that the presenter and materials were well received by the students, and the two teachers appreciated and learned from being exposed to Marc’s curriculum and teaching style. The next step will occur in 2022-23 school year where Marc will join Ryan Cirillo’s science class and help Ryan to deliver the Biology curriculum in a way that increases and deepens the learning process.

Students continued to be able to work in the Copy Center (and again produced and sold 13,700 greeting cards as in past years), and some of the other vocational offerings (Kitchen, Greenhouse) could now be made available due to lifted pandemic related restrictions. CHS issued seven work permits to students who had gained employment out in the community, and a total of 15 CHS students gained employment by the end of the year.

Table 1

CHS STUDENT ENROLLMENT 2021-2022



CHS began the year with a census of 27 students. Enrollment fluctuated only slightly throughout the year (Table 1), although there was significant turn over of students (7

unenrolled, 7 enrolled). Of those who unenrolled from CHS, one moved out of state, one went to night school, one went to residential school, one was under house arrest, two chose to get full time jobs, and one returned to district. CHS then graduated four students in June (one planned to go to Job Corps, one planned to go to Massasoit but changed her mind, one planned to train to be an EMT, and one joined the PipeFitters Union). The SSEC gymnasium became fully available in June, so CHS was able to hold its graduation ceremony in the gymnasium again after two years of a different venue.

### ***Plans for Future: 2022- 2023***

Given the elimination of COVID-related restrictions, the high schools are planning for a return to continued integration of CHS and SSH, specifically staff overlap, course integration, and an increase in standardization of training for staff. Additionally, CHS is striving to continue to expand and increase student vocational offerings and opportunities when/where possible in the community.

Within the building, thanks to the ESY Grant, CHS is able to offer more opportunities for team building and belonging through recreation. As we have all experienced, especially in schools, a result of COVID has been separation, isolation, fatigue, and fewer electives and activities. However, the addition of some recreational activities (ping pong, Jenga, Karaoke) is allowing our students and staff to play and laugh together. We believe that this joy and community bonding is part of why the student body will be more engaged academically, socially, and receptive to and compliant with the new cell phone policy this fall. These three activities in particular also provide opportunities for OT and S/L specialists to work with students in different, more creative ways than they had been able to do previously. Staff and students also will be learning together how to integrate technology such as 3-D printing and the new Lego sets that require programming. Lastly, the newly developed PBS (Positive Behavioral Support) Team will be working with Marc Hauser and Julie Foshey to analyze educata data to make programmatic changes that will increase student time on learning and prosocial behavior.

# 2022 Community School Annual Report

## Description of School/Student Population

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

### Program Overview:

The Community School uses a standards based curriculum linked to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. This curriculum is adapted to meet the diverse needs of each student with a focus on functional academics geared toward individualized developmental needs. Thematic interdisciplinary units, standards based math and reading instruction programs are utilized to allow the students to access the general education curriculum while working on skills related to academics, communication, activities of daily living, social/emotional development, self-regulation, adaptive behavior, vocation/pre-vocation and leisure/recreation. Most Community School students enter the general education curriculum and participate in the MCAS Alternate Assessment through access and entry points according to grade level standards. The content related to each standard area is then individualized to meet student needs. A small portion of Community AIM students access the curriculum at or close to grade level and participate in on-demand MCAS testing with individualized accommodations.

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

1. Equals Math (access points to grade level along with extensive online materials)
2. Reading A-Z (online program)
3. iReady
4. Panorama

5. Unique Learning Systems (differentiated fully adapted integrated units)
6. Brain Pop
7. Scholastic online
8. News 2 You adapted readers
9. Social Thinking
10. Zones of Regulation
11. Help Kidz Learn

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

### **Evidence Based Methodologies:**

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

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

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

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

**Technology-aided Instruction and Intervention:** This includes the extensive use of advanced speech generating devices (SGD) to support the augmentative communication needs of the students. The Picture Exchange System (PECS) is used with specific students in both low tech and high tech formats. Other low tech options include tangible symbols, real and representative pictures and modified sign language.

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

### **Technology:**

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

### **Accommodations:**

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

### **Community Based & Community Referenced Instruction Content (altered during 2021-2022 school year):**

Community based instruction remained largely on hold during the 2021-2022 school year to ensure compliance with Covid protocols and mitigate risk. Classroom teams worked to provide functional life skills, pre-vocational and vocational skills training within the school setting. They also focused on the development of adaptive behavior skills that will be generalized to community settings when this type of instruction resumes.

When Community based instruction resumes, all students given parental/guardian permission are eligible to participate. Beginning in preschool, students attend regular field trips related to the curriculum and individual learning goals with a focus on generalization of learned skills and acquisition of novel skills related to safety,



communication, socialization and overall independence. Community based instruction is expanded throughout each grade with increased focus on functional life skills. Examples include;

1. Weekly shopping trips for school supplies
2. Leisure based opportunities
3. Varied vocational and vocational related opportunities
4. Academic/content themed outings

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

### **Program staff & services include:**

Special education teachers, teachers of students with visual impairments, multi-sensory impairment, orientation & mobility services, assistive technology services, paraprofessionals, speech, physical & occupational therapists, nursing, social workers/clinicians, adaptive physical education teacher, music therapist and BCBA or behavior level staff. We also offer yoga, therapeutic swimming (on-hold for 2021-2022), and therapeutic riding.

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

### **School Year Program:**

During the 2021-2022 school year, students attended 180 school days beginning in August/September through June. Program hours are 9:00am to 3:30pm. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of each month are early dismissals at 12:00pm. This provides time for staff to participate in professional development opportunities.

### **Extended School Year Program:**

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

students studying in a related field (education, nursing, occupational/physical/speech therapy etc.).

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

The AIM program is a hybrid program model that includes the South Shore Educational Collaborative's Community School and Quest Programs. This model was introduced at the start of the 2015-2016 school year and has now grown from a single classroom to four classrooms serving students from both the Community School and the Quest School. The AIM program focuses on higher level academic content for students who would typically attend the Community School and more individualized modifications for the students who would typically attend the Quest school. Students in these classrooms receive individualized attention for social, emotional, and academic needs. Students benefit from the diverse experience provided to them with access to social groups and a focus on their social learning through the social thinking curriculum. There is an integrated social skills curriculum that includes strong positive behavioral supports. Social skills focus on the recognition of feelings that occur throughout the day and the affects these have on the student's academic and social relationships. Each classroom utilizes the Social Thinking Curriculum to help students identify how our social interactions impact the way others think and feel, and how we, ourselves, interpret the world and social situations around us. Students learn a variety of skills which include sharing space effectively with others, learning to work as part of a team, and developing relationships with family, friends, and classmates. The curriculum focuses on various strategies and coping skills to help manage emotions throughout the school day in order to better access academics and social situations. Counseling based on individualized student needs is also offered. Students at the High School level participate in many volunteer vocational job opportunities either at school or in the community. Opportunities to collaborate on a social, vocational and academic level with students from the Careers and South Shore High Programs continue to grow and be explored on an individual student basis.

