



2023

Southern Worcester  
County Educational  
Collaborative

# Annual Report

185 Southbridge Road, Dudley MA  
SWCEC.org  
@SWCEC\_MA







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## LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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December 2023

Dear SWCEC Community,

I am pleased to present you with the Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2023, which encompasses the 2022-2023 school year here at SWCEC. The past year was a productive one for the Collaborative in which we saw enrollments continue to swell our student ranks on our two campuses. While we did see a large number of referrals during FY23, we struggled with finding staff to fill some of our positions, due largely in part to the ongoing labor shortage and lack of rising educators. Commissioner Jeffrey Riley bemoaned the shortage of highly qualified teachers and unfortunately our region has not been immune to its effects. Despite this, the Collaborative successfully provided many students and families with the specialized instructional services, therapies, and supports so desperately needed for rising numbers of Special Education students across the Commonwealth. Despite labor market shortages, SWCEC provided tuition-based services to a total of 140 students throughout the 2022-2023 school year at our Dudley and Southbridge campuses. SWCEC provided related services through our itinerant staff to over 250 students in our member and non-member districts.

The Collaborative extended its productivity with staff working at their own professional and student goals as well as with continued work on several Professional Learning Communities. These PLCs set goals toward enhancing and realizing the objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan ratified by the SWCEC Board in March 2023. The new Strategic Plan is three years in its scope and sequences check points and benchmarks aligning with the following three overarching goals: 1) Student Outcomes and Achievement; 2) Product and Professional Development; and 3) Marketing and Community Outreach. Many of these areas are already in progress, but it is with renewed enthusiasm that I look forward to working with our staff and fellow colleagues of member districts to realize outcomes of this plan. As you read through this Annual Report, I encourage you also to look at the details of the SWCEC Strategy for Improvement Plan as I am sure you will see evidence of the hard work that is already bearing fruit, namely in our students who learn skills of adaptability, resilience, voice, agency, and ultimately independent living and productivity. In future Annual Reports I will strive to report progress on the Strategic Plan with the expectation that together, we will continue to grow our programs and services provided to our member Districts.

Fiscally, the Collaborative operated at a surplus of \$456,208 as compared to a total budget of \$8,007,728. Details of the Collaborative's financial status can be found at the end of this document. Thank you for taking the time to look over our Collaborative's report and I wish you all well during the new year.

Sincerely,



Arnold D. Lundwall, Executive Director of SWCEC

## GOVERNANCE

A Board of Directors that includes one voting representative from each member district governs SWCEC. Appointment to this Board requires a vote annually by each district School Committee.

Dr. Elizabeth Chamberland, Auburn  
Mr. Steven Lamarche, Dudley Charlton Regional  
Dr. James Cummings, Grafton  
Dr. Brett Kustigian, Chair, Leicester  
Dr. Gregory Myers, Millbury  
Ms. Amy McKinstry, Northbridge  
Mr. Timothy McCormick, North Brookfield  
Mr. Michael Lucas, Oxford  
Mrs. Maureen Binienda, Quaboag Regional  
Dr. Jeffrey Villar, Southbridge  
Dr. Paul Haughey, Spencer East Brookfield Regional  
Dr. Kimberly Roberts-Morandi, Sutton  
Ms. Deborah Boyd, Vice Chair Tantasqua Union 61 Regional  
Dr. Michael Baldassarre, Uxbridge  
Dr. Ruthann Goguen (Feb 2023) Ms. Monique Pierangeli, Webster

## SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mr. Gregory Walton, Auburn  
Mr. Robert Bergeron, Dudley Charlton Regional  
Mr. Robert Wall and Nicole MacDonald, Grafton  
Mrs. Pamela Smith, Leicester  
Ms. Kate Ryan, Millbury  
Mr. Gregory Rosenthal, Northbridge  
Ms. Kristen Esposito, North Brookfield  
Ms. Kristen Miller, Oxford  
Ms. Yumei Yao, Quaboag Regional  
Ms. Karen Giangregorio, Southbridge  
Mr. David Gates, Spencer East Brookfield Regional  
Ms. Andrea Alves Thomas, Sutton  
Ms. Brenda Looney, Tantasqua Union 61 Regional  
Ms. Anna Knapp, Uxbridge  
Ms. Kathleen Baris, Webster



