

Draft responses to Somerville School Committee questions regarding Powderhouse Studios

Asked 4 February 2019

These responses are only a draft, assembled in coordination with Central Office as beginning responses to questions asked by members of Somerville's School Committee. Several questions are still pending District input and/or clarification from members. Please direct any additional questions or concerns to Jeff Curley and/or the Powderhouse team at leadership@powderhouse.org

To the extent practicable, the original language of the questions has been preserved.

Questions for Powderhouse Studios

Enrollment

When do we see the lottery formula? I can't understand the mechanics of the lottery. If you pull names, obviously it has to be a weighted lottery reflective of the district. I understand the guarantee that it won't open unless it is reflective, but I just want to understand the mechanics of the lottery.

There continues to be confusion as to which student population is to mirror.

Currently the wording is that PHS enrollment will be open to anyone having completed 7th grade that does not have a high school diploma. I'd like to know: is there an upper age limit to that? How open ended is that?

Curriculum, student experience

It has been referenced several times that somehow because Powderhouse has a smaller cohort that it will be better able to serve certain students. Powderhouse is bringing in different and interesting educators — which is fantastic — that are going to pursue their ed certifications, but they may not have the depth of experience in education. So the main teacher population I'm expecting isn't people that have 10-20 years teaching experience, which is exciting, but at the same time I'm not sure what they're going to bring to the table to teach kids with special needs. Support coming to PHS is supposed to be coming from the district, so if that support is the same as was provided in-district and we weren't able to meet their needs then, why would we be able to meet them now [at PHS]? What expertise does Powderhouse staff have to work with out of district students that they suggest may come back [to Somerville] to attend PHS? We're talking about students with very complex needs, and it's not just a small setting that is going to solve the problem. I want to know more about what experience the

teachers will have, because one Special Ed teacher is not going to be able to service... If it's going to be a truly inclusive model, everyone there is going to have to have some experience. It's really important to know, in terms of the budget, that we're going to be saving money as a district by bringing in students who received out of district placements. I think a lot of people don't understand that. This school will be a district school, and it will not be able to accommodate students who are out of district, period. That's a special ed law, that's the criteria. If you're in an out-of-district placement, it's because the district can't serve your special education needs.

Given the quote unquote "1000 hour project" is the project that's necessary for graduating: what are the expected timeframes? We have our 4-year graduation rate and our 6-year graduation rate — what happens if a student changes majors, so to speak, and their 4-year degree becomes a 6-year degree? Projects change — we've all worked on projects that shift and change. How do we make sure people aren't caught off guard by graduation rates?

For English Language Learners, there's going to be a minimum level of English that will need to be attained. I don't know what that level is, but in terms of PHS reflecting the population of the district, we're not talking about special education population, we're not talking about English Language Learners. I want to have that more clearly and honestly defined.

At last week's meeting, attention was drawn to how much of the Individualized Learning Plan for students is going to be done in collaboration with families, which based on my interpretation is a value of ours. But as we've seen when it comes to talking about our homework policies and other policies, one of the great inequities in our district, of course, is the amount of time, energy, and expertise families and students can bring to their own educational advocacy. So, in a model where that advocacy is a vital part in determining what—especially with issues like social studies, science, anything, basically, that's not Common Core English and Math—that a student learns, what specific procedures will be put in place to compensate for inequities in educational advocacy abilities / willingness? Telling me that, "Oh we will, we're mindful of that," I wouldn't accept that from the district, and I couldn't possibly accept that from a third party. I need specific systems. In a previous presentation, and in the follow-up Q&A, the Powderhouse model references educational planning being done in coordination with families. What features, systems, or guardrails will be put in place to guard against the potential for inequity this dependence on family involvement may bring?

Staffing

What is the process for securing a Digital Literacy and Computer Science license?

What is the fellowship program Powderhouse is proposing?

What will the hiring process for Powderhouse Studios be? What will happen to current PHS staff if it becomes a district school? What would that hiring process look like?

I'd like a little more clarity on what a building leader is. Is that an administrative position? Something more organic to PHS? How will it be defined?

There was reference in the PHS Q&A to a bilingual parent liaison. Is that an additional staff position that needs to be added to the staffing model?

Schedule

How are conflicts handled when, e.g., one student is off-campus for athletics, but is part of a group working on a project or some other learning activity? I have a lot of question about vacations and time off, especially given that students are supposed to be working in concert at time. Similarly with seat hours, how does that work with time off?

What is the schedule accommodating sports, and how is this reconciled with the state's requirement of 990 Student Learning Time hours?

Please provide a student-teacher ratio model that takes into account fluctuations in student attendance, whether vacation, off-site learning, after-school activities, and teacher fluctuations in instructional time, whether that's vacations, individual learning projects during school. If you look at a student's schedule, and they come in from 10-12, that's 120 minutes. They take an hour lunch, and then from 1-2:30, if they leave for athletics, that's 120 minutes of instruction, which is actually less than they would get at Somerville High. We need to be digging into these details.

Facilities

It seems that Powderhouse is leasing more space than its proposal calls for. How will that space be used?

The proposal mentions sublets; how will sublets be used, and what is their purpose?

The lease involves a 5y option. What happens to the lease if Powderhouse Studios, Limited defaults on the lease? What happens if the 501(c)(3) defaults on the lease? What would happen to kids?

If at some point in the future, Powderhouse Studios decides to move, what happens to the lease and its relationship to the District?

Facility cost, general terms, cost per square foot. Summarized as not a contract.

How does having a separate corporate entity which has a contract for the space work?

Would the city assume the lease?

Finances

In Powderhouse Studios, Limited's 2017 990, what was the purpose of the spending of the \$56,000 listed as "Other" costs?

Can Powderhouse provide some sense of the 2018 budget and expected numbers? Can we see the 2018 XQ funds and how they were spent? Why stop at PHS's 990's? If this is going to be a public partnership, the books need to be opened. I want to see full finances, and I don't know why we have to be asking for that, why there would be any struggle associated with that. We need full trust. The 2017 numbers in the 990, helpful. We don't have current numbers. What's going on with this organization that we're hoping to partner with?

Is it true that in 2017 Powderhouse staff received no salary from Powderhouse Studios, Limited? What is an update/preview of the 2018 staffing costs? I want to see current payroll numbers.

Has Powderhouse received any other income besides XQ?

Is there anything to prevent PHS's 501(c)(3) from applying for same grants as other district schools, or those that compete with SPS? Are there safeguards that can help them prevent PHS from competing with other entities?

Student per capita is based on 180 days, and yet the staff salaries are based on a longer year, and need to be cost out. How does that math work?

How would spending more on Powderhouse students be reconciled with our equity initiative? If that funding were to come from an outside source, we'd really need to look at this.