### **Home Based Services:**

The Community School in collaboration with the sending school district may provide consultation and direct home support for students deemed eligible through the IEP process. These services include but are not limited to;

1. Direct behavioral support
2. Intensive Toilet Training (Preschool through 21 years)
3. Parent training
4. Transition supports which may focus on;
  - 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

### 2021-2022 Classroom Breakdown:

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

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

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

High School/Transition:	Four classrooms for students grades nine through 12+.
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### 2021-2022 Program Information and Outcomes:

The 2021-2022 School Year began with approximately 108 students across 17 classrooms at 75 Abington Street in Hingham. In October of 2021, upgrades to the HVAC system at Randolph High School allowed the Community school to reopen its classroom space at that location. This space had been closed to students and staff since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and remained closed for the duration of the 2020-2021 school year. This reopening marked an important step forward while also relieving some of the spatial constraints of condensing 17 classrooms into a space meant for 14. Administrative staff and classroom staff were able to coordinate this move in a manner that caused little to no disruption to student learning and routines. Once complete, important program spaces such as the motor room, music classroom and documentation areas in Hingham were able to be utilized as intended. This provided both a morale boost to staff and more focused and functional programming for the students at both locations.

The 2021-2022 school year presented with continued challenges related to Covid-19. Although most students and all staff returned to in-person learning/teaching, the ever changing protocols and general concern provided what can only be described as a consistent cloud over staff, students and families that prevented a full return to normalcy. Program spaces were required to be utilized in a multi-purpose manner and the gym was inaccessible for the majority of the school year so that it could be used for the aerosol generating procedures of medically complex students. Our therapeutic swimming pool in Hingham remained closed for the duration of the school year. Staff shortages related to illness and the limited number of applicants to fill support positions lead to additional strain and demand on the Community Schools dedicated staff. Despite these challenges and the negative impact on morale, the staff, students and families persevered. The Community School staff accepted this challenge and went above and beyond to implement the programming that our students require. This is evidenced through the many successes listed below.

1. Most students returned to an in-person learning model
  - a. Students who had not received in-person instruction since the start of the Covid-19 closure safely returned to in-person learning.
  - b. Community School staff continued to support medically excused students through hybrid and virtual learning models in a manner that met their complex and diverse needs.
  - c. Community School staff continued to support their students with their traditional high standards through numerous challenges.
  - d. Referrals and program numbers stabilized and began to increase.
2. Successfully maintained health and safety protocols for both students and staff.
3. Continued to offer diverse professional development opportunities during planned half days.
  - a. The virtual format continued to allow access to more diverse professional development opportunities.
  - b. AIM- Growth and collaboration between Quest and Community School improved by identifying a Lead Teacher and holding monthly meetings aimed at improving the use of shared resources and minimizing differences in student programming and expectations.
4. Fundraising/Community Service
  - a. Several classrooms lead successful program fundraisers.
    - i. This enabled the purchase of important materials benefiting the students.
  - b. AIM students developed and ran program wide fundraising to help children in foster care.
  - c. Some classrooms supported causes outside of SSEC by raising money for student selected charitable causes.
5. Community School teachers recognized both students and staff for special
  - a. Accomplishments through a student/staff spotlight.
6. Teachers promoted several student centered art projects which boosted staff
  - a. Morale and recognized student work in a special and meaningful manner.
7. Nursing navigated the additional challenges that they were presented with and went above and beyond in managing the ever changing protocols and procedures related to both students and staff.
8. Successfully resumed traditional in-person graduation format
  - a. Recognized 8 students who will turn 22 over the next year.

## **MINI SCHOOL PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT**

**Maureen M. Gattine, MS., BCBA, LABA  
Program Director  
School Year 2021-2022**

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 2021-2022 school year, the Mini School Program provided educational services to 70 students (September, 2021) in classrooms located in Hull at the Jacobs Elementary School, Memorial Middle School, Hull High School and one Randolph High School classroom. Public school settings provide Mini School students the opportunity to interact with the general education population both in mainstreaming classes for some students and throughout the school environment. Due to Covid-19, we had started the year off with restrictive policies and procedures and then January, 2022 the policies were less restrictive with many who were vaccinated, etc. The Mini School also had eleven students that were enrolled while living at Agape Inn, Holbrook which was a long term and respite program for individuals with developmental disabilities, autism and other behavioral and emotional needs. In February, 2022 Agape Inn closed and students were exited from the Mini School program and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) moved the students into residential school placements.

SSEC Mini School students require a multi-disciplinary team teaching approach with a high staff/student ratio. Each student's daily programming focuses on teaching skills he/she needs in order to be as independent as possible. Students receive the following services from specialists as needed: Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Assistive Technology and Adapted Physical Education. We also continued instruction in teaching Drums Alive with the four instructors that we have. Drums Alive is an all inclusive, comprehensive, multi-generational, culturally diverse Brain and Body program for all ages and abilities that empower participants to achieve healthy lives through research based fitness and wellness applications. This evidence based program encompasses music, rhythm, psychological, educational, emotional, physical and social skills. 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 training 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 WELLE, 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, Civil Rights and Title IX training. Shannon Sullivan, Mini School Clinician, educated by MARC (Bridgewater State College) as a trainer for Anti-Bullying/Cyber Bullying Intervention and Prevention. Our Nurses, Sue Kelly and Sarah Remington continue to be a Trainer in CPR and First Aid. Maureen Gattine, Pat DiCristofaro, Ellen Leahy and Tracy Walsh continue to be trainers for WELLE, formerly known as NAPPI (physical intervention and de-escalation). Shannon Sullivan, clinician was trained this school year to also be a WELLE trainer. The Mini School continues to use Panorama Science by National Geographic with printed texts. It is science based content that engages students to learn more about the world around them. The Mini School continues to use Stemsopes for science curriculum in three of the classrooms that are working toward grade level standards. It is aligned with the curriculum frameworks and is an online 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum that guides students in rich scientific discourse through modeling, questioning, and interactive activities. The Mini School also uses Benchmark books to help support the History and Social Science curriculum. This is for emerging, early and fluent readers. Other online curriculum resources that the Mini School uses across the classrooms are Flocabulary, an online, fun engaging and musical way to learn vocabulary across the content area. Mathematics is also taught using Touch Math (a program geared towards visual learners) as well as the Saxon Math program. English Language Arts is taught through a guided reading program, Edmark Reading Program, and Read Naturally Live as well as instruction in phonics and spelling programs. The Mini School used i-Ready for appropriate students, which is a comprehensive assessment and instruction program that empowers educators with the resources they need to help the students. This also helps in developing differentiated instruction for the students. It helps in assisting the teachers to determine grade level proficiency based on state and national standards. The Mini School also used McGraw Hill Social Studies curriculum. The Mini School also uses a reading specialist that travels to all the classrooms and consults with teachers as well as direct services with some students. Dyslexia screening (Shaywitz Dyslexia Screener for Grades K-3) was implemented for students that were able to participate in it. The Mini School also has an EL teacher that supports students in our program and gives direct as well as indirect services and consultation.

## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

### Delineation of Mini School Staff

Position	FTE
Program Director	1.0
Assistant Program Director	1.0
Teachers	10.0
Clinician	1.0
Home-School Consultant	1.0
BCBA	.84
Behavior Specialist	.84
Occupational Therapists (2)	1.43

OT Assistants (1)	.84
Physical Therapist	.07
Speech Therapists	2.5
Adaptive PE Teacher	.84
Nurses	1.38
Paraprofessionals	24
Substitute Paraprofessionals	0
Total:	46.74

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

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. Due to Covid-19, the focus was incorporating community and vocational skills to be learned in the classroom through a variety of methodologies. When policies became less restrictive in 2022 they returned to some of the job placements, such as the SaltWater Diner, Papa Gino's and Blazing Saddles. Both Randolph and Hull High School classrooms participated in Meals on Wheels.

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

and interpreting, as well as fulfilling the reporting requirements of DESE for physical intervention and behavior support strategies.

