

ANNUAL REPORT  
2012-2013



Administrative Office  
57 ORCHARD STREET  
MARLBOROUGH, MA 07152  
508-481-3611  
[www.avcollaborative.org](http://www.avcollaborative.org)



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## Message from the Executive Director

Dear Assabet Valley Collaborative Community Members,

Newly amended [M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E](#) requires each collaborative to produce an annual report that provides information on programs and services provided by the collaborative, includes a discussion of the cost-effectiveness of the collaborative's programs and services and that demonstrates progress towards achieving the objectives and purposes set forth in the collaborative agreement. This annual report provides an overview of programs, highlights the value of membership, and showcases particular accomplishments by the collaborative in FY13.

### **Compliance with Statutes and Regulations:**

During 2012-2013, AVC, like other Collaboratives in Massachusetts, worked diligently to respond to new legislation ([M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E](#)) and new regulations ([603 CMR 50.00](#)). Work associated with implementing these new laws and regulations included revisions to our collaborative agreement, development of new policies, publication of an annual report, and routine communication with our member district school committees through quarterly reports.

### **New Educator Evaluation System:**

Although AVC was not required to implement the new educator evaluation system until FY14, AVC launched a phase-in approach to the new system by implementing SMART goals and educator plans for all AVC staff in 2012-2013. This phase-in enabled AVC staff and administrators time to learn and master one of the new elements of the system before adding all the additional components that will be required of all districts and collaboratives in Massachusetts in 2013-2014.

### **Program Facilities – Marlborough and Shrewsbury:**

During 2012-2013, AVC worked diligently to secure suitable and sustainable facilities to support our continued growth.

- At the beginning of the year, it appeared that our lease for the Bigelow School – home to AVCAS/SOAR, FSP and Central Office -- would not be renewed the following year. This would have been a tremendous disruption to our services and programming. Through networking and negotiations with the City of Marlborough, instead of losing our home at Bigelow School, we agreed to a win-win lease contract with the City that enables AVC to call Bigelow home for the next 25 years – until 2038!
- Growing enrollment in Evolution was causing the program to quickly outgrow our new space at Shrewsbury High School. Rather than limit our enrollment or pursue other costly options, the team at AVC was able to secure a lease for FY14 for a location that would add value to the program (proximity to local worksites, fixed bus route for travel training, etc) for only \$4,000 annual rent. This new location will assist Evolution in continuing to grow while also adding some high quality new features to the program.

**Website/Online Presence – [www.avcollaborative.org](http://www.avcollaborative.org)**

AVC launched a new website in 2012-2013 which better promotes the work we do, the services we provide, and the value we bring to our member districts. Along with meeting the regulatory requirements to post public meetings, minutes, and other materials, the new website allows AVC programs to showcase events, publish newsletters, upload photos and share information with a variety of audiences for a variety of purposes.

**Growth and Stability:**

AVC’s Board of Directors voted to grant membership to a new district, Grafton Public Schools, during 2012-2013. During 2012-2013 AVC programs and services continued to grow, leading to increased financial stability as shown in our FY13 Financial Audit. Stability at AVC results in the opportunity for the organization to add services and maintain reasonable costs to our members for purchase of those services.

**Programs & Services:**

Highlights and achievements of our programs and services will be described more fully throughout the rest of this report. Each program and service (special education programs, special education transportation, professional development, and consultation services, wraparound) will be described with each section including a discussion of the cost effectiveness or value the particular program or service brings to our districts and our communities.

**A Note about “Value”**

It is important to note that while there are many elements of membership at AVC that result in clear cost savings and efficiencies, there are many other benefits of membership that are related to supporting core values, inclusion, collaboration with peers, and quality collective inquiry. This document will strive to highlight both the tangible cost efficiencies available to members as well as the intangible value-added benefits that come with being an active member of the AVC community.

Thank you for your contributions to our work at AVC. We rely on active and engaged districts, parents, staff, and community members - because we can do so much when we do it together.

With gratitude,



Cathy Cummins  
Executive Director





**2012-2013 Members of AVC**

- Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School (1976)
- Berlin, Boylston & Berlin-Boylston Public Schools (1976)
- Grafton Public Schools (pending DESE approval anticipated 2013)
- Hudson Public Schools (1976)
- Marlborough Public Schools (1976)
- Maynard Public Schools (1976)
- Millbury Public Schools (2011)
- Nashoba Regional School District (1976)
- Northborough, Southborough & Northborough-Southborough Public Schools (1976)
- Shrewsbury Public Schools (1976)
- Westborough Public Schools (1976)

**2012-2013 Board of Directors:**

<b>Mary Jo Nawrocki</b>	Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School
<b>Nadine Ekstrom</b>	Public Schools of Berlin and Boylston
<b>Jay Cummings (non-voting)</b>	Grafton Public Schools (pending DESE approval)
<b>Kevin Lyons</b>	Hudson Public Schools
<b>Stephen Dlott</b>	Marlborough Public Schools
<b>Robert Gerardi</b>	Maynard Public Schools
<b>Susan Hitchcock</b>	Millbury Public Schools
<b>Michael Wood (Chair)</b>	Nashoba Regional School District
<b>Charles Gobron</b>	Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough
<b>Joseph Sawyer (Vice-Chair)</b>	Shrewsbury Public Schools
<b>Marianne O'Connor</b>	Westborough Public Schools

**2012-2013 AVC Administration/Senior Leadership Team**

- Cathy Cummins, Executive Director
- Anne Mahan, Director of Finance & Operations
- Nicki Eastburn, Director of Development & Consultation Services
- Karen Laskey, Director of Satellite Programs
- April Zyirek, Director of Therapeutic Programs

### **Purpose:**

The AVC Collaborative Agreement articulates the purpose of AVC is to jointly conduct programs and/or services which shall complement and strengthen member school committees and increase educational opportunities for children ages 3-22. Services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- specialized education programs for students ages 3-22
- services provided to students aged 3-22 (transportation, therapy, counseling, supports)
- joint/cooperative or volume purchasing according to Chapter 30B as well as joint/cooperative purchasing through intergovernmental agreements
- services delivered to member school community staff - including training, professional development, consultation, or other service
- development of partnerships with community and state agencies to enhance support to member district communities
- joint initiatives including inter-district projects, research, task forces, etc.
- joint hiring or job sharing for low incidence personnel
- application for grants or other sources of funding for programs that may include state agencies, community-based partners, institutions of higher education, etc.
- application for grants or other sources of funding to operate programs for individuals that complement the mission and vision of the Collaborative

### **HISTORY OF ASSABET VALLEY COLLABORATIVE**

Assabet Valley Collaborative was established in 1976 and has evolved to provide support to our member districts in meeting the following needs:

- Special Education Programs
- Transportation
- Community-based Social Services
- Consultation & Contract Services
- Cooperative Purchasing
- Professional Development & Job-Alikes

AVC is deeply committed to bringing communities together to maximize diverse resources to provide the best services to children, families, and our region. Through collaboration and partnership we strive to map resources, identify needs, and develop and support services that will address unmet needs in our member school district communities.

