



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES  
12 WELBY ROAD  
NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 02745

TELEPHONE: (508) 998-5599  
FAX: (508) 998-5959  
[www.smecollaborative.org](http://www.smecollaborative.org)

To Whom it May Concern:

Recent amendments to MGL Chapter 40, Section 4E require all Educational Collaboratives in the Commonwealth to create and submit an annual report to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education and to each member school committee by January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year for the previous school year. Attached, you will find the annual report for the Southeastern Massachusetts Educational Collaborative (SMEC), covering the period of July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013. This report contains all required elements, including summarized information on the programs and services offered by the Collaborative, a discussion of the cost effectiveness of each program and service offered by SMEC and a discussion of the progress made toward reaching our stated goals and objectives as an agency. In addition, our Audited Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's report are attached and considered to be incorporated into the annual report.

During the period covered by the FY13 annual report, SMEC, like several other Educational Collaboratives that provide high quality services to both children and adults with disabilities, remained in an uncertain position, while the MA State Legislature and Legislative Commission on Collaboratives deliberated the appropriateness of Educational Collaboratives providing a continuum of services to our students after their twenty-second birthday. Now that each of these authorities has documented approval for this type of service provision by Educational Collaboratives, SMEC and others can move forward with planning and setting goals for future improvement and expansion for all of our programs and services.

We encourage anyone reading this report to use this information as a brief overview of SMEC as it currently exists and an idea of where our agency may be heading in the future. This report fulfills a legislative requirement but much more information can be found by visiting our website, calling any of our program locations or our administrative office to request more information or to set up a personal tour or visit. We'd love to show you around and answer any questions you may have. The best way to get to know SMEC is to speak to those who choose to be part of it. We are proud of our agency and look forward to sharing it with you.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Catherine S. Cooper'.

Catherine S. Cooper, M.Ed., JD  
Executive Director  
SMEC

# Southeastern MA Educational Collaborative FY13 Annual Report

## SMEC Leadership

SMEC membership includes the school districts of Acushnet, Dartmouth, Marion, Mattapoisett, New Bedford Rochester and Old Rochester Regional. Each of these school committees appointed a member to serve on the SMEC Board for the 2012-2013 school year as follows:

### Board of Directors 2012-2013

Frank Kuthan, SMEC Board Chair, Acushnet

Michelle Ouellette, Marion

Gerald Johnson, SMEC Board Vice-Chair, Mattapoisett\*

Tim Scholz, Rochester

Donna McKenna, Fairhaven

Christopher Oliver, Dartmouth

Marlene Pollock, New Bedford

James O'Brien, Old Rochester  
Regional

\*Through April 2013

## Administration

In addition to the Board of Directors, the 2012-2013 SMEC leadership team also included the following:

### Treasurer

John Nunes

### SMEC Administrative Team

Catherine S. Cooper, Executive Director

Karyn Labonte, Business Office Manager

Michelle Goettlich, Student Services Director

Nelson Cordeiro, Adult Services Asst. Director

Karen Stern, Adult Services Director

Sean Mitchell, SAIL Program Manager

The SMEC steering committee is made up of the special education directors from each member district and serves in an advisory capacity to the Administrative Team:

### 2012-2013 Steering Committee Members

Nance Bellizzi, Acushnet

Linda Maniglia, Dartmouth

David Kenney, Fairhaven

Teresa Hamm, Marion, Mattapoisett, Rochester and Old Rochester Regional

Kathleen Turner, New Bedford

### SMEC Mission, Guiding Principles and Objectives

In 2013, SMEC began a Strategic Planning Process which is due to culminate with a report in early 2014. The SMEC mission statement, principles and objectives highlighted below are from the prior version of SMEC's Strategic Plan, completed in 2008, pending completion of the new Strategic Plan. In addition, SMEC's Articles of Agreement, currently under revision and pending DESE approval, will contain the revised mission statement, principles and objectives. However since the SMEC Articles of Agreement approved in 2009 are the last DESE approved version, the mission statement, principles and objectives listed in the 2009 version are contained herein.

#### Mission Statement:

The Southeastern Massachusetts Educational Collaborative is dedicated to providing high quality programs and services for all children and adults who need specialized instruction or support.