During the 2021-2022 school year the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education resumed full MCAS requirements and testing schedules. At the Mini School, 16 students participated in standard MCAS for grades 3-8 with accommodations. The Mini School uses Computer Based Testing for grades 3-8. The students all have chrome books that they used throughout the school year. Twenty-eight Mini School students participated in MCAS testing by Alternate Assessment. Students with a significant cognitive disability are eligible to participate in MCAS-Alt in all content areas. Results were in the 'progressing' category in most subject areas with some "emerging" scores in the area of writing.

During the 2021-2022 school year, the youngest Mini School students (grades K-5) attended school in five classrooms at the Jacobs Elementary School in Hull. Mini School teachers use many strategies and accommodations to help our young students develop the prerequisite skills needed to learn. In order to be able to sit and attend, sensory input and schedules are provided throughout the school day. Positive reinforcement programs, visual schedules, timers, topic boards and social stories help organize the students' day, as well as remind them of classroom expectations.

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

Planning for transition to adulthood is a major component of the curriculum for our high school students. Emphasis is placed on helping students prepare for adulthood with a focus on transitioning. Students receive educational, speech and occupational therapy services which are directed toward building independence in social pragmatics, leisure activities, recreation and exercise, vocational skills, personal hygiene, self-advocacy, finances and daily chores. Vocational opportunities were offered both in the school and community settings; asynchronous vocational and life skills training. We had three students that turned 22 and earned a certificate of attendance. One student now attends Triangle Adult Program in Randolph, one is working with DDS and doing community experiences and one still awaits adult programming and is on waitlists.

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.



# QUEST PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT FY 2022

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

The Quest Program continued to have 11 classrooms during the 2020-2021 school year. Eight classrooms are traditional Quest classrooms and three of the classrooms continue to be a joint venture with the SSEC Community School. These classrooms, given the name AIM (Achieve, Inspire, Motivate), are designed to meet the needs of students that required the therapeutic and behavioral support of the Quest Program but required modifications to the academic programming and social skills instruction typical of a Quest classroom. In these areas, the students require programming more similar to what

was available at the Community School. In conjunction with the Community School, the three AIM classrooms served 24 students (10 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 or more paraprofessionals in each classroom. A full time licensed social worker works with all students in these three AIM classrooms to provide counseling and social skills instruction. This social worker is a part of the Quest clinical team and is supervised by a licensed social worker working in the Quest Program. Further support was provided by Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists and Speech Language Pathologists from the Community School as well as Reading Teachers from the Quest Program. The classrooms access the Quest Art teacher and both the APE teacher from the Community School and the Quest PE teacher. Behavioral support was provided by both programs as needed. Students in the AIM room were able to participate in electives and activities with the Quest Program and the Community School. In previous years, students were also able to access the therapy pool, sailing and horseback riding programs through the Community School. Some of these activities were placed on hold due to the COVID 19 pandemic but have begun to be put back into place. Staff continue to learn the best ways to work together to serve this diverse group of learners. These classrooms are truly a part of both the Community and Quest Programs. Most importantly, SSEC continues to be able to meet the needs of students with challenging and unique needs. 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 programming designed to meet the changing needs of our students and sending districts. Given the success of this classroom, AIM expanded to include a fourth classroom serving high school students for the 2018-2019 school year with a fifth planned for the 2022-2023 school year. These students were able to join in activities and services with the other AIM classes and access instruction and programming appropriate for their age and developmental level.

The SSEC Quest Program continues to be supervised by a Program Director, Jennie Williams, who serves as the academic administrator of the program. Rosanna Warrick is the full time Program Coordinator responsible for supervising the behavior team, managing the milieu, supervising paraprofessionals, data collection and running the program in the absence of the director as well as other duties as needed. Tim Handorf continued to be an important part of the Quest Program as the Clinical Director. Mr. Handorf retired at the end of the 2021-2022 school year and we thank him for more than two decades of service to the students and staff of SSEC.

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, there were some changes made this school year regarding **program staff and service**. For the 2021-2022 school year our staff included: 12 full time certified special education teachers, 2 student teachers, a full time PE/Health teacher shared with 3 programs, a full time Art teacher shared with 3 programs, 25 paraprofessionals, 1 full time and 2 part time reading teachers, 6 full time school based clinicians, 1 clinical psychology intern, 1 social work intern, 1 full time behaviorist, 1 full time and 2 part time occupational therapists, 1 full time and 2 part time speech and language therapists, a part time physical therapist, a full time administrative assistant and a part time assistive technology teacher. Quest also continued to access the services of a

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

### **Program Development for the 2021-2022 School Year**

The 2021-2022 school year continued to be significantly impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic. SSEC was open full time for in person learning for both the summer of 2021 and the 2021-2022 school year. Students who missed school due to the pandemic were supported in learning at home and given extra support upon returning to school. Only students with specific documentation from a physician were able to access remote learning on a consistent basis. Fortunately, Quest students were able to attend school in person with some interruptions due to illness. Staffing continued to be a challenge during this school year. Hiring sufficient staff was challenging throughout the year and many staff were out for periods of time due to COVID 19. SSEC offered vaccination clinics throughout the year to help staff and students stay healthy and in school.

### **COVID 19 Programmatic Adjustments**

Instruction was fully in person for the school year, but there were restrictions and limitations. Staff completed many trainings on use of personal protective equipment (PPE), data collection, use of the Google Classroom and other technology, and cleaning and distancing protocols. Staff also continued to make adjustments to their classrooms to allow for distancing and to make cleaning easier throughout the day. Air purifiers were used in all offices that did not have windows.

To begin the school year, students were kept in cohorts throughout the school day. Breakfast and lunch were delivered to the classrooms and students were not allowed to travel through other programs unless absolutely necessary. Related service providers built cleaning time into their schedule as they were servicing students in person in different cohorts. Students were able to return to the art room and this class was taught in person. Physical education increased this year and students had between two and four classes per week as well as a weekly health class. Music was provided in the classrooms.

Staff provided multiple opportunities for motor breaks and mask breaks throughout the day.

As the year progressed and more staff and students were vaccinated, some of the COVID 19 restrictions were eased. The mask mandate was lifted in March. It was briefly put back in place due to an increase in cases in April, but was lifted for the second time two weeks later. Students were slowly able to move more freely throughout the building. Middle school students were able to volunteer with younger peers and high school students were able to volunteer in the Quest Program. The cafeteria returned to serving students in person. Most Team meetings were held virtually but in-person meetings became more frequent as the year progressed. Despite the many challenges presented by the COVID 19 pandemic, the Quest Program was able to offer in person instruction and service delivery throughout the year to support student progress and learning.

Despite the challenges presented by the COVID 19 pandemic, the Quest Program continued to implement and expand upon the initiatives begun during previous years as well implement new curriculum initiatives. The Quest Program maintained the expansion of the AIM classrooms as described above. We welcomed a new doctoral psychology intern, a social work intern and two student teachers. Stability in staffing and in programming allowed us to build on the positive changes implemented in previous years. We have continued to offer PE, art, music and instruction in assistive technology which has allowed us to create a more well-rounded education for Quest students.

### **Data Collection**

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

improving our ability to utilize collected data continues to be a point of emphasis in the Quest Program. The Quest data team, which had not been able to meet last year, was reformed to provide analysis of collected data and implement changes needed to the data collection systems.