### Progress in Achieving Purpose:

The following Table describes AVC’s progress in 2012-2013 in achieving the purposes articulated in the existing Collaborative Agreement.

<b>Programs/Services which “shall complement and strengthen member school committees and increase educational opportunities for children ages 3-22.”</b>	<b>Progress towards Purpose in FY13</b>
<i>Specialized education programs for students ages 3-22</i>	AVC continued to provide specialized programs as noted in the sections of this report describing programs. Student enrollment in programs continued to increase in 2012-2013 – from 109 students in FY12 to 135 students in FY13 ( <b>pages 9-20</b> ).
<i>Services provided to students aged 3-22 (transportation, therapy, counseling, supports)</i>	AVC provided consultation therapy services to over 300 students from 10 member districts and 4 nonmember districts ( <b>page 13</b> ). AVC transported 273 students in 2012-2013, up from 259 students in 2011-2012 ( <b>page 14</b> ).
<i>Joint/cooperative or volume purchasing according to Chapter 30B as well as joint/cooperative purchasing through intergovernmental agreements</i>	AVC joint purchasing for office supplies, copy paper, and school supplies resulting in an estimated \$374,390 in cost savings to districts. Additional cooperative purchasing contract awards included technology services and bread and rolls ( <b>page 15</b> ).
<i>Services delivered to member school community staff - including training, professional development, consultation, or other service</i>	AVC provided 1,829 contact hours of training to over 350 participants through targeted professional development activities. AVC’s Family Success Partnership (FSP) delivered wraparound services to 5 districts servicing 60 students and approximately 180 individuals ( <b>page 17</b> ).
<i>Development of partnerships with community and state agencies to enhance support to member districts</i>	AVC convenes community and state agencies, and continues to be a leader in systems of care meetings and task forces related to mental health, transition services, and inclusion ( <b>page 20 and Appendix A</b> ).
<i>Joint initiatives including inter-district projects, research, task forces, etc.</i>	AVC convened over 50 job-alike meetings for district administrators including Superintendents, Special Education Administrators, Business Administrators, Curriculum Leaders, Technology Leaders, Human Resource Administrators, and High School Principals. Job-Alike meetings resulted in resource sharing, joint initiatives, projects and collaboration ( <b>page 18</b> ).
<i>Joint hiring or job sharing for low incidence personnel</i>	AVC posted for and attempted to fill positions of Teacher of the Visually Impaired and an Assistive Technology Specialist in FY13 but was unable to fill these positions long-term. This is an area of exploration for FY14. AVC’s Board of Directors voted to authorize a shared position of Educational Technology Specialist – shared between AVC and a member district for the next fiscal year.
<i>Application for grants or other sources of funding for programs that may include state agencies, community-based partners, etc.</i>	AVC continued to seek grant-funding and partnerships with community agencies to support sustainability of wrap-around services. As a result of this, AVC received funding from Sudbury Foundation to commission an independent cost-avoidance study ( <b>See Appendix A</b> ).
<i>Application for grants or other sources of funding to operate programs for individuals that complement the mission and vision of the Collaborative</i>	AVC secured competitive and entitlement grant funding to support AVCAS’s expressive therapies programming and professional development ( <b>page 11</b> ).

## **Benefits of Membership**

Membership at Assabet Valley Collaborative brings access to the following benefits:

- 1.) All AVC programs and services are provided to members at **membership rates**. Non-member districts can also access AVC programs and services, but at a 12%-15% surcharge. Membership pricing is generally competitive with similar, private vendors resulting in cost efficiencies. Services and programs are also designed using quality indicators that are based on member feedback and guidance; members rely on AVC to provide high quality services that also maximize local resources through working with neighboring districts.
- 2.) Member districts **influence and guide decision-making** about adding programs, improving quality of services and pooling resources with neighboring districts. AVC started several new programs since 2008 based upon member district input about needs, including a middle school program for students with emotional/behavioral needs, a 45-day assessment program, and an 18-22 vocational program.
- 3.) Members have **access to Cooperative/Volume Purchasing** through collective procurement activities. AVC procures goods and services on behalf of member communities, resulting in more competitive pricing for goods districts need to purchase. In FY13 AVC contracts included bread and rolls, office supplies, copy paper, school supplies and technology services.
- 4.) Members have **access to grant-funded initiatives** through collective, collaborative stakeholder groups. AVC seeks to identify areas of need and to locate grant funding or other sources of revenue to support the launch of new initiatives. AVC's innovative Family Success Partnership was launched in this way, providing community-based wrap-around services for area families at no cost to districts 2007-2012.
- 5.) Members have **access to Job-Alikes and joint initiatives** for district faculty. Through joint initiatives, member districts share expertise, pool resources to increase capacity, collaborate on new regulations and mandates, and launch innovations and projects to improve public education in our region. See summary of Peer Review initiative for one robust, value added way that the Job-Alike for special education administrators has added value to member districts.
- 6.) **Enrollment in neighboring districts specialized programs** is possible due to the collective and collaborative partnerships fostered through membership at AVC. Districts can expand each other's capacity to provide public school specialized programs through tuition agreements between districts for special education programs in the least restrictive environment.