The Collaborative utilizes a team approach to service provision and is dedicated to meeting the needs of the whole individual.

#### Guiding Principles:

We believe that all people have strengths, abilities and gifts and must be treated with respect and dignity regardless of their level of need.

We strive to ensure that support and services are guided by an individual's goals and preferences.

We strive to assist each individual to participate in and contribute meaningfully to their community through school, work, community service and recreation.

We believe that all individuals have the ability and need to learn and can learn in a safe, nurturing environment with the appropriate support.

We will safeguard each individual's right to privacy, dignity and respect.

We believe that parents and families are their children's most important advocates and teachers.

We believe that through collaboration and teamwork we strengthen the resources of school districts and adult agencies to provide the very best in school age and adult programs.

We have high expectations for the success of our students, staff, consumers, parents and the community.

We believe that an effective organization is diverse in perspective, culture and experience.

#### FY13 Goals and Objectives:

To provide quality services and individualized programs to meet the ever-changing needs of students and consumers from early childhood through adulthood.

To provide appropriate facilities to accommodate programs and services.

To provide comprehensive professional development opportunities for school districts and SMEC staff in accordance with the SMEC Professional Development Plan.

To enhance the Collaborative infrastructure to support and sustain high quality programs and growth.

SMEC provides programs for special needs individuals age three to adult. Our programs have a strong focus on community integration and independence. Student services and programs are available at the preschool, elementary and secondary levels. Students who transition into adult services at age twenty-two and who are eligible to receive adult service funding have the option to choose SMEC as their adult service provider. Over 98% of our students in this category choose to stay with SMEC when they turn twenty-two.

Offering high quality high quality programs requires us to continually examine our facilities to ensure that they meet the needs of our students, consumers and staff. Our student services programs are housed in public school classrooms and we have been fortunate to have a multitude of modern, high quality and spacious classrooms from which to choose. Several of our member districts have undergone SBA school building projects in the last decade and have included space for SMEC programs in these ventures.

Although we currently have appropriate locations for our adult service programs, our Strategic Planning Committee, which is still in the process of reporting on its recommendations as of the writing of this annual report, has identified space for our adult programs as an area that we will need to analyze and consider over the next three to five year period due to continued growth in these departments.

During FY13, our in-house professional development primarily focused on implementing the new Educator Evaluation process and standards for Collaborative teachers. In addition to the required annual trainings on CPR/First Aid, Mandated Reporting, Civil Rights and non-violent crisis intervention, our teachers received sixteen hours of formal training on the Educator Evaluation process with the goal of full implementation during the 2013-2014 school year.

SMEC also offered trainings to faculty and staff from districts throughout Southeastern Massachusetts during FY13 including courses and workshops on using technology with special education students, executive functioning and a content workshop for fine arts teachers.