### **Classroom Pods**

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

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

### **Behavioral System**

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

Quest students continued to take advantage of the available sensory strategies, Quiet Study and spaces for self-timeouts in order to help them remain in class using these rooms 8,759 times during the course of the year (5,403 sensory/motor breaks and 3,356 self-time outs). Students were able to take a teacher directed break within their classroom 1,953 times and required teacher directed time out of class 3,246 times during

the 2021-2022 school year. In comparison to the data from the 2020-2021 school year, Quest students used more breaks with an increase from 8,883 to 13,958.

The pattern with regard to the type of breaks used has remained consistent over the past years. Motor/sensory breaks were the most frequent type of break, accounting for 35% of breaks in 18-19, 34% of breaks in 19-20, 31% of breaks in 20-21 and 38% of breaks in 21-22. Teacher directed time out of class accounted for 21% of breaks over both 18-19 and 19-20 and 22% of breaks in 20-21. There was a slight increase to 23% for 21-2. A positive trend that began in 2019-2020 continues again this year. There was an increase in self timeouts or student directed breaks from class. In 18-19, students took 1,179 self-directed breaks which accounted for 14% of all breaks. During the 2019-2020 school year, they took 2,468 self-directed breaks, which was 24% of all breaks. This number increased again in 2020-2021 with students taking 2,637 self-directed breaks, which accounted for 29% of breaks. This year, the overall number of self-directed breaks increased to 3,356 but this was only 24% of overall breaks. These numbers indicate that more than 60% of all breaks were students proactively taking space or a motor/sensory break. While staff do prompt and encourage students to use these breaks this trend, when considered with the restraint data, speaks to the significance of positive behavior supports. It is also important to note that our behaviorist is now full time in the Quest and AIM program. The increase of student directed breaks continues to be a point of emphasis in the Quest Program.

The Quest Program also continued to benefit from the training and implementation of NAPPI, Int which changed their name to WELLE over the course of the 2019-2020 school year. NAPPI stands for Non-Aggressive Psychological and Physical Intervention while WELLE is not an acronym. The primary reason the collaborative utilizes WELLE is that their program's physical interventions are safer for students and staff. This program also provides significant staff training in de-escalation and psychological intervention. The implementation of WELLE, along with minimal turnover of the program's behavioral staff, has continued to help us be judicious with the use of physical restraint in the Quest Program. During the 2019-2020 school year, which was abbreviated due to the COVID 19 shut down, Quest had 177 instances of physical intervention. During the 2020-2021 school year, there were 124 instances that required physical intervention. During the 2021-2022 school year, there were 178 instances of physical intervention. These numbers are more in line with the data collected in the 19-20 school year and likely account for the fact that all students were attending in person this year. Similar to past years, a small percentage of students accounts for all of the physical intervention. During this school year, 31 of the 83 students served in the Quest Program required physical intervention one or more times over the course of the school year. This is consistent with last year when 25 of 82 students required one or more instances of physical intervention as well as from July 2019-March 2020, when 29 students of 85 served required a physical intervention. During the 2018-2019 school year, 30 students required a hold. As we continue to work on building positive behavior supports and reducing instances of physical intervention it is important to remember that, though it is a last resort, these interventions allow staff and students to remain safe at school. There are students who would not be able to remain at a public day school

without this intervention as they learn the emotional regulation strategies they need to remain safe in school and the community.

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

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

As a program, we adopted the Social Thinking® Curriculum in 2010 and the language and concepts of the curriculum continue to be used program wide. The Social Thinking Curriculum was developed by Michelle Garcia Winner, a Speech and Language Pathologist, through her work with school age students on the autism spectrum. This curriculum, which is both evidence based and practice informed, is a social cognitive approach to social skills instruction designed to teach perspective taking and social thinking skills to students with a variety of social challenges. The goal is to help students better understand how their words and actions impact the thoughts and feelings of others around them, making them better able to share space effectively with others. All Quest students have at least one direct instruction group based on this curriculum each week. Staff continued to receive regular training on Social Thinking both in the program and through trainings led by M.G. Winner and her staff. The Quest Speech and Language pathologist continues to incorporate Social Thinking measures into formal and informal assessments of students, better allowing us to assess this important aspect of communication often missed in standardized assessment tools. The SLP also completed a week-long in depth training in Social Thinking in the fall of 2018 furthering her skills in assessment and intervention using Social Thinking. The behavioral staff continues to use Social Behavior Maps to guide processing of behavioral incidents with students. Throughout the program, students are learning to match the size of their reaction to the size of the problem. In addition, weekly planning time is built into the schedule to allow time for the clinicians, speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist, and classroom staff to plan cohesive group lessons. This time has allowed staff to create a bank of lessons that have been used successfully. Social Thinking group lessons are also discussed in pod meetings and both teaching and behavioral staff continue to participate in classroom groups. Social Thinking is not only taught during classroom groups, it is being taught and reinforced by all staff throughout the school day. Clinicians in the middle school classrooms also utilize other cognitive therapy approaches, including Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and mindfulness strategies in conjunction with Social Thinking. All staff were trained in the Calm Classroom mindfulness program in March 2019. These strategies were piloted in the Quest and AIM classrooms throughout the end of the year of the 18-19 school year and continue to be implemented throughout the program. All of these evidence based

approaches teach students to be mindful of the cognitive processes driving their social interactions and emotional experiences. Staff is also learning about neurodiversity and there are many ways to teach social skills. Social skills instruction continues to be provided to help students have the skills they need while also respecting their differences and individual needs.

### **Responsive Classroom**

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

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

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

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

In addition to meeting the requirements of the bullying prevention law, staff continue to work with students to identify both potential targets and potential bullies. We address this issue in health class, social skills groups, in individual therapy sessions, and in IEP goals to ensure that Quest is a safe and respectful environment for all students. Staff continue to receive annual training through the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC) at Bridgewater State University and the curriculum developed by MARC is incorporated into health classes as appropriate. As we move away from remote learning and students are spending less time at home, the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on social skills and social interactions has become apparent. Students are



working to share space respectfully and this has proved challenging for many of our students.

### **Student Activities & Learning**

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

During the summer of 2021, we held a Field Day and also had many community wide activities at the school. Students took part in an African Drumming demonstration, played with baby animals and reptiles, visited food trucks and attended a science demonstration. All activities were planned to allow for social distancing and to comply with COVID 19 protocols. We were able to hold our Annual Open House in September in person. Parents were asked to come in shifts and it was wonderful to welcome them back to the school. We were not able to host our annual Thanksgiving Feast in November and students did not go on field trips. However, students did take part in a Spirit Week and other activities at the school culminating in Field Day in June.

This year's graduation of 10 eighth grade students was held in person in the gym and students were able to invite all their family and friends. Students from the Quest and AIM classes participated in the graduation ceremony, many of them reading speeches they had written. Graduation is always a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the progress of our students. It was wonderful to celebrate our graduating students in person. We were also able to honor staff members Tim Handorf, Patricia Collins, Lisa Penzo and Jeff Turley, who retired at the end of June.

### **Curriculum**

Instruction in the Quest Program follows the MA Curriculum Frameworks for all subject areas. Given that all classrooms are self-contained and students are coming from more than 20 districts, planning lessons that are appropriately rigorous and differentiated at the same time can be challenging for the teaching staff. To support the teachers in their planning and instruction, the Director of Student Services continued to support teachers in implementing Math, ELA and Science/Technology curriculum that meet the needs of the majority of our students. All classrooms used Pearson's Social Studies curriculum which is aligned with the updated Massachusetts frameworks. Elementary school teachers continued to have access to the Panorama science curriculum which has been created by National Geographic. This program has the tools to differentiate for all students, including English Learners, built in. Also provided to the elementary teachers is the REACH for Reading program to teach ELA through science content and is also produced by National Geographic. Middle school teachers also are accessing the Benchmark curriculum for science and social studies. All teachers had access to STEMScopes Science and Math as well. These materials present the content into manageable parts and the texts look like magazines and graphic novels. In addition to these initiatives, teachers used many online programs, such as IXL, Mystery Science and

Readworks, to support students learning in school and remotely. Students also took part in iReady benchmark testing three times during the course of the school year.