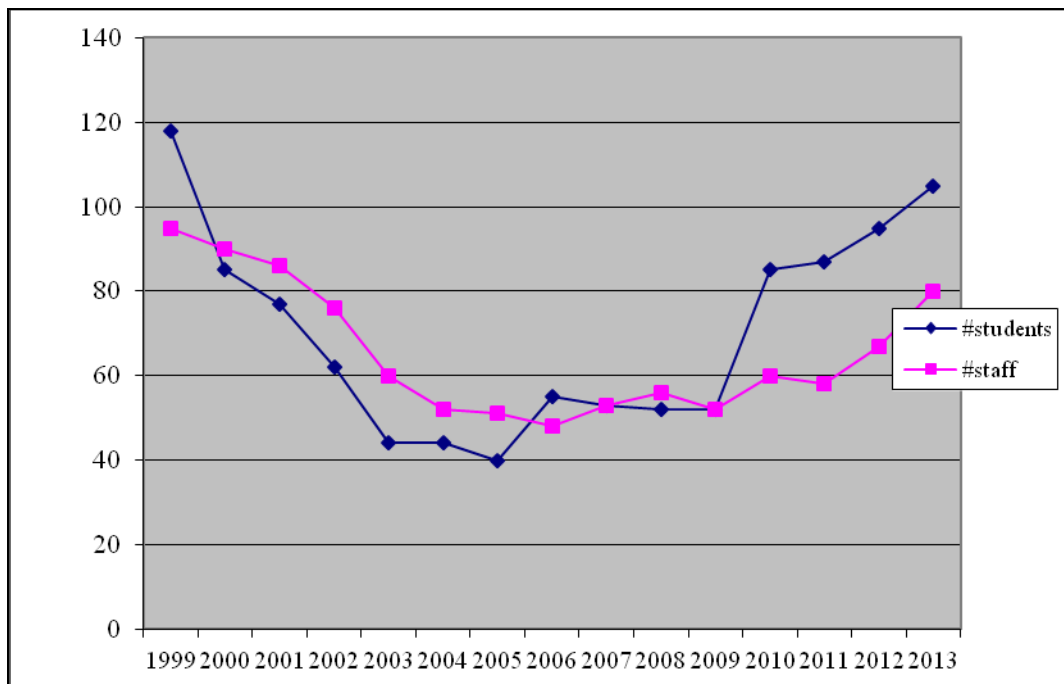


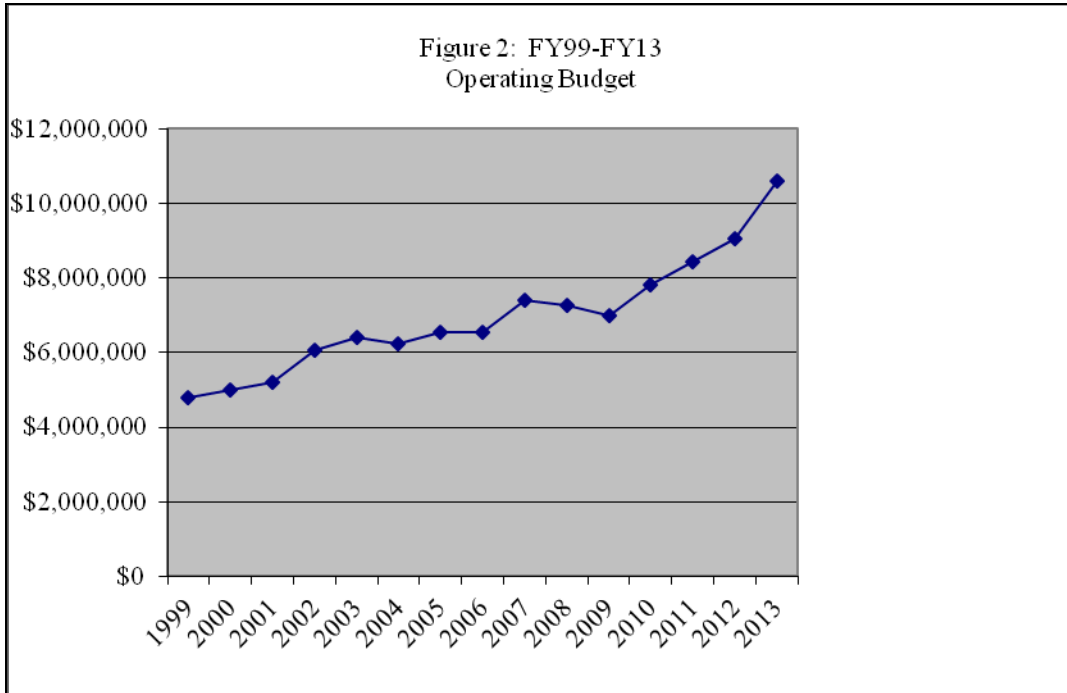
## Assabet Valley Collaborative Performance Report

AVC continued a recent trend of significant growth in FY13, which has been increasing capacity, operating budget and enrollment since significant turnaround activities took place in 2007-2008. The following charts provide graphic representation of AVC's growth in recent history and looking back to 1999. For detailed, audited FY13 financial statements, see the FY13 Audit Report included in Appendix B.

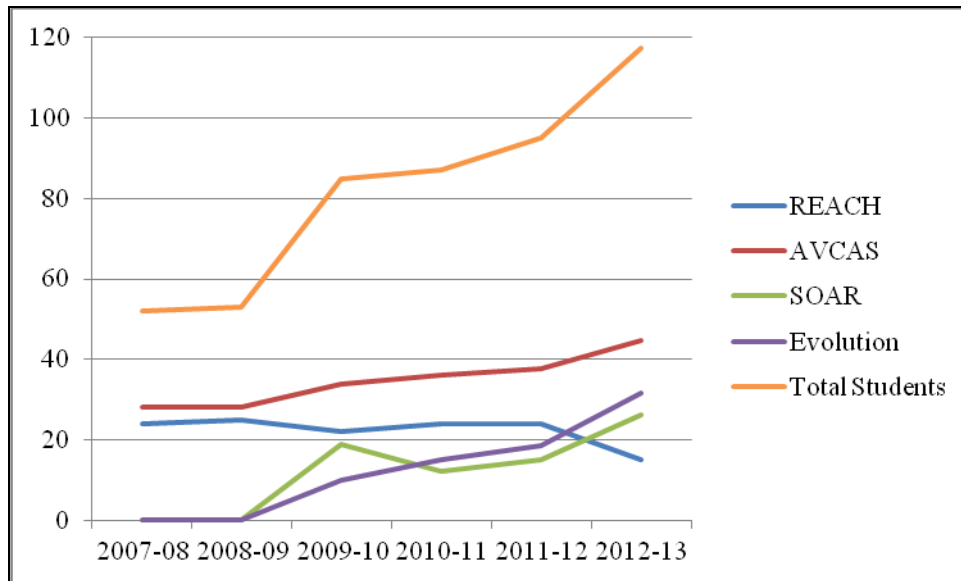
Figure 1 demonstrates the enrollment and staffing patterns at AVC from FY99-FY13 and Figure 2 represents the growth in the Operating Budget from FY99-FY13 – both showing a trend in increasing stabilization at AVC as well as increasing capacity and service to districts. Figure 3 reflects more recent (2008-2013) student enrollment trends by program.

**Figure 1: AVC Student Enrollment in Special Education Programs FY99-FY13**





**FIGURE 3: STUDENT ENROLLMENT BY PROGRAM 2008-2013**



## 2012-2013 Summary of Programs & Services

### REACH Program

In FY13 - Served 15 students – 8 from member districts and 7 from nonmember districts.

In FY12 - Served 25 students – 17 from member districts and 8 from nonmember districts.

*\*REACH Crossroads program formerly serving students ages 18-22 merged with Evolution in FY13 resulting in a decrease in enrollment in REACH.*

REACH II – *Trottier Middle School, 49 Parkerville Road, Southborough, MA – ages 10-14*

REACH III – *Algonquin Regional High School, 79 Bartlett Street, Northborough, MA – ages 14-16*

REACH IV -- *Algonquin Regional High School, 79 Bartlett Street, Northborough, MA – ages 16-18*

### Program Description:

**REACH** serves students with severe and multiple disabilities in substantially separate classrooms throughout our member districts' public buildings. AVC serves the educational, related-service, and medical needs of students who have global delays in multiple areas --including cognitive, motor, communication, vision and/or hearing. Students require the highly specialized professional staff including teachers, Speech and Language Pathologists, Physical, Occupational, and Music Therapists, Vision Specialists, and Nurses. Assistive technology is an integral component of the program and our students' communication and social needs are addressed throughout each day and through communication activities between home and school.

### Value:

AVC's REACH program provides a high quality, cost effective alternative to enrollment in private schools that are further away from our students' home communities and that cost between \$41 and \$290 (per [OSD special education pricing data](#) for programs serving similar populations) more per day than the member REACH tuition.