Where will the funds for teacher projects come from?

(1) I'd like to know specifically what funds PHS will use for the onboarding, fellowship, and residency program. (2) The slides tonight didn't appear to me to take into account the onboarding staff, so that would appear to be additional positions.

Governance

What are the governing bodies in Powderhouse? What decisions are they accountable for? Can we see more information on these governance structures? What is the difference between being "In consultation with the Superintendent," as PHS is requesting, vs. "Under supervision of the Superintendent," as is normal procedure. I have a resistance to the fact that this is a public school with public dollars, and is not *always* under the supervision of the Superintendent. What would happen if Powderhouse and district disagreed on a building-level, implementation of policy? What if that policy included the purchasing of equipment, where PHS might exert the authority to purchase equipment with XQ dollars instead of district dollars?

Legal

I would like a copy of the innovation plan with a record of all the votes taken by the innovation committee.

More detail on the current proposal for Intellectual Property regarding Powderhouse. There has been recent reference made to the "current proposal" about IP, but I don't think we've seen that. I don't know if there's been additional work done. The only thing I've seen has been the "priority to benefit the staff and students" single paragraph. But more recently there's been references to a licensing office. Behaving like a public university takes resources. Until the parameters are documented, but right now it's hard for me to understand. I'm uncomfortable with the original language, and there's a reference to something we haven't seen. It takes legal help in order to administrate this.

Exemplary policies

Research and related materials

We've received some samples of contracts that are in place, as well as some verbal agreements, but I would think we would want to know more specifically who these contracts are with.

Contracts and vendors

Verbal agreements, partnerships, exploratory work

Questions for Somerville Public Schools Central Office

Finances

We need a comprehensive budget for Powderhouse, not just a staffing plan. This is a fundamental piece of information we need to be able to make an informed decision. What are all the expected costs and income?

One of the things that's useful for me for conceptualizing is when we find out what the district expense is. Starting to have examples of the equivalent cost — that's what I'm looking for. Hugely important, urgent.

There have been several questions about how much support Central Office would have to provide to PHS to be successful. There was a reference to a 0.1 to 0.2 FTE made, referencing legal translation, nursing. It didn't necessarily reference oversight, policy development, operations, curriculum, cross-district sharing — components of work that I think exist, that may be included in 0.1 or 0.2. I'm not expert, but I would think it would be more than that.

I'm also curious about the level of effort by Somerville Schools in this process — from staff, legal council, other consulting — from the window of when this was brought forward to the School Committee (January). How much time is being spent on this? I'm really curious as to how much we've invested since this came to light. Just an idea of how much.

Process

(1) If and when in the process will administration share with the school committee any areas of concern or elements of the plan they would recommend changing, adding, or removing? At this point in time, it's been a collaboration between administration and the applicant to go through this process and evolve the plan, but at some point I think the school committee needs to hear how administration feels about where we are today — acknowledging that we're not where we want to be. We've all been very clear that this has been complicated, and initiating a new model for learning is complicated. So, I'm not totally surprised, but at some point we have to hear [these recommendations].

(2) Very specifically, when will administration make their recommendation regarding whether or not they would recommend adopting PHS? This is something I've gotten from more than one constituent — "This sounds like an exciting idea. How does the Superintendent feel about it? Are they supporting this? And right now I don't have an answer for that?" At some point, it had been mentioned that it would come on March 4th, which is the date we're going to vote. I personally would feel incredibly uncomfortable if that was the date we we're getting the recommendation because that's the date we're supposed to do our final deliberation. I would hope that in a previous meeting there would be time allocated to deliberation and to do good deliberation we have to hear from administration. I think the date on that is the 25th of February.

I know in the questions it was very clear, that we're just doing a yay or a nay. But a lot has been invested here. A lot of energy has been put into this buy the district, by the applicant. I don't know if there's a place in the process where SC members could say "I have a real issue with X-thing," or, "I'm really excited about Y — can we take this one further?" So it's not all necessarily negative, but one thing I keep bringing up is IP. That is a real stopping point for me, to not understand how that is going to work. There are other things for other members, as well as myself, that could be stop-gaps — not stop-gaps, but places that we could take pause, where we would love to share and get that out sooner rather than later. If there's a chance to make that happen for all of this investment that everyone has done, that would be great.

This innovation school law isn't very clear. I would like to request that our counsel advise us on what our rights are in terms of approving an innovation school, under the statute. Can we approve it for one year, if we have to approve it? Or is it a minimum of three years? I'd like to know exactly what we're voting on when we do vote in a month.

Requests for additional information

Ackman

What is the 1, 3, 5 year budget for Powderhouse Studios?

O'Sullivan

Connection to standards with samples, more detail. What students will be doing. I need more details on that.

Hiring process — who is part of that, who is making those decisions?

Green

Budget for PHS and more detail on current finances of PHS Ltd.

More information on how that affects the lease.

Algorithm to be explicit. I want to see what the weight is.

There have been a lot of questions about how the school can maintain its pledge for equity and diversity — what are those systems and procedures?

Ackman

Detailed outline by month of project plan for starting the school — end of March, end of April, end of May, end of June, end of July, end of August — what the anticipated completion items are in order to successfully get a school off the ground. End of every month, not week by week.

Pitone

Chain of authority to Superintendent — 'in consultation with' is not a district school. It says in the plan that the Board of Trustees is in charge of the school.

Questions for Powderhouse Studios

Enrollment

When do we see the lottery formula? I can't understand the mechanics of the lottery. If you pull names, obviously it has to be a weighted lottery reflective of the district. I understand the guarantee that it won't open unless it is reflective, but I just want to understand the mechanics of the lottery.

Those interested in the precise mechanics of the *current* proposed lottery process and formula may find them laid out in detail beginning on p42 of the approved Innovation Plan.

Additional operational details of the lottery are currently being refined with the District to address some legal and technical questions which have been raised.

There continues to be confusion as to which student population is to mirror.

Refer to the previous Q&A submitted by the Powderhouse Studios team for additional details on the intended population:

The student body at Powderhouse will reflect the makeup of Somerville youth. This is written into the Innovation Plan on page 18 and elsewhere. The reference to Somerville High [referenced in the last question on this topic] was shorthand as Powderhouse will largely serve high school aged students.

This was the proposed student population in the Innovation Plan as approved in March 2017. While different student demographic commitments were discussed during Innovation Plan Committee discussions—e.g. mirroring the demographics of Somerville High School or to a cohort's corresponding grade cohorts within SPS since Powderhouse would include middle grades students as well—the Innovation Plan Committee ultimately decided to match Somerville youth *en toto*.