### **Summer Program**

The 2021 Summer Program was fully in person with 51 students enrolled. This number was lower than in years past so we had a total of 9 classrooms (6 in Quest, 3 in AIM) for ESY 2021. Academic instruction as well as all services and therapies were provided in person. As noted above, students took part in several activities and were able to interact with students outside their classroom while outside. Free breakfast and lunch were provided for all students.

### **Home and Community Involvement**

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

### **Outreach Initiative**

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

### **Technology**

The Quest Program, in line with the SSEC Strategic Plan, continues to be dedicated to increasing the availability and usability of both assistive and instructional technology for students and staff. Each professional staff member has been given an iPad, Chromebook or laptop to use for instruction, data collection and accessing teach point and working on

the DESE teacher evaluation. Students continue to use iPads, laptops and Chromebooks to support their learning. All Quest students have access to a Chromebook in their classroom throughout the school day. Having 1:1 devices has allowed students to utilize assistive technology, such as Cowriter and Read, Write, Google, to help them access the curriculum. Students receive direct instruction from an Assistive Technology teacher weekly in their classrooms to learn how these tools can be used to access their schoolwork. In the spring, students have typically then used their devices to take the next generation MCAS on the device they have been using throughout the school year. Each Quest classroom continues to have a projector with at least two computers. Members of the Tech Team also provided training in available technology to interested staff members.

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

### **Quest School Handbook**

A school handbook was revised before school reopened in the fall of 2021. 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 attached to this report.

### **Year in Summary**

In total, the Quest Program served 83 students this school year. We began the school year with 64 students and ended the year with 72 students. The 83 students that we serviced came from a total of 28 different school districts.

We serviced 8 S.T.A.R.T.S. students, providing them with an extended evaluation. Six of the students remained at the Quest Program for part or all of the remainder of the school year. Two students required a different or more restrictive placement following the extended evaluation period.

During the 2021-2022 school year, 3 students left after ESY. One moved to their high school program as they had graduated from grade 8 the previous spring, one returned to their sending school district and one student moved. Over the course of the year, 2 students returned to their sending district, 1 student moved and four students required a more restrictive setting. In June we graduated 10 grade 8 students. Of the 10 students, 8 students moved to a South Shore Educational Collaborative high school program. Five will attend South Shore High School, two will attend the Careers High School and one will attend the AIM Community High School. One student will return to their sending district for high school and one moved out of state. At the end of the school year, two other students also returned to their sending district for a total of 4 over the course of the

school year. Quest also transferred 1 student to the South Shore High School grade 8 Bridge classroom for the start of the 2022-2023 year.

Quest enrollment remained steady over the course of the school year. The enrollment was at capacity by the end of the school year. Quest began the 2022-2023 school year with 63 students.

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

## South Shore High School Annual Report 2021-2022

### *Program Description*

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

### *Student Population*

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

### **Monthly Enrollment**

(SSHS students/ Bridge Classroom Students/STARTS Evaluation Students)

Sept. '21	44	+6 Bridge	+2 STARTS
Oct. '21	49	+6 Bridge	+2 STARTS
Nov. '21	47	+3 Bridge	+1 STARTS
Dec. '21	47	+8 Bridge	+1 STARTS
Jan. '22	48	+8 Bridge	+0 STARTS
Feb. '22	47	+9 Bridge	+0 STARTS
March '22	48	+9 Bridge	+1 STARTS
April '22	49	+9 Bridge	+2 STARTS

May '22	48	+9 Bridge	+2 STARTS
June '22	48	+9 Bridge	+1 STARTS

South Shore High School/Bridge had between 50 and 57 students enrolled between September and June of the 2021-2022 school year. In addition, over the course of the year, SSHS was able to accommodate 4 students for a STARTS extended evaluation. Of the 57 students present through the end of the school year, ***South Shore High School successfully graduated 11 seniors, from 10 different districts.*** All seniors were able to meet the credit and course requirements of their sending districts and meet all MCAS graduation requirements. SSHS had two students receive the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship. The graduating class of 2022, their families, district personnel, SSHS staff, our Executive Director, and Director of Student Support Services were able to celebrate in a meaningful ceremony and small luncheon within the SSEC main building. This year, new to SSHS, the ceremony was held at a time that could accommodate having the entire SSHS student body participate in the graduation ceremony of their peers. This is crucial in allowing younger class members to visualize their own goals and future success, have a sense of school pride, and practice the social expectations of a large gathering with their peers' family members. In addition to the success of graduating seniors, ***SSHS successfully returned three students to their sending district.***

### ***Program Staff***

During the 2021-2022 school year, South Shore High School operated 8 classrooms led by a special education teacher and supported by paraprofessionals. One of the 8 classrooms, our Bridge Classroom, is a transition classroom for students in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade who demonstrate some readiness to gain an introduction to a high school model. Students in the Bridge Classroom remain in a self-contained classroom with access to high school aged peer role models, teaching staff, clinicians, and related service providers to support their successful transition to high school. In addition to teachers and paraprofessionals, SSHS staff included one part time and three full time clinical social workers, a milieu coordinator, a part-time speech and language pathologist, part-time occupational therapist, part-time reading specialist, two part-time transition specialists, and a .5 BCBA. During the 21-22 school year, the program was also supported by SSEC program nurses, our program secretary, the SSEC Clinical Director, Tim Handorf and the SSEC contracted psychiatric consultant, Dr. Jeff Turley.

### ***Academic Structure***

Students at SSHS are assigned courses designed to meet the graduation requirements from their sending school district. Upon graduation, students receive an official transcript and diploma from their sending school district. Classroom instruction is differentiated to meet the needs of diverse learners in order to ensure the academic success of all students. Class sizes remained at 8 students or less to provide for maximum instructional and social/emotional support. With the exception of our Bridge classroom, the majority of students change classes each period per subject matter. SSHS follows the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. In addition to the standard classes

that SSHS offers, SSEC has a contractual arrangement with an online learning platform called Fuel Education. Students are offered the opportunity to take a Fuel Ed course through independent study classes with support from a SSHS teacher that acts as a liaison with Fuel Education to monitor their progress and offer any support if needed. Fuel Ed offers a robust course choice to supplement and enhance student transcripts, to provide students the opportunity to pursue a particular academic interest, and to support college readiness and competitiveness in the college application process. With the support of our transition specialists, students in primarily the 12<sup>th</sup> and at times 11<sup>th</sup> grade may take a dual enrollment course at a local community college. SSHS continues to be a PSAT and SAT approved testing site for our students.

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

For the 2021-2022 school year, SSHS had three full-time clinical social workers. In addition, the program had support from a clinical director and psychiatric consultant. SSHS is a trauma informed school. Principles of Solution Focused Narrative Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), and Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) are used in the counseling work with students. In addition, SSHS clinicians write all of the social emotional IEP goals, collect data on goals, and report on IEP goal progress four times per year. Clinicians met twice weekly for advanced case consultation and discussion; once with the clinical director and program director and once in a weekly psychoeducational seminar run by Dr. Jeff Turley, the program's psychiatric consultant. Clinicians provide significant home to school communication to support families and caretakers and act as a liaison to outside treatment providers per parent request and consent. The primary focus of counseling at SSHS is to assist students in countering the problems that have had a negative impact on their academic, social, and emotional success through accurate problem identification and the development of healthy, effective coping strategies. In order to support as needed crisis assessment and intervention, SSHS utilizes an on call clinician schedule at all times throughout the school day.