Although quality and cost are important considerations, geography and inclusion are vital to the value AVC's REACH classrooms offer our students, particularly from Member districts; most private placements are also in the Metro Boston area which adds travel distance, time and costs for districts. AVC's REACH classrooms are housed in public school settings, which add the value of inclusion opportunities with peers in the host school community as well as being able to participate in home community activities.



### Major accomplishments 2012-2013:

- Added vision services to programmatic service delivery (reducing costs to districts)
- Continued training of staff in PODD communication program
- Pet Therapy Volunteer
- Nursing students
- Music Therapy Interns
- Quarterly Newsletter
- Waiting list for typical peers reverse inclusion volunteers
- Community service projects

Tuition 204 days	Member Rate	Nonmember Rate	Membership Savings
REACH	\$68,879	\$77,144	\$8,265

**Evolution – Shrewsbury High School – 64 Holden Street; Shrewsbury, MA**

In FY 13 - served 34 students -- 31 from member districts, 3 from non-member districts

In FY 12 - served 18 students -- ALL from member districts

**Program Description:**

**Evolution** serves special education students who have completed 12th grade whose IEP Teams have identified a need for a post-graduate vocational/transitional program up to age 22. Evolution provides specialized instruction to meet the needs of a variety of students. It provides transition services that include transition assessments, vocational assessments, and transition and job coaching to meet the transition needs of a variety of students as they transition to adulthood.

**Value:**

AVC began Evolution in 2009 when a member district requested that AVC acquire the program in order to enable the enrollment of additional districts’ students which created an economy of scale to foster program improvements, competitive quality with private placements, and localized community-based vocational and transitional activities. Member districts often struggle to support specialized programs like Evolution because they require school vehicles to transport students throughout the community, a high volume of support staff to work with students in the community at job sites and transition activities, and require flexible use of personnel including worksite support, classroom support, travel training, and driving of school vehicles. AVC acquired Evolution from Westborough Public Schools in 2009 and enrolled 9 students; in the next three years the enrollment nearly quadrupled (grew by 378%) enrolling 34 students in 2012-2013. In FY12, Evolution entered an agreement with Shrewsbury Public Schools to cost share renovation of customized space at Shrewsbury High School to expand the program given future enrollment projections of 30-40 students. Significant growth in the program resulted in quickly outgrowing our new space at SHS; at the conclusion of 2012-2013, AVC entered an agreement for FY14 for the lease of additional ‘satellite’ space with proximity to a fixed bus route and community-based sites within walking distance.

**Major accomplishments 2012-2013:**

- New job sites, travel training, YMCA
- Cooking showdown
- Annual Job fair with local employers/businesses
- Acquisition of additional vehicles
- Partner with Perkins School for PD for staff and field
- Increased enrollment from 18 to 34 students
- Search for additional classroom space in community
- Quarterly newsletter



<b>Tuition 180 days</b>	<b>Member Rate</b>	<b>Nonmember Rate</b>	<b>Membership Savings</b>
Evolution Tier 1	\$30,335	\$33,975	\$3,640
Evolution Tier 2	\$45,000	\$50,400	\$5,400
Evolution Tier 3 *Formerly REACH/Crossroads	\$68,879	\$77,144	\$8,265

**Assabet Valley Collaborative Alternative School (AVCAS) 57 Orchard Street, Marlborough**

In FY13 - Served 69 students – 28 AVC members; 32 ACCEPT members; 9 non-members

In FY12 - Served 50 students – 23 AVC members; 23 ACCEPT members, 4 non-members

**Program Description:**

AVCAS is a public special education day school serving middle and high school students (grades 6-12) coping with emotional, learning and behavioral difficulties. Our students have experienced difficulty in traditional school settings and require a small, therapeutic school environment to access their education. AVCAS staff provides a learning environment that is safe, responsive, and cohesive and strives to empower each student to reach his/her individual educational goals within the context of a therapeutic environment. AVCAS staff collaborate with students, families, sending school districts, state agencies, and community mental health providers to ensure that students are supported during the school day as well as beyond the scope of the school day when indicated.

**Value:**

AVCAS provides a regional option for students who may otherwise be referred for private school placements further from the home community. AVCAS is invested in supporting students in returning to their home district, and in working with the member districts to build the capacity to support the needs of students with social and emotional disabilities. AVCAS is known for quality school-based clinical services as well as for our expressive arts and physical education programs. In 2008 AVC enrolled 28 students and has grown to serve 50+ students due to our reputation as a high quality, local, public option for students with high level of need. AVC's partnership with ACCEPT Collaborative also adds value to member districts from both collaboratives because AVC does not currently operate an elementary program for this population while ACCEPT Collaborative does. AVC and ACCEPT partner to offer each other's member district member tuitions and thus together can provide programming for students K-12.

**Major accomplishments 2012-2013:**

- Work study & Annual Job fair with local employers/businesses
- Annual Music performance
- Graduated 11 Seniors
- Significant increase in enrollment
- Expressive Arts programming supported through Massachusetts Cultural Council
- Interactive white boards
- NYPUM dirt-biking program
- Intramural basketball programming
- Art and Music Therapy internship programs



<b>Tuition 180 days</b>	<b>Member Rate</b>	<b>Nonmember Rate</b>	<b>Membership Savings</b>
AVCAS	\$44,117	\$49,411	\$5,294

**SOAR – 45 Day Assessment Program – 57 Orchard Street, Marlborough, MA**

In FY13 - Served 17 students – 7 AVC members; 8 ACCEPT members, 2 non-members

In FY12 - Served 16 students – 7 AVC members; 7 ACCEPT members, 2 non-members

**Program Description:**

Jointly operated by [Assabet Valley Collaborative](#) and [ACCEPT Education Collaborative](#), Short Term Option for Assessment and Recommendations -- SOAR -- is a short-term stabilization and diagnostic assessment program for middle and high school students (grades 6-12) who are struggling in their school setting as a result of emotional and/or behavioral difficulties. The clinical and educational expertise available from SOAR staff assists districts in addressing diagnostic and placement issues for students experiencing difficulties.

**Value:**

SOAR is housed in the same building as AVCAS which provides access to services, expertise and facilities not typically found in other 45-day assessment programs – including comprehensive academic support, music, art and other elective teachers, physical education, and clinical support services. In addition, AVC’s partnership with area clinical providers enables us to pass cost savings in clinical evaluations on to districts. SOAR staff are committed to supporting districts in responding to referral questions and identifying recommendations to support the student’s need in the least restrictive environment. Because of the diversity of expertise available within AVC faculty, SOAR can serve a wide range of students – many of whom are transitioning from more restrictive settings like hospitalizations or residential settings and many of whom are referred because of incidences or crises at home or school.