Currently the wording is that PHS enrollment will be open to anyone having completed 7th grade that does not have a high school diploma. I'd like to know: is there an upper age limit to that? How open ended is that?

Currently, if someone is older or younger than the 13–15 age bracket, their enrollment at Powderhouse will require coordination with Central Office. For the purposes of backfilling, by default those lottery slots will be open to youth in the age range of the cohort into which they'd be placed.

Language about PHS's enrollment not having an upper bound was included in part because Somerville Public Schools is responsible for providing an education to everyone, regardless of age. The decision as to whether or not, *e.g.*, SCALE might be the right placement for someone is ultimately a conversation between the District and student, and Powderhouse would expect the same to hold true for its enrollment process.

Curriculum, student experience

It has been referenced several times that somehow because Powderhouse has a smaller cohort that it will be better able to serve certain students. Powderhouse is bringing in different and interesting educators — which is fantastic — that are going to pursue their ed certifications, but they may not have the depth of experience in education. So the main teacher population I'm expecting isn't people that have 10-20 years teaching experience, which is exciting, but at the same time I'm not sure what they're going to bring to the table to teach kids with special needs. Support coming to PHS is supposed to be coming from the district, so if that support is the same as was provided in-district and we weren't able to meet their needs then, why would we be able to meet them now [at PHS]? What expertise does Powderhouse staff have to work with out of district students that they suggest may come back [to Somerville] to attend PHS? We're talking about students with very complex needs, and it's not just a small setting that is going to solve the problem. I want to know more about what experience the teachers will have, because one Special Ed teacher is not going to be able to service... If it's going to be a truly inclusive model, everyone there is going to have to have some experience. It's really important to know, in terms of the budget, that we're going to be saving money as a district by bringing in students who received out of district placements. I think a lot of people don't understand that. This school will be a district school, and it will not be able to accommodate students who are out of district, period. That's a special ed law, that's the criteria. If you're in an out-of-district placement, it's because the district can't serve your special education needs.

In general, as it pertains to special education (regardless of whether youth would be returning from an outplaced environment), part of the premise of Powderhouse is that it would be offering a *new* and complementary option for youth. Of course, appropriately qualified staff would be required to implement such an option, and that staffing (and or additional professional development and experience for all staff) would need to be designed in recognition of the particular needs and backgrounds of the youth drawn to Powderhouse. The particulars of the

staffing plan with regards to special education at Powderhouse are still being finalized with the District, and would be expected to evolve to reflect observed enrollment patterns.

With that in mind, what follows in this answer is offered to contextualize Powderhouse's evaluation and early statements with regard to special education and outplacement. Powderhouse would hope to work closely with Central Special Education directors and personnel to understand in which cases and to what extent these broader trends Powderhouse's research has surfaced may be relevant in Somerville's specific context.

Specifically with regard to outplacement, the Powderhouse team's previous suggestions that some number of outplaced families might return to Somerville Public Schools if Powderhouse were an option was based on two kinds of data point:

- Families who are currently outplaced who have (through pre-registration or direct outreach) communicated that they would seek to come back to Somerville Public Schools if Powderhouse Studios were an option for their children.
- Descriptions and referrals from special education professionals at special needs day schools who have reviewed Powderhouse's design and/or identified youth in day schools and centers whom they felt would benefit from an environment like Powderhouse's.

This is not to say that all or most youth currently in outplaced environments would be a good fit for Powderhouse, merely that there are some families and professionals who believe this to be the case. In particular, youth who have been outplaced for safety considerations would likely still not be well-served by Powderhouse.

In considering who may be a good fit for Powderhouse, a representative resource is [this, 2013 analysis commissioned by DESE](#) of out-of-district programming. That analysis suggests that programmatically, emotional disabilities and autism represent two of the most common profiles for initial placement out-of-district (refer to Figure 2.1 below, excerpted from that 2013 DESE report). These also represent some of the profiles which are most frequently outplaced (lagging only hearing and vision impairment (refer to Figure 1.3 below, excerpted from that 2013 DESE report).

Two other findings especially relevant to Powderhouse in that report and others include:

- Late middle school and early high school are the primary years in which children were first placed in out-of-district programs
- Parents and approved private-school administrators noted that beginning in middle school, larger settings, expectations for more independence, and greater academic rigor and accountability were a sudden transition for students accustomed to smaller and more nurturing environments.

Figure 2.1: Profiles for initial placement in private special education schools by grade

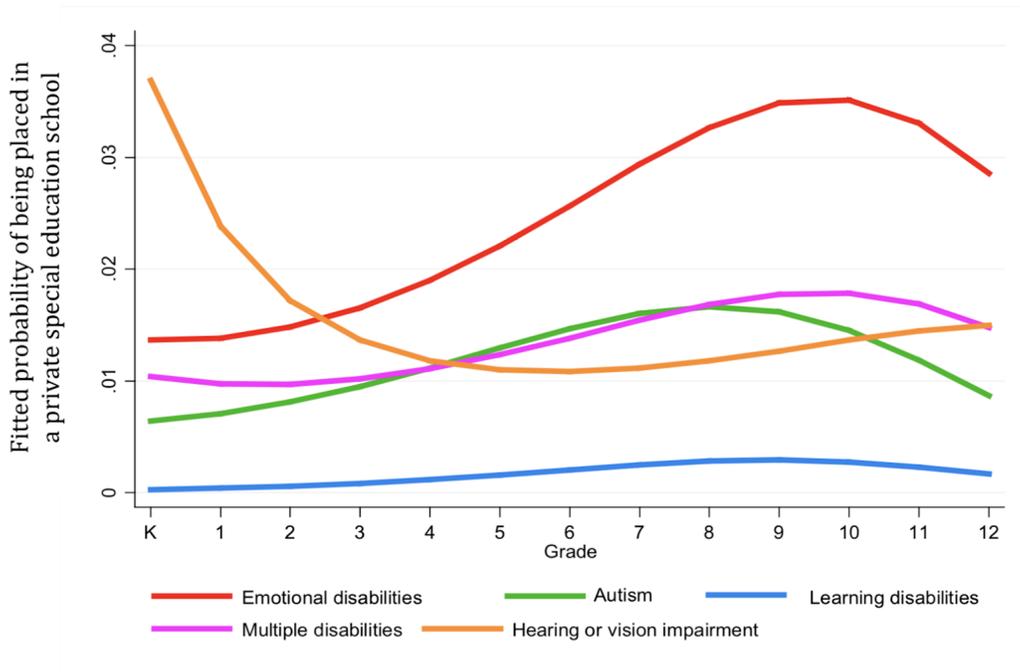
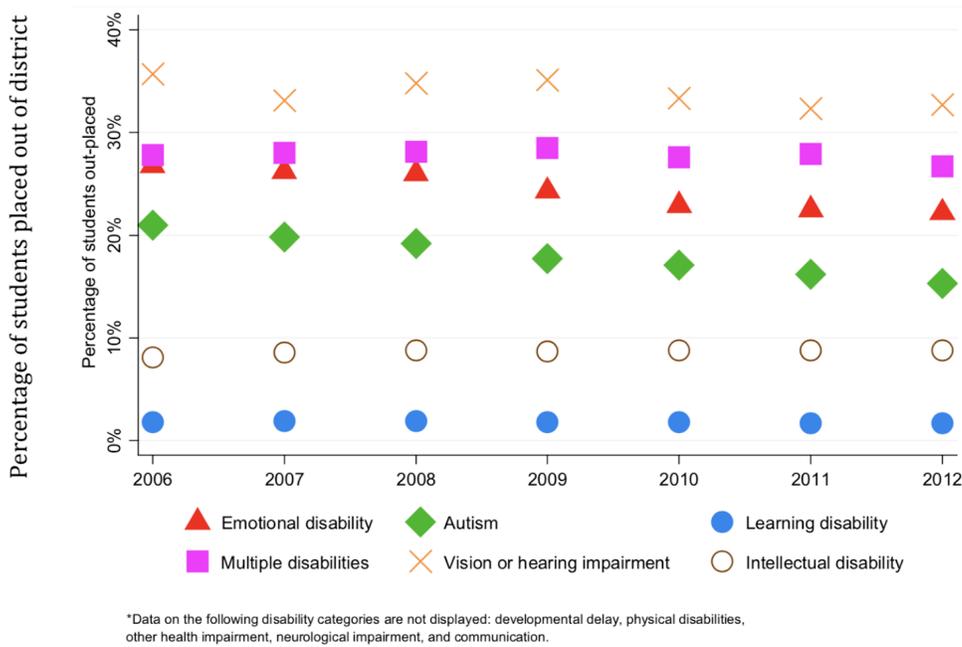