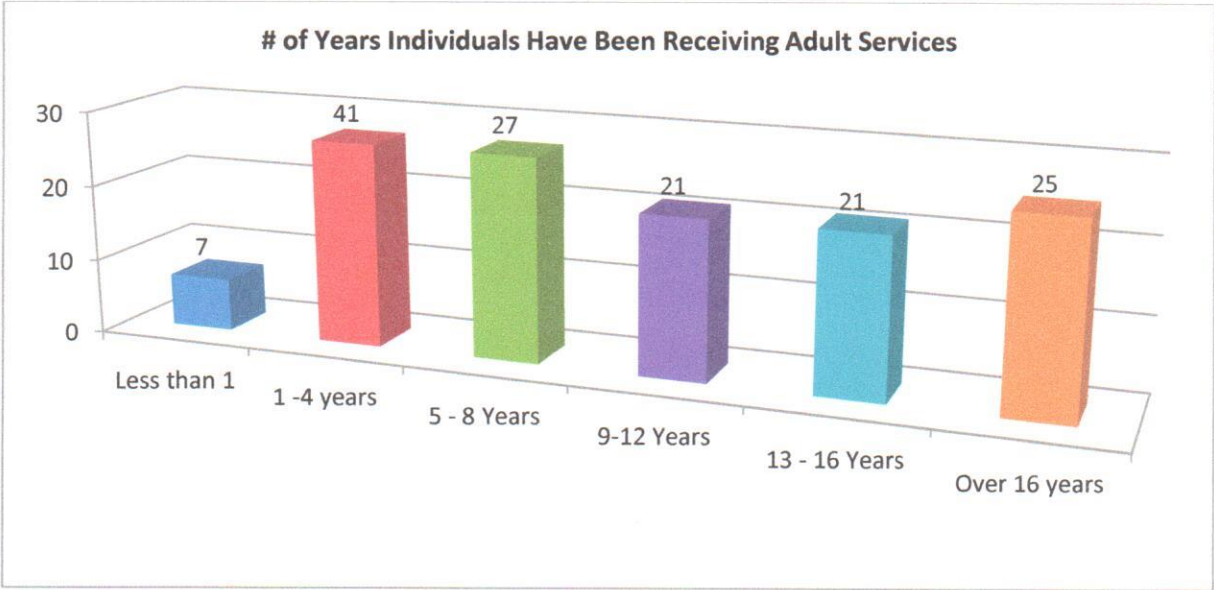
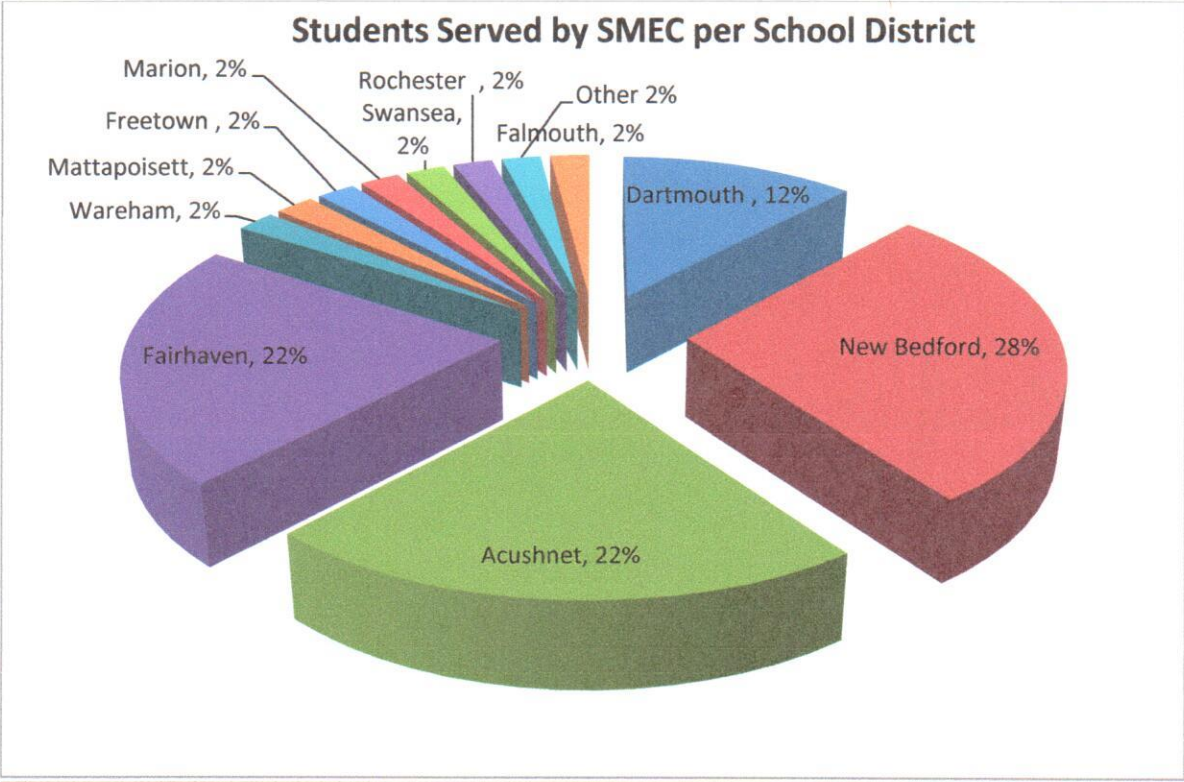
In addition to focusing on ensuring our programs are located in suitable facilities, we also made progress on increasing the use of technology in all programs, adding iPads and new computers in all classrooms and programs, purchasing licenses for new online learning platforms and other instructional software and training in the use of instructional technology for staff. Other infrastructure improvements, such as acquiring and maintaining a safe and reliable van pool and attracting and retaining high quality staff are ongoing priorities and built into the administrative decision making process for all programs.