**Major accomplishments 2012-2013:**

- Work study & Annual Job fair with local employers/businesses
- Annual Music performance
- Significant increase in enrollment
- Expressive Arts programming supported through Massachusetts Cultural Council
- Interactive White Boards
- Art and Music Therapy internship programs



<b>Tuition 45 days</b>	<b>Member Rate</b>	<b>Nonmember Rate</b>	<b>Membership Savings</b>
SOAR	\$11,878	\$13,303	\$1,425

**Consultation Services – 57 Orchard Street, Marlborough, MA – various locations**

FY13: 8 staff servicing 10 districts – supporting 300+ students

FY12: 8 staff servicing 10 districts – supporting 300+ students

**Service Description:**

Assabet Valley Collaborative works with districts to provide a variety of related services - including Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech/Language Therapy, Music Therapy, Assistive Technology services, and mental health/clinical services. Services provided range from Evaluation, consultation, home-based, to direct services in school settings.

**Value:**

AVC employs a range of experts with particularly specialized training and credentials which helps to support the low-incidence needs in member districts. In addition, AVC’s consultants are committed to integrated services and expanding the capacity of our member districts to provide increasing support to students in their home districts in the least restrictive setting.

**Major accomplishments 2012-2013:**

- iPads for therapeutic service delivery
- Monthly professional development and collaboration meetings
- Partnerships with state-wide organizations to support inclusion and professional development
- Participation in unpacking the new evaluation rubrics for related service providers and contribution to state-wide organizations implementing new tool for school-based therapists



Hourly rate - consultants	Member Rate	Nonmember Rate	Membership Savings
Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech/Language, Assistive Technology, Music Therapy, Social Work/Counseling	\$84.66	\$94.82	\$10.16
Therapy Assistants – PTA, COTA, SLPA	\$56.44	\$63.21	\$6.77

**Transportation** – 57 Orchard Street, Marlborough, MA

FY13 - transported average of 273 students from 10 member districts and 8 non-member districts

FY12 - transported average of 259 students from 8 member districts 11 non-member districts.

AVC coordinated out-of-district special education transportation services for 10 member districts in FY13 – up from 8 member districts in FY12. AVC leverages volume from many districts; transportation vendors submit competitive rates to AVC resulting in cost savings for special education transportation. In addition, AVC monitors the quality of the services provided, in an effort to save districts valuable time and to capitalize on an economy of scale. In FY13, AVC began the first year of a three-year contract with Vanpool. While pricing is an important component of the transportation services we provide, our districts rely on AVC to broker services with vendors committed to high quality, flexibility, and responsiveness.



	<b>2012-2013 Member Rates</b>	<b>2012-2013 Non-Member Rates</b>	<b>Estimated Savings</b>
<b>Single district route – 7d vehicle</b>	\$110.00 within Collaborative Region	\$123.20 non-member	\$13.20 per route
<b>Single district route – 7d vehicle</b>	\$135 outside Collaborative Region	\$151.20 non-member	\$16.20 per route
<b>Single district route Wheel Chair vehicle</b>	\$225	\$252	\$27.00 per route



**Cooperative Purchasing - 57 Orchard Street, Marlborough, MA**

AVC improves efficiencies and increases cost savings through the facilitation of joint purchasing through which districts are able to obtain competitive pricing from vendors while taking advantage of a streamlined bid process – which often yield bids lower than the state bid list and single-district procurement activities. In 2012-2013, AVC conducted joint procurement of School Supplies, Paper, Office Supplies, Technology Services, and Bread and Rolls for Food Service. The contracts with WB Mason for school supplies, paper and office supplies yielded a savings to districts of over \$374,000.

<b>FY13 Estimated Savings resulting from Cooperative Purchase of Paper, School &amp; Office Supplies</b>				
<b>Account Name</b>	<b>Estimated Paper Savings (=savings)</b>	<b>Estimated Office Supply Savings (=savings)</b>	<b>Estimated School Supplies Savings (=savings)</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Assabet Valley Regional Technical</b>	(\$3,459.28)	(\$33,934.76)	(\$5,660.10)	<b>(\$43,054.13)</b>
<b>Assabet Valley Collaborative</b>	(\$769.87)	(\$10,266.68)	(\$1,516.50)	<b>(\$12,553.04)</b>
<b>Berlin-Boylston</b>	(\$3,801.40)	(\$13,231.93)	(\$5,955.03)	<b>(\$22,988.36)</b>
<b>Hudson Public Schools</b>	(\$8,988.32)	(\$8,234.48)	(\$832.90)	<b>(\$18,055.70)</b>
<b>Marlborough Public Schools</b>	(\$14,032.36)	(\$39,583.80)	(\$29,928.28)	<b>(\$83,544.43)</b>
<b>Maynard Public Schools</b>	(\$4,590.58)	(\$9,638.02)	(\$2,135.39)	<b>(\$16,363.99)</b>
<b>Northborough-Southborough</b>	(\$10,770.38)	(\$13,908.59)	(\$5,596.75)	<b>(\$30,275.71)</b>
<b>Nashoba Reg. School Dist</b>	(\$10,055.11)	(\$37,121.10)	(\$13,677.14)	<b>(\$60,853.36)</b>
<b>Shrewsbury Public School</b>	(\$17,487.21)	(\$36,864.72)	(\$12,593.60)	<b>(\$66,945.53)</b>
<b>Westborough Public School</b>	(\$10,503.51)	(\$6,397.83)	(\$2,853.89)	<b>(\$19,755.22)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>(\$84,458.01)</b>	<b>(\$209,181.91)</b>	<b>(\$80,749.56)</b>	<b>(\$374,389.48)</b>

<b>Paper Savings*</b>				
<b>Account Name</b>	<b>Paper</b>	<b>Paper/rms</b>	<b>State bid \$</b>	<b>Estimated Cost Savings (=savings)</b>
Assabet Valley Regional Technical	\$14,963.25	577.51	\$18,422.53	(\$3,459.28)
Assabet Valley Collaborative	\$2,793.73	107.82	\$3,563.60	(\$769.87)
Berlin-Boylston	\$15,883.89		\$19,685.29	(\$3,801.40)
Hudson Public Schools	\$39,539.46	1,526.03	\$48,527.78	(\$8,988.32)
Marlborough Public Schools	\$61,728.07	2,382.40	\$75,760.43	(\$14,032.36)
Maynard Public Schools	\$16,658.54		\$21,249.12	(\$4,590.58)
Northborough-Southborough	\$43,227.89		\$53,998.27	(\$10,770.38)
Nashoba Reg. School District	\$44,232.26	1,707.15	\$54,287.37	(\$10,055.11)
Shrewsbury Public School	\$76,925.91	2,968.97	\$94,413.12	(\$17,487.21)
Westborough Public School	\$46,204.74	1,783.28	\$56,708.25	(\$10,503.51)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$362,157.74</b>	<b>6,300.92</b>	<b>\$295,494.38</b>	<b>(\$84,458.01)</b>

\*Savings calculated by comparing the price of a ream of paper purchased through jointly procured contract with WB Mason with the price of an identical ream of paper available for purchase from the State Bid List. (Savings) = number of reams multiplied by the difference between prices.

