



# Southeastern Massachusetts Educational Collaborative

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Dennis Farias, City Clerk  
New Bedford City Council  
133 William St - Rm 215  
New Bedford, MA 02740

December 19, 2017

RE: Request for special municipal employee status

Dear City Clerk Farias and NB City Council Members:

The Southeastern MA Educational Collaborative (SMEC) is a public educational collaborative organized under the MGL Ch. 40 Section 4E. Our membership includes the school committees of Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Marion, Mattapoisett, New Bedford, Rochester, Old Rochester Regional and Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School and we serve students from throughout Southeastern Massachusetts.

Our Collaborative has been requested and qualified by the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to provide Sheltered English Endorsement (SEI) Courses to public school teachers and administrators from throughout the region. We must follow certain guidelines when implementing these courses, including a provision that we may only hire course instructors who have been trained and approved by DESE to instruct and implement the SEI course curriculum. There are only a few such approved instructors in the state.

One such approved instructor is Michael Watson, an administrator at the Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School (GNBVT). Mr. Watson lives in Dartmouth and is available to conduct courses for local educators at our Dartmouth site on evenings and weekends. The teacher endorsement course requires 45 hours of face to face instruction, so having an instructor who lives in the vicinity is a major resource for us.

Because GNBVT is a member of our Collaborative, the MA state ethics regulation, Ch. 268A, requires that in order for Mr. Watson to also be hired by SMEC, he must be declared a "special

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municipal employee” by the three municipalities that send students to the GNBVT. Once declared a “special municipal employee”, Mr. Watson would submit a disclosure form to the city clerk for each of the three municipalities and would then be eligible for hire by SMEC. A representative from the State Ethics Commission has confirmed that this process is both required and appropriate for this situation.

We are requesting that the New Bedford City Council, Fairhaven Board of Selectman and Dartmouth Board of Selectman declare Michael Watson as a “special municipal employee” so that he can be hired by SMEC to provide instruction to local educators in Sheltered English Immersion and working with English Language Learners. GNBVT Superintendent James O’Brien is aware of and in support of this request.

If any further information is needed or you wish for me to appear before the city council to explain further or answer any questions, please feel free to contact me at (508) 998-5599, ext. 137 or [ccooper@smecollaborative.org](mailto:ccooper@smecollaborative.org). Otherwise, please provide me with a certificate of vote indicating Mr. Watson’s status as a special municipal employee for the provisions of MGL Ch. 268A at your earliest convenience.

Yours truly,



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