### ***Transition Services***

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

- Self-advocacy (understanding their IEP's, their disability area, their accommodations, their strengths and weaknesses as learners)
- Vocational skills (establishing onsite vocational opportunities, off site internship sites, resume writing, mock interviewing, employment applications, assessment of vocational skills with the Workplace Soft Skills rubric)
- Career/Trade identification (online research tools, O\*Net Interest Profiler)
- College identification and readiness (scheduling PSAT and SAT testing, college search engines, college tours, assistance with signing up for and supporting dual enrollment classes at the community college level, attending college fairs)

- Establishing connections with adult support agencies (completing direct referrals to the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, attending meetings with student and MRC case managers, supporting the Pre-ETS pre-employment transition skills program through Tempus Unlimited)
- Establishing community service experiences (both onsite experiences and offsite experiences to meet sending district community service requirements or per student interest)

As Covid restrictions were lifted, during the 2021-2022 school year, SSHS students were able to resume college level dual enrollment classes at Quincy Community College and Massasoit Community College, both in person and remotely. Transition staff also coordinated tours at local colleges, college fair nights, informational sessions with trade schools, and informational sessions with Job Corps. Students were also able to resume onsite vocational opportunities in our industrial kitchen, in our Greenhouse, working with younger students in our Quest Program, and working with multi-handicapped students in our Community Program. ***Due to their success and experience, one SSHS student became gainfully employed in the Community Program's extended school year session and one SSHS graduate has a contracted position within the Quest program for the 2022-2023 school year.***

### ***Related Services***

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

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

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

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

Staff continued to work with our data consultant, Marc Hauser to collect data, track progress, and use the data to make informed program decisions and individual student



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

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

***Lifting of Covid-19 School Protocols:*** With the lifting of Covid restrictions, SSHS was able to resume a typical schedule in which students traveled class to class and practiced gathering in larger social contexts (i.e. lunch/break). Opportunities for movement and socialization were incrementally increased to support skill development in a safe, supportive manner.

With increased movement within the program, increased expectations for pro-social behavior following Covid, and efforts to support a wider range of district referrals, SSHS saw an increase in both physical intervention (3 in the 20/21 to 5 in the 21/22 school year) and out of school suspensions due to significant events (2 in the 20/21 school year to 12 in the 21/22 school year). Out of school suspensions were mainly given for episodes of assaultive behavior, with two occurring for threats to cause mass harm to SSEC.

***Parent Involvement:*** Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their children's education. Successful outcomes occur most often when parents feel comfortable to share their expertise and unique knowledge of their child, partner in the process, and feel as though they have a trusting, mutually supportive relationship with SSHS. Parents have an understanding that they may request to speak to their child's teacher, clinician, related service provider, or program director whenever needed. SSHS held an in person open house for parents in the fall of 2021. SSEC held virtual informational sessions for parents in each of its programs. A weekly email entitled "The Wednesday Weekly" was sent to all parents with key programmatic information, supportive resources, important dates, and student successes.

### ***Noteworthy Achievements:***

- SSHS graduated 11 seniors.
- SSHS seniors were accepted and plan to attend the following colleges: Bridgewater State University, Lasell College, Landmark College, UMASS Boston, and Massasoit College. Two students entered Job Corps.
- A meaningful in person graduation ceremony with families and the entire SSHS community occurred at the Hingham Community Center in June of 2022.
- The SSHS Class of 2022 was able to plan and attend a Senior Class Field trip to Faneuil Hall via the MBTA Commuter Ferry.

- SSHS started its first Student Council. Homerooms held class elections. The Student Council planned, organized, and led schoolwide events such as; spirit week, honor roll ice cream events, a junior/senior prom, and set up/welcome for graduation. In addition, they spearheaded a new “gender neutral” dress code.
- SSHS successfully returned three students to their sending school districts.
- Despite the previous years’ Covid-19 related shutdown, SSHS met with significant *MCAS success* in the Spring of 2022. Of the fifteen 9<sup>th</sup> grade students that took the Biology portion, eleven met the MCAS Science graduation requirement. All 10<sup>th</sup> grade students that took the exam met the ELA requirement and thirteen of the fourteen met the Math graduation requirement.
- Every student participated in a targeted critical thinking class for a half year entitled L.I.F.E.
  - L.I.F.E. is a class designed to engage students to Listen to each other, Interpret what others believe and do, Formulate powerful reasons and arguments for their decisions and actions, and Empathize with others, focusing on topics that they naturally care about. Each class will use short films, podcasts, provocative essays, television court cases, games, and civically-oriented projects to not only develop the core competencies that L.I.F.E. targets, but to ensure that students are thoroughly engaged, confident, and motivated to grow and contribute to topics that are central to human flourishing.
- Established relationship between the Plymouth office of NAMI (the national alliance of the mentally ill) in order to receive a \$500 scholarship to a deserving senior toward college expenses.
- Staff training in WELLE (crisis prevention and intervention training) led to limited need for physical intervention despite the significant social/emotional needs of our student population (five incidents for the entirety of the school year)

### ***SSHS Goals for the 2022-2023***

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

- Continue to be responsive to member and non-member districts to provide comprehensive, highly effective programming for students with social and emotional challenges.
- To increase enrollment in order to support district needs and requests
- Continue to promote culture and climate through the development of a school logo/merchandise
- Continued use of Student Council to enhance student representation in programmatic decisions

- Continue to promote increased parent communication and involvement via the use of weekly parent updates. Increase dissemination of supportive resources within the email
- Continue to improve the efficacy of data collection and intervention
- Increase dual enrollment opportunities on community college campuses
- Addition of paraprofessionals to enhance classroom staffing
- Continued use of on-site consultant/professor to promote Critical Thinking skill development in teaching methods and student learning.
- Reduce need for physical intervention and out of school suspensions by 10%
- Increase psychoeducational opportunities to combat vaping.
- Improve academic rigor through effective use of educational grant funds.
- Resume educational field trips

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

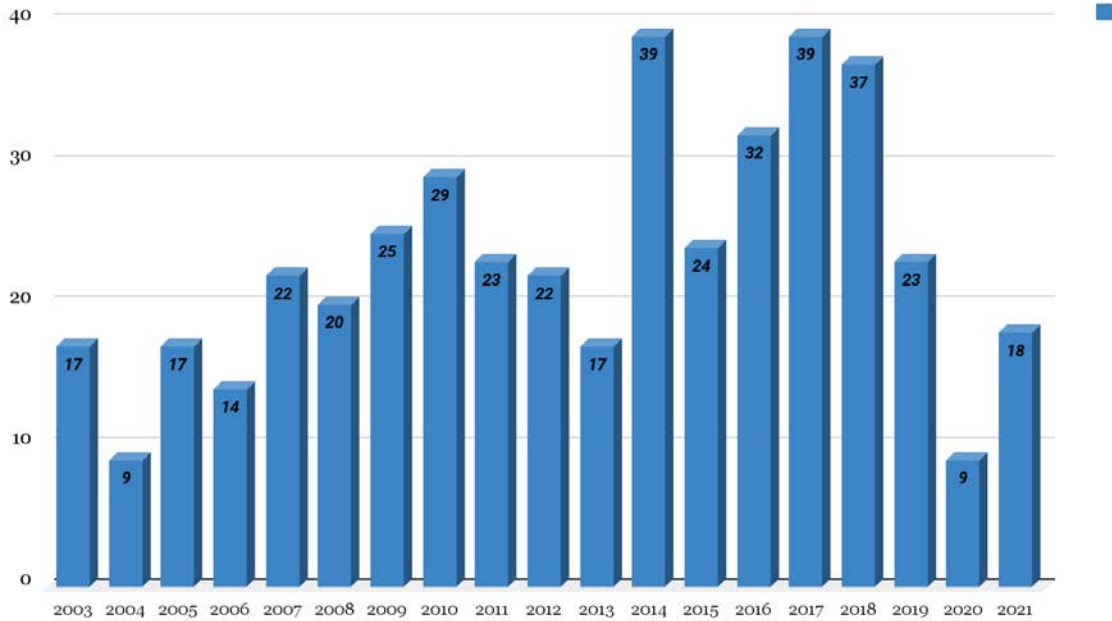
## **ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022** **Anne Rowland, Psy.D. Program Coordinator**