<b>Office Supplies Savings*</b>			
<b>Account Name</b>	<b>Office Supplies (72% discount from ultimate office catalog pricing)</b>	<b>Office supplies (13.25% discount from WB Rule of thumb catalog (9w)) State bid \$</b>	<b>Estimated Cost Savings (=savings)</b>
Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School	\$33,269.37	\$67,204.13	(\$33,934.76)
Assabet Valley Collaborative	\$10,065.37	\$20,332.05	(\$10,266.68)
Berlin-Boylston	\$12,972.48	\$26,204.41	(\$13,231.93)
Hudson Public Schools	\$8,073.02	\$16,307.50	(\$8,234.48)
Marlborough Public Schools	\$38,807.65	\$78,391.45	(\$39,583.80)
Maynard Public Schools	\$9,449.04	\$19,087.06	(\$9,638.02)
Nashoba Reg. School Dist	\$13,635.87	\$27,544.46	(\$13,908.59)
Northborough-Southborough Public Schools	\$36,393.24	\$73,514.34	(\$37,121.10)
Shrewsbury Public School	\$36,141.88	\$73,006.60	(\$36,864.72)
Westborough Public School	\$6,272.38	\$12,670.21	(\$6,397.83)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$205,080.30</b>	<b>\$414,262.21</b>	<b>(\$209,181.91)</b>

*\*Savings calculated by selecting 5-10 items from the AVC Contract WB Mason Office Supplies Catalog and then selecting those identical 5-10 items from a WB Mason Catalog from the State Bid List. Differences in prices between those items were averaged yielding an average 102% savings using the AVC Contract – meaning on average the state bid list contract items were more than twice the price of the items on the AVC Contract. This 102% was then applied to the amount spent by each district to produce an estimated cost savings for each district and then in the aggregate.*

<b>School Supplies Savings*</b>			
<b>Account Name</b>	<b>School Supplies</b>	<b>State bid (School Specialty) \$</b>	<b>Estimated Cost Savings (=savings)</b>
Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School	\$4,528.08	\$10,188.18	(\$5,660.10)
Assabet Valley Collaborative	\$1,213.20	\$2,729.70	(\$1,516.50)
Berlin-Boylston Public Schools	\$4,764.02	\$10,719.05	(\$5,955.03)
Hudson Public Schools	\$666.32	\$1,499.22	(\$832.90)
Marlborough Public Schools	\$23,942.62	\$53,870.90	(\$29,928.28)
Maynard Public Schools	\$1,708.31	\$3,843.70	(\$2,135.39)
Nashoba Reg. School District	\$4,477.40	\$10,074.15	(\$5,596.75)
Northborough-Southborough Public Schools	\$10,941.71	\$24,618.85	(\$13,677.14)
Shrewsbury Public School	\$10,074.88	\$22,668.48	(\$12,593.60)
Westborough Public School	\$2,283.11	\$5,137.00	(\$2,853.89)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$64,599.65</b>	<b>\$145,349.21</b>	<b>(\$80,749.56)</b>

*\*Savings calculated by selecting 5-10 items from the AVC Contract WB Mason School Supplies Catalog and then selecting those identical 5-10 items from School Specialty School Supplies Catalog from the State Bid List. Differences in prices between those items were averaged yielding an average 125% savings using the AVC Contract – meaning on average the state bid list contract items were 2.25 times the price of the items on the AVC Contract. This 125% was then applied to the amount spent by each district to produce an estimated cost savings for each district and then in the aggregate.*

**Professional Development – 57 Orchard Street, Marlborough, MA**

In FY13 AVC provided over 1800 contact hours of formal training to over 350 participants

Assabet Valley Collaborative is committed to meeting the professional development needs identified by its member districts to improve the quality of their programs and services. AVC provides specialized professional development, connects districts to each other for initiatives in common, provides an economy of scale to reduce costs and distance for high priority or mandatory training, and customizes workshops to the meet specific needs of districts.

In FY13, AVC coordinated a conference to respond to the need to provide comprehensive training to paraprofessionals. Given the number of paraprofessionals in districts, this category of staff is often the most difficult to coordinate. To create an economy of scale and to capitalize on district talent and expertise, four districts and AVC staff shared in-kind resources to support the training of 300+ paraprofessionals on a shared PD day. Participating districts provided in-kind trainers on a range of 20 different topics in three (3) locations. Paraprofessionals selected their own workshop schedule for the day. Because AVC coordinated in-kind resources, the only direct cost to districts to send their paraprofessionals to this comprehensive training was the cost of a boxed lunch. Together, the participating districts paid less than \$2200 to send 300 paraprofessionals to a full-day of training – a cost of about \$8/person.

Other highlights include AVC’s Advanced Clinical Series available to districts and AVC staff which provided 13 hours of advanced clinical professional development to social workers, school psychologists, guidance counselors, etc.

AVC’s partnership with ACCEPT Collaborative also expands opportunities to our member districts. ACCEPT is a well-established provider of high quality professional development, and through our association and collaboration with ACCEPT, AVC members can access ACCEPT professional development at their member rates.



<b>PD Topic/Initiative</b>	<b>Cost per Participant</b>	<b>Cost to Non-members</b>	<b># of Participants</b>	<b># of hours</b>
Paraprofessional Conference	Approx. \$8.00 (box lunch) + in-kind presenters	N/A – not available to nonmembers	300	6
Advanced Clinical Series	\$750/district for unlimited # of participants in 4-part series including 13 hours	N/A – not available to nonmembers	62	189

**Job-alikes – 57 Orchard Street, Marlborough, MA**

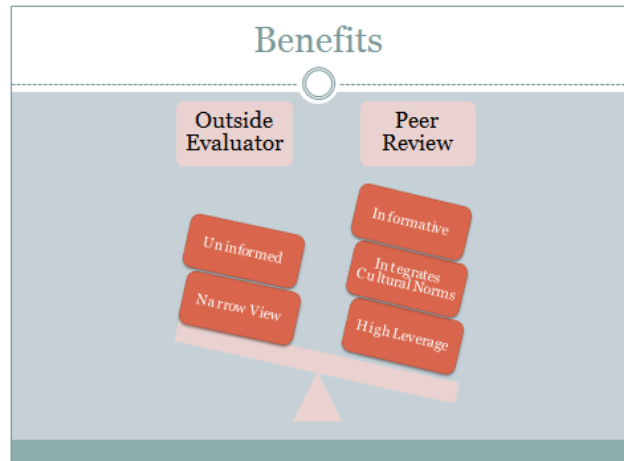
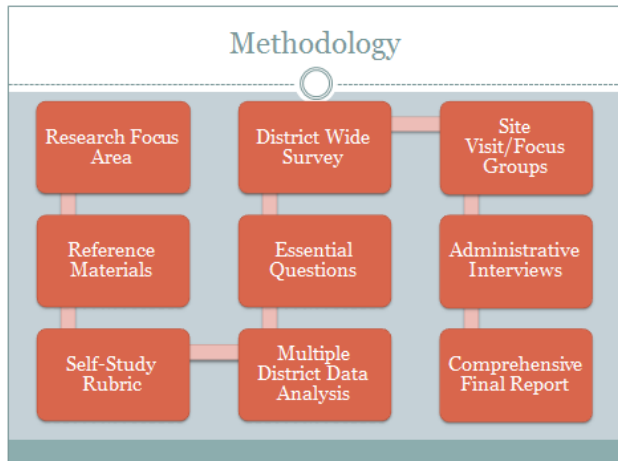
AVC convenes monthly meetings for member district leaders. The following chart includes the job-alike groups, the priorities/accomplishments, and a summary of responses to a survey of group members to rate the value of job-alikes during 2012-2013 year.