Figure 1.3: Percentage of students within each disability category in out-of-district placements, by year



Part of Powderhouse’s work with local graduate schools of education has entailed identifying the research, professional development, and associated best practices which would best ground

Powderhouse's design for those with special education needs. A selected set of resources contextualizing Powderhouse's design relative to special education follow; further detail is available upon request:

- Filippatou, D., & Kaldi, S. (2010). The Effectiveness of Project-Based Learning on Pupils with Learning Difficulties Regarding Academic Performance, Group Work and Motivation. *International journal of special education*, 25(1), 17-26.
- OCM BOCES "Bridging the Gap" Model Transition Program
- Doppelt, Y. (2003). Implementation and assessment of project-based learning in a flexible environment. *International Journal of Technology and Design Education*, 13(3), 255-272.
- Trent, S. C., Artiles, A. J., & Englert, C. S. (1998). Chapter 8: From Deficit Thinking to Social Constructivism: A Review of Theory, Research, and Practice in Special Education. *Review of research in education*, 23(1), 277-307.
- Gardner, J. E., Wissick, C. A., Schweder, W., & Smith Canter, L. (2003). Enhancing interdisciplinary instruction in general and special education: Thematic units and technology. *Remedial and Special Education*, 24(3), 161-172.

Ultimately, the special education staffing and programming at Powderhouse is not just a school-based decision, but a district-based one. Powderhouse would hope to work closely with Special Education personnel (both through the District Integration Working Group and other channels) to ensure that Powderhouse both (a) served its youth effectively, and (b) to the extent possible, offer a new and complementary option for youth in Somerville.

Given the quote unquote "1000 hour project" is the project that's necessary for graduating: what are the expected timeframes? We have our 4-year graduation rate and our 6-year graduation rate — what happens if a student changes majors, so to speak, and their 4-year degree becomes a 6-year degree? Projects change — we've all worked on projects that shift and change. How do we make sure people aren't caught off guard by graduation rates?

The goal of the "thousand hour project" is a commitment to Powderhouse youth completing a complex, interdisciplinary, long-term project. When Powderhouse talks about projects it is with an understanding that the process of doing them is fundamentally iterative and non-linear.

Powderhouse's project cycle includes the following phases:

1. Finding problems or questions which matter to you
2. Designing projects which engage (1)
3. Rustling up the ingredients you need for (2)
4. Managing your time and those ingredients to complete (2)
5. Documenting, critiquing, and sharing your work (often in public exhibition)

But these phases can be repeated and happen in different orders. You have a new project idea while working on your last project. You go down one path, realize you set an impossible goal and pivot based on new information. You put the whole project on hold to do more research. You get frustrated and pursue a side project for a while before—with guidance and coaching from staff and peers—you come back to tackle the thing you got stuck on.

At Powderhouse, all of these divergent paths are considered to be a part of the project cycle. Undertaking a thousand hour project doesn't mean working uninterrupted on a predetermined path toward a specific outcome. Instead, it means engaging a question or problem you want to address in a reflective, iterative way; thoughtfully setting, pursuing, and sometimes shifting milestones with the support of staff as the project develops; and documenting, exhibiting, and critiquing your work and process along the way as well as when it is done.

Changing the scope and nature of a project proposal or plan would be done in consultation with cohort staff. Much as a student might vet an essay topic with a teacher, or a PhD student might revisit their thesis proposal with advisors, at Powderhouse (especially at the scale of a 1,000-hour project), youth would be working with staff to scope and manage project progression appropriately, aligning with youth's goals for progress toward graduation.

For English Language Learners, there's going to be a minimum level of English that will need to be attained. I don't know what that level is, but in terms of PHS reflecting the population of the district, we're not talking about special education population, we're not talking about English Language Learners. I want to have that more clearly and honestly defined.

With regard to English Language Learners, "reflecting" the population of the district (for the purposes of the enrollment process and lottery) has been defined as the proportion of students enrolling who are English Language Learners. At this time, there isn't additional granularity (*e.g.* by proficiency level) included in the lottery. The Superintendent has suggested that Powderhouse would be appropriate for youth whose ELL Proficiency Levels were 3, 4, or 5, but would likely not be the right offering for those who had been evaluated as Levels 1 or 2.

At last week's meeting, attention was drawn to how much of the Individualized Learning Plan for students is going to be done in collaboration with families, which based on my interpretation is a value of ours. But as we've seen when it comes to talking about our homework policies and other policies, one of the great inequities in our district, of course, is the amount of time, energy, and expertise families and students can bring to their own educational advocacy. So, in a model where that advocacy is a vital part in determining what—especially with issues like social studies, science, anything, basically, that's not Common Core English and Math—that a student learns, what specific procedures will be put in place to compensate for inequities in educational advocacy abilities / willingness? Telling me that, "Oh we will, we're mindful of that," I wouldn't accept that from the district, and I couldn't possibly accept that from a third party. I need specific systems. In a previous presentation, and in the follow-up Q&A, the Powderhouse model references educational planning being done in coordination with families. What features, systems, or guardrails will be put in place to guard against the potential for inequity this dependence on family involvement may bring?

The Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) offers staff a birds' eye view on the work that youth have done and are aiming to as they progress toward graduation. This tool offers staff the structures they need individually and at a cohort level to manage the individualization core to Powderhouse's model. This tool will also be used to provide accountability and oversight to ensure equity.

At a cohort level, this means that part of staff and leadership's responsibility is to document, reflect on, and evaluate ILP progress across various sub-groups (e.g. those with English Language Learning or special education needs) to understand not just the progress of the cohort, but also the differentiation of youth's experience. Differences in progress and ambition of ILPs across subgroups would be cause for analysis and potentially intervention, much as differences in subgroups in standardized testing or a course audit might be cause for a school or district to intervene.

Individually, staff will be meeting with families and as a team to regularly review both youth's progress on and intended course through their Individualized Learning Plan. Much as the Individualized Education Program (IEP) serves as a nexus for conversations between schools

and families about their children's needs, the intent of the ILP is to offer something similar (though obviously less technically and legally complex).

Staffing

What is the process for securing a Digital Literacy and Computer Science license?

Currently, Lesley University offers a Digital Literacy and Computer Science (DLCS) licensure pathway. Because the standards are still relatively new, interested programs are still developing their DLCS pathways

Powderhouse has engaged the Lesley Graduate School of Education and the Woodrow Wilson Academy of Teaching and Learning in co-designing a competency-based DLCS pathway built specifically around the project-based pedagogy that Powderhouse puts at the center of its model.

All of these DLCS pathways have the same licensure requirements as any other pathway as laid out by DESE's licensure requirements. The professional development, curriculum frameworks, and licensure requirements for this pathway may be found [here](#). Additional details about the review and competency determination process as overseen by DESE is available upon request.

What is the fellowship program Powderhouse is proposing?

Powderhouse's unique pedagogical model and focus require training and preparation going beyond what many graduate schools of education currently offer. Some of this difference stems from Powderhouse's focus on computation, narrative, and design. Some stems from the broader roles Powderhouse staff are asked to play, extending past domain expertise.

Powderhouse's fellowship program is intended first as an onboarding experience preparing Powderhouse staff effectively, and second as part of Powderhouse's ongoing offerings of professional and curriculum development to the District and more broadly.

The five focuses of that year include:

1. Developing staff's fluency in computation, narrative, and design
2. Designing project-based programs with youth, in particular programs wherein youth design and develop their own projects
3. Developing an individual [program of study](#)
4. Learning about school design, management, and operations as it pertains to Powderhouse's Innovation Plan and ongoing school improvement process
5. And a broad-based set of workshops and professional development focusing on skill sets to complement various specialists with whom staff will work (e.g. restorative justice, special education advocacy, etc.)

In the current design, this fellowship program requires about a year of time before staff are working full-time with youth. Especially in our first few years, when we will be bringing in a number of new staff each year, we hope staff in our fellowship program, in training to work with the next year's cohort, will also be available as apprentices and support staff within Powderhouse during its opening years.

Additional detail about the curriculum and progression proposed for the fellowship program (as well as its intersections with Digital Literacy and Computer Science licensure) is available upon request.

What will the hiring process for Powderhouse Studios be? What will happen to current PHS staff if it becomes a district school? What would that hiring process look like?

The details of Powderhouse's hiring process, as integrated with district processes, would be among the deliverables of the District Integration Working Group.

Current Powderhouse staff would need to apply for open positions, just as any other City/District employee. The Powderhouse team has drafted a variety of job descriptions for its roles throughout the design process. Exemplary descriptions may be found on p55 of the Innovation Plan as approved, and further detail is available in the Powderhouse STA MOA as ratified.

The Powderhouse team is currently working with Central Office to finalize descriptions to integrate them with the practices and workflows of SPS HR.

I'd like a little more clarity on what a building leader is. Is that an administrative position? Something more organic to PHS? How will it be defined?

"Building leader" is an education sector term denoting administrative or leadership positions typically entailing the roles and responsibilities of a principal, headmaster, director, *etc.* Some schools have a head of lower school and upper school, *e.g.* Both of those heads could be described as building leaders, as might Somerville High School's principal.

The role will be defined through the same process as other roles within SPS and Powderhouse as the precise job descriptions are drafted.

There was reference in the PHS Q&A to a bilingual parent liaison. Is that an additional staff position that needs to be added to the staffing model?

Yes, however the details of this have not yet been vetted with the district or SFLC. In the PHS Q&A, the Powderhouse response was intended to indicate interest in and commitment to providing those services, but additional coordination with the district and SFLC is required.

Schedule

How are conflicts handled when, e.g., one student is off-campus for athletics, but is part of a group working on a project or some other learning activity? I have a lot of question about vacations and time off, especially given that students are supposed to be working in concert at time.

Similarly with seat hours, how does that work with time off?

Details about the definition of structured/student learning time (what used to be “seat time”) may be found [here](#), to wit,

Structured learning time shall mean time during which students are engaged in regularly scheduled instruction, learning activities, or learning assessments within the curriculum for study of the "core subjects" and "other subjects." In addition to classroom time where both teachers and students are present, structured learning time may include directed study, independent study, technology-assisted learning, presentations by persons other than teachers, school-to-work programs, and statewide student performance assessments.

This means that some portion of the off-campus work Powderhouse youth will be doing will count for the purposes of learning time.

Outside of sick days and other unpredictable absences, all off-campus hours scheduled by youth will be done with lead time. Youth will have a set schedule for any athletics, drama, internship, or other experience which takes them off-site; they will share that schedule with staff; and staff will work with youth to make decisions about the projects and programs they take on in order to minimize scheduling conflicts like those described here.

For a sense of the scale of flexibility in total learning time, refer to:

- [“What is the schedule accommodating sports, and how is this reconciled with the state’s requirement of 990 Student Learning Time hours?”](#)

What is the schedule accommodating sports, and how is this reconciled with the state’s requirement of 990 Student Learning Time hours?

At a high level, Powderhouse’s competency-based, flexible, year-round schedule means there is more than enough time and curricular flexibility to ensure youth can both participate in sports outside of Powderhouse and meet the state’s learning time requirements.

Looking specifically at the question of schedule and overall time available, there are three sports seasons per year in Somerville, with times and cadence of practice varying across sports. Some begin at 2:30PM, some at 4:30PM or later.