2023 SWCEC

# GROW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**Teaching students how navigate their own learning and  
identifying a path to individual achievement**

DESE Approved Public Therapeutic Day School

Eric Glazier, Principal

Located at 121 Ashland Avenue, Southbridge

Services grades K-6

Average enrollment: 36

Operates on a 180 day school year

Offers a 25 day extended school year

Parent Advisory Council

Primary Population/Disability:

Social Emotional

Developmental Delay

Intellectual

Specific Learning

Communication

Health

Neurological

## Program Highlights

- Grow provides a whole student approach to our social emotional curriculum. Students receive individualized counseling and group counseling weekly. We utilize curriculums such as Everyday Speech and Second Steps.
- Community partnerships to actively support families. Clinical staff look for ways to connect local agency resources with families...from in-home ABA support to therapeutic mentors, to in-home therapy.
- Students learn self-control, social skills, and the confidence to challenge themselves academically



## Success Highlights

Our staff continue to build upon the Positive Behavior Intervention model that supports our students' success. So often, the students who attend Grow have struggled to be recognized for positive behavior. Staff emphasize every instance of students observed being responsible, safe, and kind.

A small team of Grow educators have been collaborating to create training modules for our staff. The training modules include Functions of Behavior, ABC Data Training, Reinforcement and Consequences, Trauma Informed Care, Mindfulness, Professional Boundaries, PBIS Introduction, and Staff Expectations.

# GROW MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL

**Preparing for responsible, independence, life-learning  
and participation in school, family and community**

DESE Approved Public Therapeutic Day School

Anthony Cacace, Principal

Located at 185 Southbridge Road, Dudley

Services grades 7-12

Average enrollment: 57

Operates on a 180 day school year

Offers a 25 day extended school year

Parent Advisory Council

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Parenting Class

Student Clubs (Adjustment Counselor/ Teacher lead):

Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA)      Student Counsel

Gaming Club                                      Art Club

Horticulture Club

Primary Population/Disability:

Social Emotional

Communication

Developmental Delay

Health

Intellectual

Neurological

Specific Learning

## Program Highlights

- Curriculum alignment with Massachusetts Frameworks and all sending districts
- Experienced and skilled staff of Counselors and Teachers (average 13+ years)
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework is foundation for the therapeutic milieu
- Differential instruction to students grouped by educational levels and social emotional needs
- Student, guardian and community involvement through the expansion of student clubs, parent classes and community service
- Project based learning

## Success Highlights

The primary goal of our staff is to see our students succeed. It has been bittersweet to see several students achieve their goals and return to their home district. Many other students earned Trust Level status which demonstrates an individual's growth, positive attitude, and personal responsibility. Students have demonstrated they can be trusted and have earned more independence at school.

A successful 6 week Dialectical Behavior Therapy class for the guardians of our middle and high school piloted by Adjustment Counselor, Melanie Irwin.





# GROW CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Combining academics with workplace experience to bring relevance to learning

DESE Approved Public Therapeutic Day School

Anthony Cacace, Principal

Located at 185 Southbridge Road, Dudley

Services grades 10-12+

Average enrollment: 9

Small group instruction (1:3 or 1:4 ratio)

Operates on a 180 day school year

Offers a 25 day extended school year

Parent Advisory Council

Primary Population/Disability:

Social Emotional      Communication      Intellectual

## Job Sites:

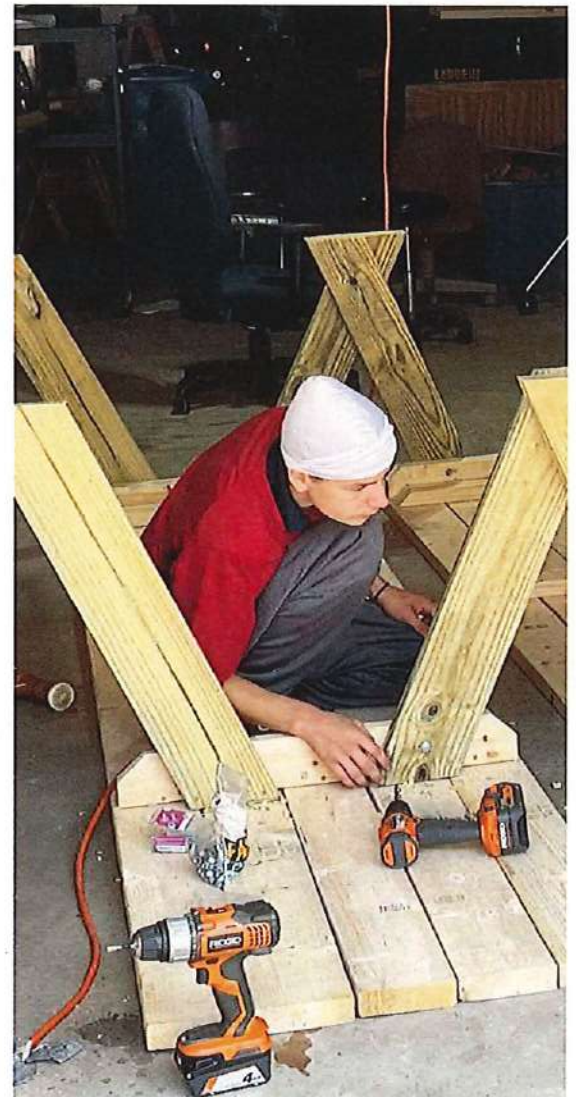
- Meals on Wheels
- Sturbridge Host Hotel & Conference Center
- Nichols College
- Oxford Congregational Church
- Park N Shop
- Center of Hope
- Dudley Department of Public Works
- Grow School Store
- SWCEC Landscaping

## Career Development Offers:

- College and transition services that provide students with transferable skill building. This is done through community-based and on-site job opportunities.
- Transition Portfolio, up to date resume and interview experiences
- Career Rehabilitation Counselor on staff

## Success Highlights:

- Paid internships through Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Worked closely with Dudley DPW in beautification projects
- Built picnic tables for Center of Hope's Scoop of Hope
- Recipient of the Janet Malser Humanities grant





## SPECIALIZED DEVELOPMENTAL MEDICALLY FRAGILE

DESE Approved Public Therapeutic Day School

Dennis Todd, Director of Special Services

Located at 185 Southbridge Road, Dudley

Services grades 3-22

Average enrollment: 6

Operates on a 210 day school year

Parent Advisory Council

Focus areas:

Daily living skills

Pre-vocational skill development

Sensory integration

Functional communication

Fine, gross, and oral motor skills

All inclusive:

Nursing

Occupational therapy

Physical therapy

Speech & language therapy

Vision therapy

Music therapy

Adapted physical education

Art

Orientation & mobility therapy

### Program Highlights

- Massachusetts Curriculum Framework approached as multi-sensory functional academic and daily living skills deeply focused on voice and choice to enhance life experiences for students
- Transdisciplinary team of related service providers incorporate various therapies into the daily classroom schedule
- Weekly transdisciplinary clinical review team meetings to assess individual student programs, progress monitoring, and planning for continued student growth
- Monthly orthotic and wheelchair clinics to ensure all students have the appropriate medical equipment and alternative positioning equipment
- Registered nurse present overseeing and providing training to staff on complex health care needs such as feeding, seizure disorders, respiratory issues, and other necessary health care interventions
- Total communication approach to teaching and learning through the use of augmentative communication tools such as picture symbols, objects, digital photographs, iPads, communication books, voice output switches and dedicated communication devices

### Success Highlights

Students in the Developmental Medically Fragile Program responded favorably to the Unique Learning System curriculum as well as the News2You program over this past year. The classroom teacher uses these two software platforms design to design and differentiate learning opportunities to meet each student's developmental level.