Group	2012-2013 Topics/Initiatives	Value Ratings (No Value = 1 ← → 4 = Extremely Valuable)
PPS/Special Education Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing lessons learned in study of use of Paraprofessionals (Peer Review)</li> <li>• New educator evaluations</li> <li>• Study of the role of School Psychologist (Peer Review – see below)</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>8 Respondents: Average Value Rating = 3.6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Shared PD initiatives decrease costs.”</li> <li>• “Problem-solving and sharing expertise reduces reliance on costly legal advice.”</li> <li>• “Peer Review initiatives improve our practices while also fulfilling DESE requirements.”</li> <li>• “Sharing resources (in-district programs) helps us to strengthen LRE options.”</li> <li>• “Sharing strategies, coordinating resources, discussing legalities, brainstorming solutions, collaborating rather than recreating/duplicating efforts.”</li> </ul>
School Business Officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperative Purchasing</li> <li>• Technology Initiatives</li> <li>• Facilities</li> <li>• District Data</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>6 respondents: Average Value Rating = 3.7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The benefits include sharing ideas so you do not need to reinvent the wheel.”</li> <li>• “Having a small group to ask questions. Quick surveys are also useful.”</li> <li>• “Participation in cooperative bidding for office supplies, paper, etc. Also the interaction with other members regarding relevant topics.”</li> <li>• “Staying current on trends. Comparing best practices and feedback.”</li> </ul>
Technology Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1:1 Device Initiatives</li> <li>• New educator evaluations</li> <li>• Technology standards</li> <li>• Digital Citizenry</li> <li>• Technology tools for collaboration</li> <li>• Blended learning</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4 respondents: Average Value Rating = 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Hands down the best PD I do.”</li> <li>• “Sharing our solutions and challenges increases our collective knowledge-base.”</li> <li>• “Provides professional development at ‘no cost’ for districts.”</li> <li>• “Provides group activities to share with staff at our districts, share tips and methods to complete work in a more timely fashion, such as the DESE reports. Provides ideas for improving teaching and learning within our districts through sharing.”</li> <li>• “Since I am new it’s been great to have the support from other districts.”</li> </ul>
Curriculum Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common Core</li> <li>• Curriculum Mapping</li> <li>• New educator evaluations</li> <li>• PARCC</li> <li>• Technology tools for learning</li> <li>• 1:1 Device Initiatives</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>6 respondents: Average Value Rating = 3.6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Being new to my position, it is a great way for me to collaborate, hear what other districts are doing, and share ideas.”</li> <li>• “We brainstorm together, share common concerns, and try to utilize one another for resources.”</li> <li>• “Support. We are not alone; we can help each other.”</li> <li>• “It is nice to be able to speak with others who are facing similar challenges.”</li> <li>• “Helps me be a more effective leader.”</li> </ul>

**AVC's Peer Review Initiative** was launched by the Special Education Administrator's job-alike group in 2010-2011. The Peer Review Initiative provides an opportunity for shared inquiry/study of a topic (Paraprofessionals 2010-2012; School Psychologists 2012-2014), leading to a better understanding of best practices related to that topic, followed by the "Peer Review" (or evaluation conducted by colleagues) of a district's implementation of the services within the topic and compared to the best practices.

**Scope of Work:**

Since 2010, the Peer Review Initiative has provided comprehensive evaluations to four (4) districts related to those districts' utilization of paraprofessionals. Additional districts have undertaken a self-study of the topic using the tools developed by the Peer Review Initiative.



In 2012-2013, the Peer Review Initiative undertook a review of the research on a new topic – the role of the School Psychologist - which has changed drastically in the last 20 years. Our research review resulted in the development of a best practice rubric, anchor articles, a survey tool, and a structured interview protocol for focus groups. Plans were developed at the end of FY13 to launch a pilot evaluation of one district in the fall of 2013, rolling out to additional districts after the pilot.

Value and Benefits of Peer Review	
<b>Shared Inquiry</b>	“This initiative was like taking an independent study college course, with friends!”
<b>Move Beyond the Mandate to Evaluate Programs</b>	Provide valuable information and recommendations to districts that capture nuances in the district and building cultures to address essential questions. Evaluations have great depth and breadth that go beyond just meeting a mandate.
<b>Better (and less expensive) than External Evaluations</b>	The Peer Review has relied on the in-kind contributions of our own colleagues – many of whom played a variety of roles in the team – researchers, focus group leaders, data collectors, data analyzers and report writers. Because we have used in-kind evaluators districts have not paid for the reports they have received.
<b>Everyone Learns</b>	The Peer Review Model includes compiling global regional data sources as well as specific in-district data sources. The multi-district data reports alone can be used for multiple purposes as they display information that reflects on the system and region. When all-staff surveys and focus group questions are grounded in what we’ve learned about best practices – we have found that those answering the questions (survey, focus groups) learn about best practices just by virtue of engaging in the conversations.

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**[Family Success Partnership](#) (FSP) – 57 Orchard Street, Marlborough, MA**

***FSP was grant-funded and provided at no cost to several member districts 2007-2012. In FY12 and FY13 culminating evaluation activities and a cost-avoidance study were completed. See Executive Summary and Cost Avoidance Study, which follow.***

**Service Description:**

FSP is a family-centered program that expands the mutual capacity of schools, state agencies and programs, human service agencies, and community-based resources to provide a flexible, comprehensive and accessible system of services to children with mental health needs that are beyond the scope of the school, but do not meet traditional eligibility requirements for state agency support. FSP utilizes a wraparound model to serve at-risk students and their families whose challenges prevent success and well-being in school.

Family Success Partnership brings together representatives from the fields of education, social work, medicine, and state government to support students and families whose mental health challenges hinder their success and wellbeing in school. With all the right voices at the table, FSP can help agencies and community groups work together, identify and fill gaps in services, and cut through the red tape that prevents students and families from receiving the supports they need.



For detailed performance and evaluation report about the impact and success of FSP see Appendix A for the Overview of the FY13 Cost Avoidance Study and full report.

Appendix:

Family Success Partnership 2013 Program Evaluation Executive Summary

Pages 1-4

## Family Success Partnership Cost Avoidance Study 2013

### SUMMARY

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The Assabet Valley Collaborative (AVC) commissioned a cost avoidance study of its innovative Family Success Partnership (FSP) in 2013 to determine whether the program's intensive, wraparound supports are a cost-effective way of helping students achieve success in school and at home. The report found that substantial cost avoidance exists when comparing the program's effective supports and services to more intensive educational and mental health services. Further, the report showed that FSP students in greatest need achieved the greatest benefit from FSP and that students received services beyond those provided by schools.