An incomplete and in-progress listing of practice times from the various sports in Somerville appears below. These have been compiled from published schedules and [a summary of an inquiry](#) to Somerville’s Director of Athletics & Intramural Sports. These are not all precise or predictable (e.g. some depend on weather, and with the closure of the Field House, are not yet determined for 2019–2020).

| Sport | Boys | | | Girls | | |
|-----------------------|----------|----------------|---------|----------|----------------|---------|
| | Freshman | Junior Varsity | Varsity | Freshman | Junior Varsity | Varsity |
| Baseball | 2:45 PM | 4:45 PM | 6:45 PM | 2:45 PM | 4:45 PM | 6:45 PM |
| Basketball | 2:45 PM | 4:45 PM | 6:45 PM | 2:45 PM | 4:45 PM | 6:45 PM |
| Cheerleading | 3:30 PM | 3:30 PM | 3:30 PM | 6:00 PM | 6:00 PM | 3:00 PM |
| Crew | 3:30 PM | 3:30 PM | 3:30 PM | 3:30 PM | 3:30 PM | 3:30 PM |
| Cross Country | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM |
| Football | 3:30 PM | 3:30 PM | 3:30 PM | 3:30 PM | 3:30 PM | 3:30 PM |
| Golf | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM |
| Ice Hockey | 3:30 PM | 3:30 PM | 4:30 PM | 3:30 PM | 3:30 PM | 4:30 PM |
| Indoor Track & Field | 2:45 PM | 4:45 PM | 6:45 PM | 2:45 PM | 4:45 PM | 6:45 PM |
| Outdoor Track & Field | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM |
| Soccer | 4:30 PM | 4:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 4:30 PM | 4:00 PM | 3:00 PM |
| Softball | 2:45 PM | 4:45 PM | 6:45 PM | 2:45 PM | 4:45 PM | 6:45 PM |
| Swim | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM |
| Tennis | 5:30 PM | 5:30 PM | 5:30 PM | 5:30 PM | 5:30 PM | 5:30 PM |
| Ultimate Frisbee | 4:15 PM | 4:15 PM | 4:15 PM | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 3:00 PM |
| Volleyball | 4:30 PM | 4:00 PM | 3:00 PM | 4:30 PM | 4:00 PM | 3:00 PM |

Powderhouse students have 1,440 hours of scheduled student learning time each year (6 hours each day × 240 school days). The worst case scenario would be if a student has to leave Powderhouse at 2PM in order to get to practice by 2:30PM. In this case, they would miss 3 hours each day they had practice.

Below appears a table summarizing the range of total learning time each year if someone has practice 1–5 days per week for 1–3 seasons each year, assuming the worst case scenario of practice at 2:30PM.

The only combination which *doesn't* meet the state minimum is one where youth would be at practice five days a week, three seasons a year, with practice beginning at 2:30PM. In this case, skipping one practice per week would be sufficient to make up the difference.

| Practice days weekly | Practice days yearly | | | Worst case practice hours yearly (assuming 3h loss per practice day) | | | Worst case learning hours yearly (assuming 3h loss per practice day) | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|---|------|------|
| | Seasons per year | | | Seasons per year | | | Seasons per year | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 | 12 | 24 | 36 | 36 | 72 | 108 | 1404 | 1368 | 1332 |
| 2 | 24 | 48 | 72 | 72 | 144 | 216 | 1368 | 1296 | 1224 |
| 3 | 36 | 72 | 108 | 108 | 216 | 324 | 1332 | 1224 | 1116 |
| 4 | 48 | 96 | 144 | 144 | 288 | 432 | 1296 | 1152 | 1008 |
| 5 | 60 | 120 | 180 | 180 | 360 | 540 | 1260 | 1080 | 900 |

Please provide a student-teacher ratio model that takes into account fluctuations in student attendance, whether vacation, off-site learning, after-school activities, and teacher fluctuations in instructional time, whether that's vacations, individual learning projects during school. If you look at a student's schedule, and they come in from 10-12, that's 120 minutes. They take an hour lunch, and then from 1-2:30, if they leave for athletics, that's 120 minutes of instruction, which is actually less than they would get at Somerville High. We need to be digging into these details.

[Powderhouse Studios is unclear on what is intended by "student-teacher ratio model" and is currently seeking clarification of this. A best attempt at an answer has been included in the interim.]

| School | Staffing by school | | | Student : FTE summary statistics | |
|---|--------------------|----------|----------------|----------------------------------|-------|
| | FTE | Students | Students : FTE | | |
| Albert F. Argenziano School at Lincoln Park | 44.2 | 616 | 13.94 | Weighted average | 11.97 |
| Arthur D Healey | 44.1 | 450 | 10.20 | Median | 11.98 |
| Benjamin G Brown | 16.2 | 229 | 14.14 | Standard deviation | 4.08 |
| Capuano Early Childhood Center | 21.8 | 332 | 15.23 | Standard deviation without NW/FC | 2.00 |
| E Somerville Community | 54.3 | 719 | 13.24 | | |
| Full Circle High School | 10.8 | 48 | 4.44 | | |
| John F Kennedy | 36.8 | 441 | 11.98 | | |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| <i>Next Wave Junior High</i> | 5.3 | 14 | 2.64 |
| <i>Somerville High</i> | 124.7 | 1,251 | 10.03 |
| <i>West Somerville Neighborhood</i> | 26.4 | 370 | 14.02 |
| <i>Winter Hill Community</i> | 43 | 439 | 10.21 |

Somerville’s weighted average student:teacher ratio is 11.97:1 and its median is 11.98:1. The standard deviation of its student:teacher ratios is 4.08. Excluding Next Wave/Full Circle (which are relative outliers in their staffing ratios), the standard deviation is 2.00. Powderhouse’s proposed student:teacher ratio is ~10:1, within the district’s current ratios.

A detailed, though slightly out of date, set of schedule and calendar calculations for Powderhouse Studios and Somerville High School may be found [here](#). Those calculations should provide some sense of how much additional time is available for academic work, even with a flexible calendar.

For additional detail on how extracurriculars like sports figure into total student learning time requirements, refer to:

- [“What is the schedule accommodating sports, and how is this reconciled with the state’s requirement of 990 Student Learning Time hours?”](#)

From a staffing point-of-view, another element of the question of staffing ratios across individualized schedules is the role of team-teaching at Powderhouse. Part of the reasoning behind Powderhouse’s embrace of team-teaching is to leverage latent staff time and attention for curriculum and professional development (as well as smaller scale, individualized academic support of youth). Variations in student schedule and load contribute positively to this.