### FY13 General Statistics

Years in Service:	38
Employees:	160
Member Districts:	8
Districts Served in 2012-2013:	15
Program Sites:	9

Students Served in or by SMEC School Programs or Services in FY13: 205

Adult (Age 22+) Consumers Served FY13: 142



## FY13 Revenue<sup>1</sup>

Tuition and Services Member:	\$2,250,202
Tuition and Services Non-Member:	\$ 103,294
DDS Contracts:	\$3,038,089 <sup>2</sup>
MCB Contract:	\$ 128,272
MassHealth/Medicaid:	\$ 583,590
DESE CACFP:	\$ 37,287
Professional Development:	\$ 31,365
Grants:	\$ 1,900
Investment Income:	\$ 794
Self Pay:	\$ 2,283
Miscellaneous:	\$ 5,873
<u>Total Revenue:</u>	<u>\$6,182,949</u>

## FY13 Amount Expended on Services for Students/Consumers Age 22+

SAIL Program (DDS/MCB Contracts):	\$2,629,903
ADH Program (Medicaid):	\$ 472,334
<u>FY13 Total Adult Service Expenses:</u>	<u>\$3,102,237<sup>3</sup></u>

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<sup>1</sup> FY13 Independent Financial Statements

<sup>2</sup> Subject to CAP on file with OSD

<sup>3</sup> FY13 Independent Audit Report; exclusive of administrative and overhead cost.

## Cost Savings to School Districts

Average MA Private School Special Education Tuition 180 Day Program:	\$63,309.54 <sup>4</sup>
FY13 SMEC Tuition 180 Day School Day Program:	\$34,560.00
Average Private Agency Therapist Fee (SLP, OT, PT):	\$100/hour
Average FY13 SMEC Therapist Fee (SLP, OT, PT):	\$60/hour

Cost savings to districts are realized by sharing resources regionally, utilizing district owned facilities to house Collaborative programs when possible, sharing agency administrative and indirect costs between the Collaborative's adult services departments and student services departments and having district representatives guide our program and service development. Exact savings figures are difficult to quantify, however a comparison of the average private day school tuition versus the SMEC program tuition for a 180 day/school day program indicates significant savings<sup>5</sup> as does a comparison of contractual service costs offered by private agencies in the geographic area against the cost to districts to access the same therapeutic services through SMEC. If SMEC programs and services were not available, districts would undoubtedly be forced to utilize these higher cost private services. In addition, services provided by the Collaborative have a value added component in that we provide services specifically tailored to the needs and requests of our districts and students thereby reducing costs for certain amenities or services that may be offered by private providers but not required to provide a high quality program or service to address the district and students' needs.

Further cost savings are realized by operating programs within local school districts thereby significantly reducing special education transportation costs and length of student trips. Cost savings varies based on route and competitive bidding quotes from private vendors. Similarly, utilizing surplus district classroom space to house collaborative programs reduces program overhead, which lowers tuition costs for all districts utilizing the program while providing a modest source of income for the host district. Lastly, offering professional development on a regional basis allows districts to offer high quality professional development to their faculty and staff that might not be possible if each district, particularly the smaller districts, had to fund and arrange courses or workshops on an individual basis. Particularly at a time when district professional development funding has been primarily targeted toward meeting the host of new and additional state and federal mandates, targeted professional development for lower incidence

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<sup>4</sup> [www.mass.gov/osd](http://www.mass.gov/osd) FY14 data for day placements

<sup>5</sup> No direct program comparison is asserted

or specialty staff would likely not occur if it weren't done on a regional basis through the Collaborative.

### FY13 Program Descriptions

#### SMEC Early Childhood Program:

The SMEC Early Childhood Program, located at Acushnet Elementary School, serves children ages three to six with developmental and language delays. Staffed by a special education teacher, speech pathologist, COTA and paraprofessionals the program provides a full day, five day per week program with a 2:1 student/staff ratio.