### BACKGROUND

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Assabet Valley Collaborative, a non-profit public educational entity comprised of 15 member school districts, designed the Family Success Partnership to meet the total needs of a family on a short-term basis in partnership with local public schools. The goal of the wraparound program is to address the variety of stressors that may interfere with families' stability and security, including mental health, physical health, housing insecurity and financial instability.



Whereas school personnel are only able to address issues having to do with the school, FSP counselors are able to meet with families wherever they are comfortable and as often as required. If necessary, program staff can refer family members to physicians or mental health providers and assist with enrollment in Massachusetts health care plans. FSP services are highly specialized and require experienced clinicians with substantial knowledge of community resources. By intervening early, FSP is expected to support continuity in the students' home and school life, often preventing a need for more expensive services.

### KEY FINDINGS

**Finding:** The neediest program participants show reduced frequency and severity of behaviors that interfere with classroom learning and quality of life outside the classroom.

Upon re-assessment after program services were delivered,<sup>1</sup> students with the highest need on average showed the largest improvement in post-scores. This was true for both

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<sup>1</sup> All pre- and post- assessment of students is conducted by School Adjustment Counselors. A decrease in scores at post-test represents improvement.





distractability/hyperactivity, verbal and physical aggression DH/VP and mental health (MH) measures.

- Those students with the lowest need at the start of their interaction with FSP showed no change in DH/VP scores, but exhibited a noticeable decline in mental health (MH) scores (-5.3 points).
- Students who scored in the highest need group showed the greatest improvement on both DH/VP and MH outcome measures. The improvement in DH/VP for this group was 2.4 points, while the improvement in MH was 1.4 points.

**Table 1: Mean Outcome Score Differences, by Level of Need  
(Closed Cases with Pre/Post Data, N=76)**

	Pre- Assessment Mean	Post- Assessment Mean	Difference
<b>DH/VP Score</b>			
Lower Need (n= 7)	10.3	10.3	0
Moderate Need (n= 31)	23.7	23.8	-0.1
High Need (n=38)	24.1	21.7	2.4
<b>MH Score</b>			
Lower Need (n= 7)	11.1	16.4	-5.3
Moderate Need (n= 31)	23.5	23.3	0.2
High Need (n= 38)	25.3	23.9	1.4

Note: Analysis limited to closed cases with both pre- and post- scores.

**A Note of Caution**

The lower need group of students is extremely small (n=7) and generalizations must be made with caution. One student in this group experienced substantial decline despite program support skewing the group’s overall results at post-test. Our interviews with program staff and in-depth analysis of this group of cases also suggests that it is reasonable to think that at the time of referral, some students might be at the start of a downward trend and it takes longer than one year to change direction.

**Finding: The program serves students who need health and behavioral services beyond the purview of public school personnel.**

This study focused on the 199 student cases supported by the FSP program between September 2009 and November 2012. The cases included students and families with different profiles and varying need.

- Almost 20% of students served by the program experienced multiple suspensions or other disciplinary actions in their regular school settings.
- About one-third of the cases (31%) involved youth/families who had prior involvement with one or more of the state agencies (DCF, DMH, DYA, DTA or DDS).

As expected, most students served by the program had substantial educational, behavioral, and social needs. Almost half of all closed cases (43%) and exactly half of all closed cases with complete pre-and post-assessment data (50%) were determined to be “high need” based on their prior mental health hospitalization status, number of suspensions or school incidents, and current educational placement. These are the students most likely to experience interruptions in their daily school lives or in their home environment.



**Finding: Substantial cost avoidance exists when comparing program support and wraparound services to more intensive educational and mental health services.**

Not *all* students participating in FSP will need additional services or incur related costs. However, at least 38 students in the study time frame had challenges that warranted more intensive services. **Education costs** for the 38 high-need students for one day in a general education program *with* wraparound FSP services are approximately \$3,194. If those same students were to attend a public collaborative like AVCAS, the costs would be considerably more (\$9,310 without FSP, or \$9,616 with FSP wraparound services); and even greater if those same students required a private day school (\$11,400) or a residential placement (\$20,140).

**Table 2: Substantial Estimated Cost Avoidance extended for 38 students With Greatest Need FSP + Regular Education Compared to More Restrictive Services**

Cost to Educate 38 high need students for 1 day	Average Cost for General Ed, in Home District with FSP, 38 students , 1 day	Estimated Cost Avoided Per day
At AVCAS <del>\$9310</del>	\$3194	\$6,116
at AVCAS w/FSP <del>\$9616</del>	\$3194	\$6,422
at Private Day School <del>\$11,400</del>	\$3194	\$8,206
in [Private] Residential Placement <del>\$20,140</del>	\$3194	\$16,946

It should be noted that **cost avoidance multiplies with time** since most educational services are provided for 45 days or one year. For example, the possible cost difference for sending 38 high need students to a residential placement versus keeping students in-district with wraparound FSP for 180 days is estimated to be \$3,050,280.

**Transportation costs** for students are required but additional costs for most students. A review of average special education transportation expenditures FY 2012 showed that transportation costs avoided for one student to stay in-district rather than utilize a more intensive strategy ranged from about \$4700 to \$7600 per student per year.

**Mental health costs** associated with more intensive services may also be avoided for some students. Ten of the students served by the program between 2009 and 2012 had experienced a mental health related hospitalization sometime prior to referral to FSP. The possible daily cost of supporting one student with private outpatient therapy including the cost to involve FSP in securing and coordinating therapy is estimated at \$21. If the student were sent instead to a psychiatric day program, the estimated cost would be \$600 per day (not including transportation), or \$853 per day for inpatient psychiatric services (not including transportation).



**Table 3: Substantial Cost Avoidance Possible for Students with Prior Mental Health Hospitalization**

Average Cost to Support 10 high need students for 1 day*	Average Cost for FSP + Private Outpatient Therapy 10 students, 1 day	Estimated Cost Avoided Per day
Psychiatric Day Program \$6,000	\$210	\$5,790
Inpatient Psychiatric Services \$8,530	\$210	\$8,320

The average stay for adolescent mental health inpatient services is 7 to 10 days, whereas the average stay for psychiatric day programs is between 10 and 15 days. These costs (between \$60,000 - \$90,000) could be avoided if private outpatient therapy arranged by FSP counselors is obtained and used to support high need students when clinically appropriate.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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Given the results of this study, FSP and their collaborators should explore the following:

- Use evidence from this study to advocate for the kind of wraparound services provided by Family Success Partnership. Highlight the potential for cost savings as preventive services may help avoid more intensive and costly services.
- Continue to develop sustainable funding plans that rely increasingly on public resources. Consider whether these plans can also include variable funding levels based in part on student need. This would require development of a credible case rate based on the resources required to support variations in student need, more accurately reflecting the level of effort and time it takes to stabilize high need students.
- Revisit participant data collection and data management processes to ensure that complete data are made available to inform ongoing practice.
- Continue to disseminate results of studies about FSP service and outcomes encouraging participating districts to use the information to help plan for student needs.