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

S.T.A.R.T.S. (Short-Term Assessment and Return to School) is an Alternative Interim Educational Setting (A.I.E.S.) which provides an opportunity for extended evaluations utilizing educational, psychological and psychiatric assessment for students who are having serious difficulties in their school and require evaluation to better understand their challenging behavior and learning styles. It now accommodates students in grades K-12, for up to 40 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 (SSH) and the Careers High School (CHS). Elementary and middle school age students are assessed while in small classrooms (7-8 students) within the Quest Program or AIM classrooms (Quest/Community Program hybrid). Some students have been evaluated while in the Mini School at Hull's Jacob's Elementary School, or in the Community Program in Hingham. STARTS students participate in and have access to all the activities and learning that are provided for all students within each age-appropriate school. For example, opportunities for job interest exploration (Graphic Design, Greenhouse, 3-D Printing, Industrial Kitchen, AV) are available and are incorporated into the assessment. CHS and SSHS also offer two different types of classroom settings (self-contained and integrated), which allows for students with a greater range of needs and disabilities to come to SSEC for a STARTS assessment.

Table 1

**STARTS ENROLLMENT 2003- 2021**



2021-2022 was the 19th operational year of STARTS. Moving through the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, enrollment for STARTS doubled (18 students) from the previous year. As seen in Table 1 above, enrollments over the years have fluctuated; the current average number of enrollments is 23; the current mode (most frequently occurring student enrollment number) is 17, which has occurred three times. 39, 23, 22 and nine annual student enrollments have all occurred two times. And the current sum of the number of student enrollments over the last 19 years is 436.

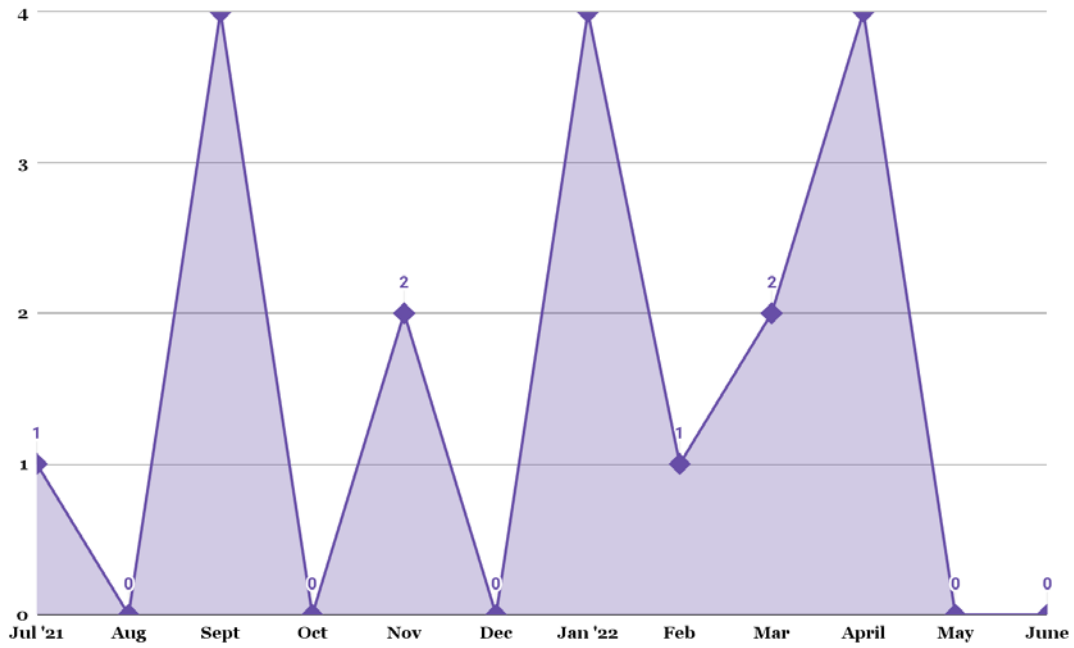
Of the 18 students enrolled in STARTS this year, 12 were males and six were females. With the exception of last year, STARTS has always had more males than females enrolled. Referrals came either from districts' mainstream classrooms or their alternative classrooms within mainstream buildings.

Five evaluations were completed within SSHS, eight were completed in Quest, and five were completed within the CHS. This was the sixteenth year that a predoctoral psychology intern was placed at SSEC via Aspire Health Alliance (formerly South Shore Mental Health) APA internship program, and the third year that two interns were placed instead of one. This allows STARTS to continue to assess more elementary age students for evaluation. Within Quest, the intern Megan Moxey completed eight evaluations. And within the two high schools, intern Kristine Hernandez completed ten. This year there was no need to have other SSEC clinicians completing STARTS evaluations. Both Megan (4) and Kristine (5) completed psychological and achievement testing (WAIS/WISC/WIAT) for students in need of their IEP mandated 3-year re-evaluation process. SSEC contracted Elise Cohen, PsyD (psychology intern from 2019-2020) for a

second year to complete additional 3-year re-evaluation tests (33). SSEC has hired a new evaluator (Sarah Tenore) for testing for the 2022-2023 academic year.

Table 2

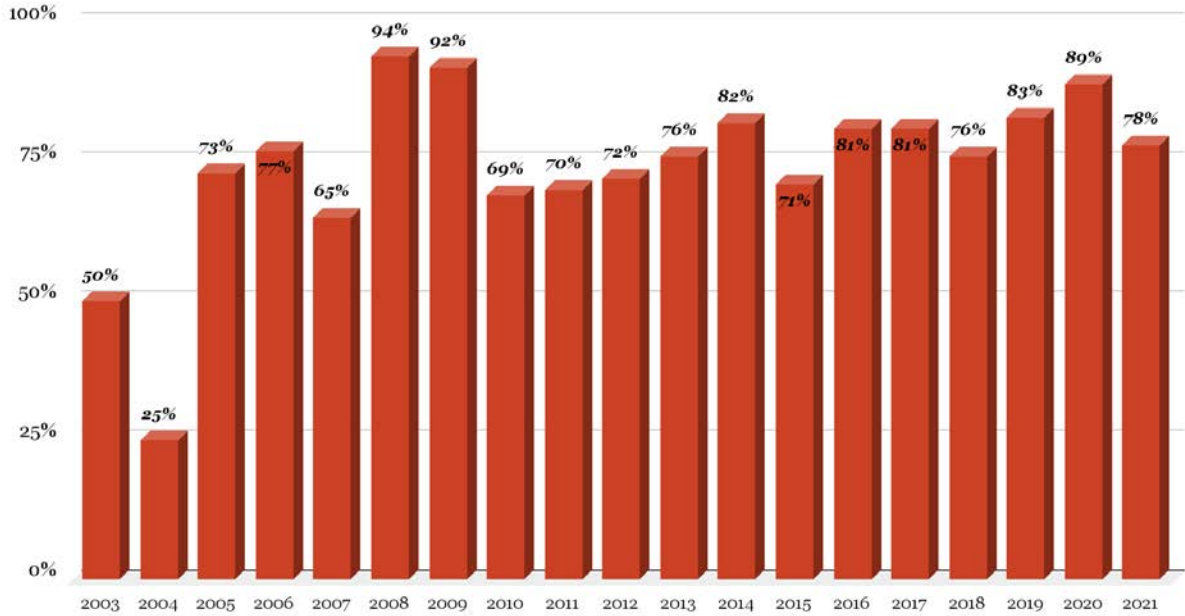
**STARTS Number of Students Beginning Assessment by Month 2021-22**