#### SMEC Primary Language Program:

The SMEC Primary Language Program, located at E. Fairhaven Elementary School, serves students in grades 1-4 with significant language delays and autism spectrum disorders. Staffed by a special education teacher, speech pathologist, COTA and paraprofessionals, the program offers intensive, language based programming with a small staff/student ratio and opportunity for inclusive activities within the host building.

#### SMEC Integrated Services Program:

The SMEC Integrated Services Program, located at the Ford Middle School in Acushnet, serves students in grades 5-8 with significant language delays and autism spectrum disorders. It provides a continuum of services for students exiting the Primary Language Program who still require a substantially separate classroom with a small staff/student ratio or for new students referred at the middle school level. Services are provided by a special education teacher, paraprofessionals, a COTA, BCBA consultant and a speech language pathologist.

#### SMEC Alternative Learning Classroom I:

The SMEC ALC I program, located at the Ford Middle School in Acushnet, serves students in grades 5-8 with social/emotional, behavioral and learning disabilities. Students are served in a substantially separate classroom with a small student/staff ratio and inclusion opportunities. Services are provided by a special education teacher, reading specialist, paraprofessional, Speech Pathologist as needed and licensed mental health counselor.

#### SMEC Alternative Learning Classroom II:

The SMEC ALC II program is located at Dartmouth High School, serving students in grades 9-12 with social/emotional, behavioral and learning disabilities. Students are served in a

substantially separate classroom with a small student/staff ratio and inclusion opportunities. Services are provided by a special education teacher, paraprofessionals, a licensed mental health counselor and consulting employment development coordinator.

Transitional Services:

SMEC offers transitional services to students ages 18-22 with developmental disabilities. Student services include job development, employment skills training and support, life skills/ADL instruction, social/community skills development and case management. Instruction is community based with classroom space available in Dartmouth and New Bedford. Staffing includes special education teachers, paraprofessionals, a speech pathologist, job developer, job coaches and transitional/vocational specialist.

FACE Program:

The FACE after school program provides an extended day social skills activity group to students in grades 5-8 with significant social/language delays. The program is staffed by a special education teacher and paraprofessional.

Supporting Adults for Inclusive Living (SAIL) program:

SMEC's SAIL program serves individuals over the age of 22 who have been deemed eligible for adult service funding through the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and the MA Commission for the Blind (MCB). SMEC is a qualified state provider for employment support, residential support, community day support and individual support services. Funding for the SAIL program is provided through state contracts with DDS and MCB. Biannual licensure and compliance audits are conducted by DDS.

SMEC Adult Day Health (ADH) Program:

SMEC's ADH program provides a continuum of services for individuals over the age of 22 who require daily supervision, activities and case management. The ADH program supplements the services provided through SMEC's SAIL program. The ADH program is currently funded and licensed through Medicaid/MassHealth, with reimbursement for hot lunches provided through the DESE's CACFP program.

Ancillary Services:

SMEC provides specialized staffing and therapeutic services to school districts throughout our region. SMEC speech pathologists, occupational therapists, COTAs, SLPAs, physical therapists, school psychologists, ELL teachers and sign language interpreters provide therapeutic and consultation services to students and staff in member and non-member districts and charter

schools throughout the region on a contractual basis. In addition, our vocational specialist offers transitional/vocational assessment services to students referred for evaluation by their LEA.

Professional Development:

SMEC offers a variety of professional development activities for educators from member and non-member districts throughout the year. In FY13, 143 educators from 23 school districts, 3 educational collaboratives and one private school took part in SMEC PD activities.

Transitional/Vocational Assessments

SMEC's Transitional/Vocational Specialist utilizes the McCarron-Dial Evaluation System along with companion assessments to provide a comprehensive transitional/vocational evaluation for students ages 15-21. Students are referred for such assessments by the LEA based on Team recommendations.

Special Education Transportation:

In 2012-2013, SMEC offered special education transportation services to member school districts. Cost benefit to district varies based on route and competitive bidding quotes from private vendors. During FY13, transportation services were limited to students attending SMEC programs.