## SPECIALIZED DEVELOPMENTAL AUTISM

DESE Approved Public Therapeutic Day School

Dennis Todd, Director of Special Services

Located at 185 Southbridge Road, Dudley

Services grades 3-22

Average enrollment: 7

Operates on a 210 day school year

Parent Advisory Council

Focus areas:

Daily living skills

Pre-vocational skill development

Sensory integration

Social pragmatic communication skills

Social skills development

All inclusive:

Nursing

Occupational therapy

Art

Speech & language therapy

Vision therapy

Physical therapy

Adapted physical education

Orientation & Mobility therapy

Music therapy

Oversight from a Board-Certified Behavioral Analyst

### Program Highlights

- Combination of Applied Behavior Analysis, discrete trial training, and integrated social skills lessons
- Our BCBA collaborates closely with the transdisciplinary team to develop effective individualized programming and behavior support plans to aid students in learning new skills, increasing independence, and expanding functional and social communication
- Teaching methods include pre-vocational, life skills, and practiced socialization, as well as academic program that aligns with the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework

### Success Highlights

The Unique Learning Systems curriculum that has been incorporated into the program this past year proved to be an effective tool allowing teachers to tailor lessons to every student's unique learning needs. The scope and sequence of the curriculum is comprehensive, and the software application allows the teacher to custom design student specific content aligned with the Massachusetts learning standards in all subjects. The Specialized Developmental Autism program students and SWCEC's Grow elementary, middle, and high school students benefitted from inclusive opportunities over this past year that included music and dance performances, literature circles, and group Speech and Occupational Therapy (SPOT) lessons.





## BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

### GROW Schools

- Masters level Special Education Teachers
- 42% of School Adjustment Counselors also Licensed Independent Clinic Social Workers
- Licensed Mental Health Counselor on staff
- Registered Nurse on staff
- Access to professional therapy service personnel

### Career Development Program

- Certified Rehabilitation Counselor level Transition Specialist working with students daily
- Exposure to different job sites introducing students to diverse career paths
- Graduates leave SWCEC with a resume, portfolio and interview experience

### Developmental Autism Program

- Master level Special Education teacher
- Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT) as classroom assistants
- Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) supports
- Access to professional therapy service personnel

### Developmental Medically Fragile

- Licensed Teacher of Visually Impaired
- Orientation & Mobility Therapy Specialist
- Registered Nurse on staff
- Related service staff provide family support to coordinated medical care teams.

## DAILY RATE OF AREA COLLABORATIVES AND PRIVATE DAY SCHOOLS

### Day School Programs

Grow / Rise	\$277.59
BICO	\$292.88
Keystone	\$340.52
<u>CAPS</u>	<u>\$268.64</u>
Devereux	\$301.72
Walker School	\$457.13

### Medically Fragile Programs

SWCEC Medical	\$373.78
<u>CAPS</u>	<u>\$376.48</u>
BC Camus School	\$506.84
Franciscan	\$551.94

### Career Development Programs

Grow/Rise	\$296.16
<u>BICO</u>	<u>\$292.88</u>
Ivy Street School	\$506.47

### Autism Programs

SWCEC Autism	\$458.25
<u>CAPS</u>	<u>\$369.30</u>
CABI	\$444.72
Amego	\$548.97
Crossroads	\$583.90
The League School	\$511.10
NECC	\$581.91

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SWCEC provides professional learning opportunities to districts. Often, smaller districts do not have a special education faculty cohort large enough to justify district-based professional learning in a cost-effective environment. Aligning professional days with member districts provide such opportunities from the Collaborative for a higher quality and more cost-effective, comprehensive professional learning experience for all special educators in our catchment area.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MENU

ABC of Refocusing Management	American Sign Language	Adaptation for Literacy in All Content Areas
Applied Non-Violence Train the Trainer Recertification	Assistive Technology	De-Escalation Technique
IEP- Keep it individual	Surface Behavior Management	Transitional Planning
Writing High Quality Goals & Objectives	DEI training	Augmentative Communication training

## THERAPEUTIC ASSESSMENT & CONTRACT SERVICES

SWCEC provides consultation, direct services, assessments and program evaluation services to member districts. These services support districts with building skills and a program that services students in their home schools. During the 2022- 2023 year, SWCEC's professional educators provided in-district support to over 250 students.