Facilities

It seems that Powderhouse is leasing more space than its proposal calls for. How will that space be used?

Powderhouse has leased ~18,000SF of space for what will eventually be ~140–160 youth and ~20 staff. This is within the typical square footage ratios associated with small high schools.

The design of Powderhouse’s space began with an analysis of raw square footage needs as a small school, informed by consulting a wide variety of school developers and designers, along with data and staff through the MSBA. An overview of that analysis which drove initial design conversations can be found [here](#).

The resulting design has Powderhouse allocating ~2,000SF of dedicated space per cohort as well as additional, school-wide space for a makerspace and multi-purpose room that would be available to the school during daytime hours and made open to the community during off hours.

These additional spaces will provide access to workshop tools and materials as well as function space for use for events, exhibitions, special workshops, and school gatherings.

Because Powderhouse will be growing into its space, there will also be short-term sublets of some of Powderhouse's campus early on. These sublets will be with compatible and educationally complementary uses of the space (*e.g.* the FabFoundation at MIT, Davis Square Martial Arts, *etc.*)

The proposal mentions sublets; how will sublets be used, and what is their purpose?

Powderhouse will lease all of its space—as well as the makerspace and multi-purpose room—from year one. Each year, as Powderhouse grows, it will grow into the remaining space. In its first few years, Powderhouse plans to sublet the space which cohorts don't need in order to offset the cost of these unused space.

Most of these sublets are expected to be for uses and organizations which fill an educationally complementary role. Conversations around sharing space and programming have happened with organizations like Davis Square Martial Arts and Generation Parkour Generation Boston (around providing physical education experiences for Powderhouse students), the FabFoundation (around the maintenance of tools and safety training of staff and students in the makerspace), and the Somerville Media Center (around setting up and sharing recording equipment with the school). No subleases have been executed thus far.

The lease involves a 5y option. What happens to the lease if Powderhouse Studios, Limited defaults on the lease? What happens if the 501(c)(3) defaults on the lease? What would happen to kids?

As a point of clarity: Powderhouse Studios, Limited, is the 501(c)(3)-eligible non-profit entity. As with any lease, in the case of default, the landlord would take possession of the space after a period of time for the use of remedies like a security deposit and similar. The details of this process can be found in the lease on file with Central Office.

As to the question of what would happen to youth enrolled in the case of default, that would be handled as any other facilities damage or loss (*e.g.* in the case of a school being rendered unusable by weather damage). In the context of the school's usage of the space, it's not obvious how a default would be possible without the City failing to allocate Powderhouse's per capita.

If at some point in the future, Powderhouse Studios decides to move, what happens to the lease and its relationship to the District?

The District is not a party to the lease held by Powderhouse Studios, Limited. If the school moves, the Powderhouse Studios, Limited, nonprofit would be responsible for handling the lease and any ongoing commitments (e.g. subleases).

The decision to move, however, would be something that would be vetted by the Board of Trustees and District.

Facility cost, general terms, cost per square foot. Summarized as not a contract.

Powderhouse Studios will be leasing about 18,000SF, including some community space for a makerspace, function hall, and flex space.

This space will be delivered in [core-and-shell condition](#), with Powderhouse Studios, Limited, being responsible for the build-out of that space. There are different per square foot lease prices for the different areas of the space (in particular, Powderhouse Studios negotiated a discount on the shared and community spaces) which mix to an average of ~\$30 per square foot per year, [triple net](#) (*without* accounting for build-out costs, some of which will be borne by sublets).

The terms governing the use of the space are broad; they simply require the school's space be used for educational, cultural, and artistic purposes. Sublets are permitted, and a variety of typical lease terms regarding inspection, maintenance, and so on are included in the lease.

Condo association terms are still in development, but for the most part will not affect Powderhouse Studios because of the separation of Powderhouse's space from the remainder of the development.

How does having a separate corporate entity which has a contract for the space work?

Much as the City rents space in the Tufts Administrative Building, the currently contemplated proposal would involve a portion of Powderhouse's budget being allocated to rent. In this case, the rental would be from the non-profit entity associated with the school. This would insulate the City from any legal or financial issues with sublets, condo association, landlord communications, etc.

Would the city assume the lease?

No.

Finances

In Powderhouse Studios, Limited's 2017 990, what was the purpose of the spending of the \$56,000 listed as "Other" costs?

Those funds were spent on contractors supporting the development of Powderhouse's operational plans around district integration, legal analyses, early development of its Individualized Learning Plan, and curricular materials for project and program development.

Can Powderhouse provide some sense of the 2018 budget and expected numbers? Can we see the 2018 XQ funds and how they were spent? Why stop at PHS's 990's? If this is going to be a public partnership, the books need to be opened. I want to see full finances, and I don't know why we have to be asking for that, why there would be any struggle associated with that. We need full trust. The 2017 numbers in the 990, helpful. We don't have current numbers. What's going on with this organization that we're hoping to partner with?

The School Committee's previous request was for Powderhouse's 990, which was provided. Powderhouse is unaware of any additional requests for books until the 4 February meeting. Powderhouse's 2018 statement of operations may be found [here](#), and its 2017 management report is available [here](#).

Is it true that in 2017 Powderhouse staff received no salary from Powderhouse Studios, Limited? What is an update/preview of the 2018 staffing costs? I want to see current payroll numbers.

Yes, this is true. Powderhouse began paying staff salaries at the start of 2018. Take-home-pay and employment periods for Powderhouse staff are as follows:

| Person | Employment period | Take-home pay |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Alec Resnick | January 2018 – present | \$47,647.44 |
| Shaunalynn Duffy | January 2018 – present | \$47,647.44 |
| Molly Josephs | January 2018 – Dec 2018 | \$47,647.44 |
| Anthony Febo | August 2018 – present | \$62,279.36 |

| | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Rosalie Norris | August 2018 – present | \$62,279.36 |
| Miriam Zisook | August 2018 – present | \$62,279.36 |

Has Powderhouse received any other income besides XQ?

No.

Is there anything to prevent PHS's 501(c3) from applying for same grants as other district schools, or those that compete with SPS? Are there safeguards that can help them prevent PHS from competing with other entities?

Yes. Powderhouse Studios' Innovation Plan commits it to the same coordination efforts around fundraising and other resources as the school entity itself.

Those interested may read more beginning on p32 of the Innovation Plan:

PHS may raise additional, outside funds at the discretion of the PHS Director and in coordination with the Superintendent and in the spirit of being part of the District.

Further detail may be found in the previous Q&A submitted to the School Committee:

Part of complementing Somerville's other schools and programs is being in communication with the District around partnerships and outside funding. When we've applied for funding in the past, Powderhouse Studios did so as an independent team and nonprofit. If approved, Powderhouse will be a part of the Somerville Public Schools and will coordinate efforts with the Superintendent with full transparency to the Board of Trustees. This commitment is written into the Innovation Plan on page 31.

