

# Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives



Joanne Haley Sullivan,  
Executive Director

---

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, April 28, 2023

Media Contact: Madelyn Hedges

Phone: [781-428-3299](tel:781-428-3299)

Email: [madelyn@jgpr.net](mailto:madelyn@jgpr.net)

## MOEC Highlights Collaboration with Autism Higher Education Foundation's Paralegal Assistant Training Program

SANDWICH -- In celebration of Autism Awareness Month, the [Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives](#) (MOEC) wishes to highlight the partnership between several of its collaboratives and the Autism Higher Education Foundation's Paralegal Assistant Training (PLAT) program.

Founded by Vanda Marie Khadem in 2016, the PLAT Program was launched by the Autism Higher Education Foundation (AHEF) in collaboration with the Massachusetts Probate and Family Courts.

Over the past eight years, the AHEF PLAT program has partnered with numerous school districts across Massachusetts. Through collaboration with educational

collaboratives, the PLAT program provides young adults with autism and other neurodivergent students with paralegal assistant vocational training and exposure to professional environments, preparing them for the workforce post-educational services.

Continued support and guidance, from programs such as PLAT, provide students with the opportunity to thrive in the workforce and become active members of the community.

"This joint effort exemplifies that it takes a village to support these young members of our community, and we are grateful for the partnerships that make this possible," said Keystone Educational Collaborative Executive Director John Demanche.

The PLAT program currently serves eight Massachusetts counties and has collaborated with over 20 schools and 25 courts. The program has served more than 100 students, including students from MOEC's participating collaboratives: SEEM Collaborative, LABBB Collaborative and Keystone Educational Collaborative.

"It is important to recognize that for these students, educational and learning opportunities do not simply end upon the completion of grade 12," said MOEC Executive Director Joanne Haley-Sullivan. "We are grateful for the continued support and new opportunities that PLAT has provided for our collaboratives' students."

Students enrolled in the program are given the opportunity to learn a variety of skills, as needed by the court, including communication skills, confidentiality, office supply vocabulary and paralegal assistant skills, starting from the most basic and increasing in degrees of complexity as the student demonstrates success and independence.

All students enrolled in the program receive one-to-one support at all times and data collection is recorded on students' skills, behavior, professionalism and independence.

"It has truly been an honor to run this program and to watch these students excel in a professional environment while building their confidence," said PLAT Executive Director Lisa Marie Noke-Kearney. "I couldn't imagine doing anything else."

Throughout their time in the program, students develop transferable skills that prepare them for a professional work environment.

The AHEF PLAT program is currently accepting students. To learn more about the AHEF PLAT program, click [here](#).

## About Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives

[MOEC](#) represents the Commonwealth's 24 educational collaboratives. MOEC serves as the voice of its members and works to develop a full appreciation for and understanding of educational collaboratives at the state, regional, and local levels. MOEC is the Commonwealth's primary advocate for collaboratives and the critical role they play in the Massachusetts educational system.

###

---

## A message from the Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Manage subscription](#)

John Guilfoil Public Relations LLC  
8 Prospect St.  
Georgetown, MA 01833  
617-993-0003