### ASSESSMENT AND CONTRACTED SERVICES MENU

Adaptive Physical Education	Assistive Technology Augmentative Communication	Behavioral Consultation	Communication Therapy
Functional Behavioral Assessment	Occupational Therapy	Physical Therapy	Program Evaluation
Psychologist Consult	Risk Assessment	Social Skills & Transition	Speech & Language Pathology
Teacher of Deaf & Hard of Hearing	Teacher of Visually Impaired	Therapeutic Consultation in Social Emotional Learning	Transition Assessment
Transition Planning	Vocational Evaluation	Vocational / Transition Services	Orientation & Mobility Therapy Specialist



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

## STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS FOR YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

	General Fund	Nonmajor Funds	Total Governmental Funds
<b>REVENUES</b>			
Tuition income	6,922,946	-	6,922,946
Membership dues	60,000	-	60,000
Program service fees	1,206,902	-	1,206,902
Governmental income	948,546	-	948,546
Summer Program	66,900	-	66,900
Interest income	37,092	-	37,092
Total revenues	9,242,386	-	9,242,386
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>			
Administration	613,210	-	613,210
Instruction	4,406,776	-	4,406,776
Student support	80,177	-	80,177
Maintenance	85,596	-	85,596
Rent	376,479	-	376,479
Telephone and utilities	40,228	-	40,228
Employee benefits	2,179,460	-	2,179,460
Fixed assets/technology	119,248	-	119,248
Insurance	105,326	-	105,326
Wages and benefits - technicians	648,330	-	648,330
Transportation	31,169	-	31,169
Total expenditures	8,686,178	-	8,686,178
Excess of revenues over expenditures	556,208	-	556,208
<b>OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES)</b>			
Transfers (out)	-	-	-
Transfers to OPEB Trust	(100,000)	-	(100,000)
Total other financing sources and uses	(100,000)	-	(100,000)
Net change in fund balances	456,208	-	456,208
Fund balances - beginning of year	1,771,173	-	1,771,173
Fund balances - end of year	2,227,381	-	2,227,381

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

## STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES BUDGET AND ACTUAL - GENERAL FUND FOR YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

	Budgeted Amount		Actual Amounts, Budgetary Basis	Variance with Final Budget- Position (Negative)
	Original	Final		
REVENUES				
Tuition income	6,865,208	6,865,208	6922,946	57,738
Membership dues	60,000	60,000	60,000	-
Supplementary and other income	1,019,600	1,019,600	1,206,902	187,302
Summer Program	49,980	49,980	66,900	16,920
Interest income	13,000	13,000	37,092	24,092
Total revenues	8,007,728	8,007,728	8,293,840	286,052
EXPENDITURES				
Administration	786,028	786,028	613,210	206,609
Instruction	4,488,420	4,488,420	4,406,776	81,644
Student support	70,411	70,411	80,1178	(43,557)
Maintenance	105,9289	105,9289	85,596	20,332
Rent	462,844	462,844	376,479	86,365
Telephone and utilities	46,016	46,016	40,228	5,788
Employee benefits	1,243,304	1,243,304	1,230,913	12,391
Fixed assets/technology	80,673	80,673	119,428	(38,755)
Insurance	119,714	119,714	105,326	14,388
Wages and benefits - technicians	653,041	653,041	648,330	4,711
Transportation	37,025	37,025	31,169	5,856
Total expenditures	8,093,404	8,093,404	7,737,632	355,772
Excess of revenues over expenditures	(85,616)	(85,616)	556,209	641,825
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES)				
Use of unreserved surplus	-	-	-	-
Transfers in (out)	-	-	(100,000)	100,000
Total other financing sources and uses			(100,000)	100,000
Excess if revenues over expenditures	(85,616)	(85,616)	456,209	541,825



## COLLABORATIVE TEAM

Board Certified Behavior Analyst  
Severe and Moderate Special Education Teachers, Masters Level  
Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, CAGS Level  
Guidance Counselor, DESE licensed  
Independent Clinic Social Worker  
Mental Health Counselor  
School Adjustment Counselors, DESE licensed  
Registered Behavior Technicians  
Speech Language Pathologist, DESE licensed  
Speech Language Assistant  
Assistive Technology Specialist  
Orientation & Mobility Specialist  
Registered Occupational Therapist  
Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant  
Registered Physical Therapist  
Physical Therapy Assistant  
Teacher of the Visually Impaired, DESE licensed  
Teacher of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing, DESE licensed

## LEADERSHIP TEAM

Mr. Arnold Lundwall, Executive Director  
Ms. Lena Travinski, Director of Finance & Operations  
Mr. Dennis Todd, Director of Special Services  
Mr. Eric Glazier, Grow Elementary School Principal  
Mr. Anthony Cacace, Grow Middle/High School Principal