The Table 2 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 enrollments. The largest peaks were in September, January and April, which is a fairly typical pattern.

Table 3

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



As seen in Table 3, this year 14 out of the 18 (78%) students remained at SSEC, which was lower than the past two years. However, three students required a higher level of care (more than last year), and one returned to their referring district.

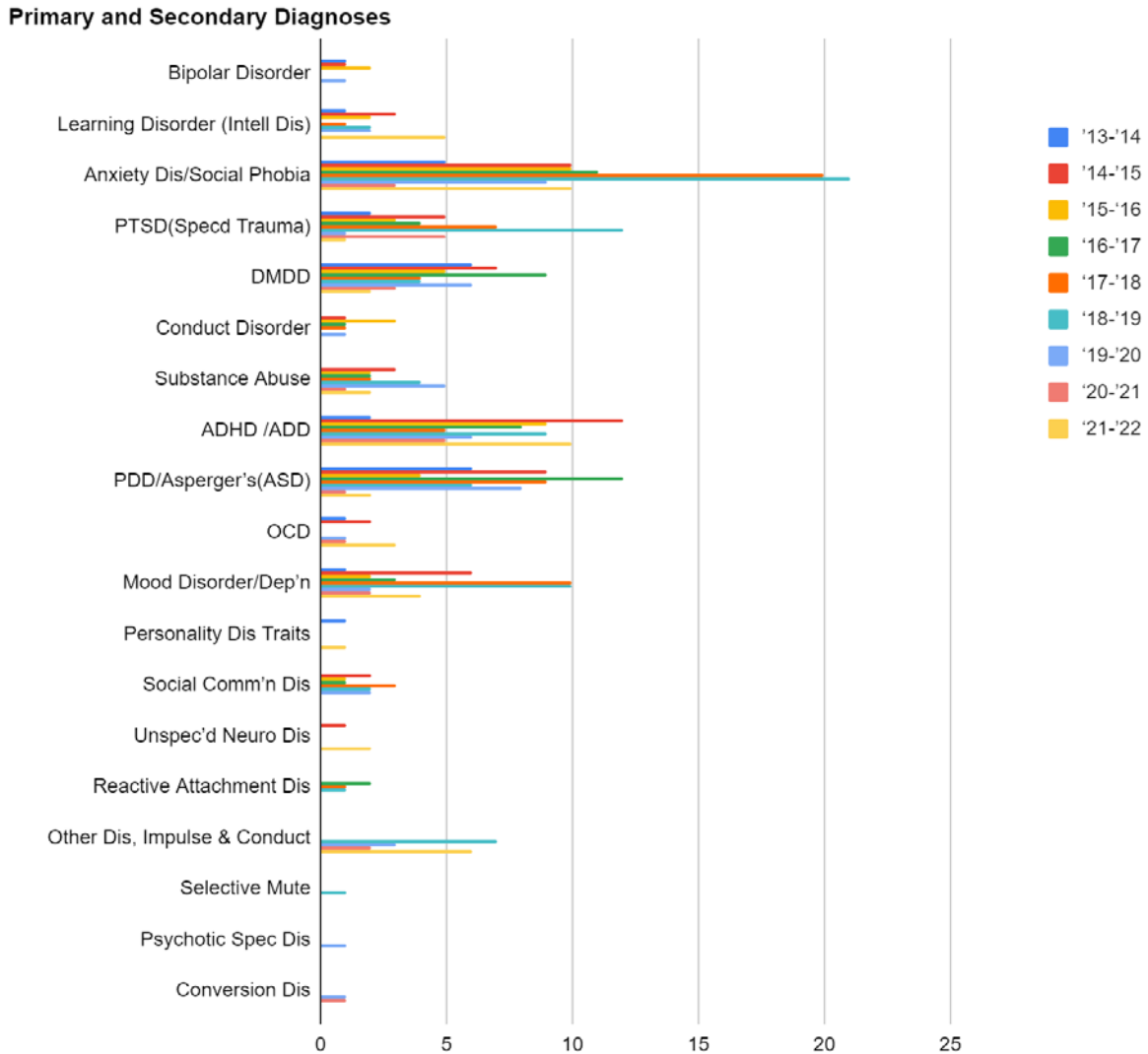
Percentages of students remaining at SSEC programs from STARTS went from 50% in year one, 25% in year two, 73% in year three, 77% in year four, 65% in year five, 94% in year six, 92% in year seven, 69% in year eight, 70% in year nine, 72% in year ten, 76% in year eleven, 82% remained in year twelve,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

Table 4  
Primary and Secondary Diagnoses (DSM-V)

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



## Number of Primary and Secondary Diagnoses by Year



The primary and secondary diagnoses are listed in the statistics chart (Table 4) and in the corresponding Graph Version. All students presented with multiple diagnoses. Since most STARTS students receive an extensive psychiatric evaluation and diagnosis completed by Dr. Jeff Turley, there is consistency in the procedure. During the 2021-2022 school year, one can see there was an uptick in the following DSM-V diagnoses: Learning Disorder, ADHD, Substance Abuse, and Other Disruptive, Impulsive Control and Conduct Disorders.

Table 5

Number of Students Enrolled by District by Year										
School District	'12-'13	'13-'14	'14-'15	'15-'16	'16-'17	'17-'18	'18-'19	'19-'20	'20-'21	'21-'22
Abington	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	2	0	1
Attleboro	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Avon	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Braintree</b>	4	1	3	2	6	4	6	3	1	2
Bridge/Rayn	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Canton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Carver	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Cohasset</b>	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1
Dennis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Duxbury	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Easton	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
East Bridgewater	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Falmouth	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Foxboro Charter	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Foxboro Reg Dist	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Hanover	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
<b>Hingham</b>	1	0	4	2	1	4	1	1	0	3
Holbrook	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1
Holliston	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Hull</b>	1	2	5	5	4	2	2	0	1	1
King Philip RSD	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Marshfield	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Milton</b>	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	0	1
Nantucket	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Needham	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
<b>Norwell</b>	0	1	5	2	0	3	1	1	0	2

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



As seen in Table 5 and the corresponding Graph Version, again this year STARTS had multiple repeat enrollments from previous years from multiple districts, indicating a level of satisfaction through meeting these goals for the districts. Enrollments of students from *member* districts increased from 44% to 67% of the total enrollments this year. Over the last 10 years, the districts sending the most students have been Braintree (32), Weymouth (24) and Hull (23).

## STARTS OUTCOMES

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

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

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