Student per capita is based on 180 days, and yet the staff salaries are based on a longer year, and need to be cost out. How does that math work?

The salaries negotiated with the STA can be found in Powderhouse's MOA. The copy shared with Powderhouse may be found in the January 2019 FAQ [here](#); the official copy is on file with the STA.

The most structural shifts in Powderhouse's design which ensure the math works out is a consolidation of other staff roles and a reconfiguration of some programmatic and administrative responsibilities (e.g. there isn't a library or media specialist, nor traditional college counseling infrastructure).

For a detailed budget overview, refer to budget overview presented by Superintendent Skipper in School Committee's executive session on 13 February 2019.

How would spending more on Powderhouse students be reconciled with our equity initiative? If that funding were to come from an outside source, we'd really need to look at this.

[The Powderhouse Studios team is awaiting clarification and further detail on the equity initiative's specifics. In the interim, the Powderhouse Studios team has attempted to provide an overview of how to consider investing additional funding in Powderhouse.]

Some portion of the funding which would be devoted to setting up Powderhouse Studios should be understood as an investment in *launching* Powderhouse.

From an equity POV, this should be distinguished from per pupil funding which would be devoted in Powderhouse's operation, much as the City doesn't model Somerville High School's construction as an investment of \$250M for the ~1,200 students there, but rather an investment benefiting many students over a long period of time. These launch costs (variously described in other materials as "overstaffing", "launch costs", and "piloting costs") are designed to support the prototyping involved in any new initiative, and would be scaled back in years four and five of Powderhouse's operation.

This leaves the actual per pupil behind Powderhouse's operating model. Powderhouse Studios is committed to its operating model being sustainable on the district per capita. Until this becomes a more precisely defined quantity through the district's development of a weighted student formula or similar, Powderhouse has treated this as a target and range..

In 2017, Somerville spent [~\\$18,500 per student per year on in-district expenditures](#). Typical estimates of district and central office overhead are often in the 10–20% range, which is part of why in Powderhouse's the current Innovation Plan, that per pupil has been established as ~\$16,100 per capita annually. Previous analyses from 2015 suggest that there is \geq ~\$5,000 per pupil per year spread in the imputed site based budgets in schools in Somerville.

For reasons both of equity *and* sustainability, Powderhouse Studios is committed to ensuring its model remains within the current, de facto bounds of spending across schools in Somerville, and the budget modeling the District and Powderhouse Studios team have done suggests this is achievable.

Where will the funds for teacher projects come from?

Staff projects are funded with school budget dollars dedicated to curriculum and/or professional development funds. These projects occur within staff programs of study and form the basis for curriculum development at Powderhouse. They are not simply passion projects or side projects or hobbies. These staff projects lay the foundation for collaborative student projects as well as staff-facilitated programs and workshops in which youth participate.

A description of programs of study from the Powderhouse website:

In the absence of traditional classes and subjects, the center of gravity for work and ideas at Powderhouse Studios come from our staff...especially as we're getting started.

For us, that means staff develop their own line of inquiry— a practice or question or problem which they'll be pursuing over years at PHS. This program of study is what will generate the projects and programs to which they invite young people.

It's not enough for it to be a subject (like 'computer programming'). It needs to be a perspective which they are authentically exploring...it's more like an artist statement or research agenda than a subject.

[Here](#) is an example of a staff member's program of study taking a disability rights lens on "imperfection." Programs of study are staff pursuits from which programs and projects for youth emerge. Every staff will define their own programs of study, ensuring a diverse set of topics and fields are represented.

You can see projects called [Ghost Gardens](#) and [Prompts, Poetry, and Pathways](#) and a longer-scale program in which the team [Collaboratively Built a Drawing Robot](#), all of which emerged from staff programs of study and demonstrate the ways that staff development of their programs of study will yield rich learning experiences for youth, the same way content mastery and skills development for teachers in traditional disciplines also serve youth.

(1) I'd like to know specifically what funds PHS will use for the onboarding, fellowship, and residency program. (2) The slides tonight didn't appear to me to take into account the onboarding staff, so that would appear to be additional positions.

Powderhouse plans to use outside funds to support the fellowship program in its inaugural years. Once the school is established, this could be reassessed based on the budget, and was incorporated into early financial models of Powderhouse's budget.

Governance

What are the governing bodies in Powderhouse? What decisions are they accountable for? Can we see more information on these governance structures? What is the difference between being “In consultation with the Superintendent,” as PHS is requesting, vs. “Under supervision of the Superintendent,” as is normal procedure. I have a resistance to the fact that this is a public school with public dollars, and is not *always* under the supervision of the Superintendent. What would happen if Powderhouse and district disagreed on a building-level, implementation of policy? What if that policy included the purchasing of equipment, where PHS might exert the authority to purchase equipment with XQ dollars instead of district dollars?

The Superintendent is ultimately responsible for the education of youth at Powderhouse. Pilot schools like [Boston Arts Academy](#) (cf. page 9 of [the BAA Handbook](#)) or the [Boston Teachers Union School](#) (cf. page 26 of [the BTU School Handbook](#)) have Boards of Trustees, Governing, and Family Councils which are variously responsible for setting and maintaining the school vision, overseeing strategic planning, approving a site-based budget for presentation to the district, and so on.

Powderhouse’s Board of Trustees will play a similar role, overseeing strategy, recommending hires and budgets, and so on. Details on the proposed governance structure for the Board of Trustees can be found beginning on p32 of the Innovation Plan.

In addition to the Board of Trustees, Powderhouse has proposed what has been referred to as a Steering Committee and District Integration Working Group whose responsibility early in Powderhouse’s operation would be to oversee the integration of Powderhouse’s model with district operations. In a long-term capacity, this group would report out to the Superintendent and School Committee on the impact and role Powderhouse played district-wide (in professional development, enrollment patterns, *etc.*)

The specific language in the Innovation Plan which various Members have referred to over time (variously “in consultation with” and “in coordination with”) was added to the Innovation Plan at the direction and suggestion of the Superintendent (who was also a member of the Innovation Plan Committee at the time). That language is intended to capture the collaborative and supervisory relationship outlined above.

Legal

I would like a copy of the innovation plan with a record of all the votes taken by the innovation committee.

The Innovation Plan is available on the [District's Powderhouse site](#) as well as [Powderhouse's website](#).

Minutes from all Innovation Plan Committee meetings can be found [here](#). Early on, the committee voted that they would not vote in individual parts of the innovation plan, but would instead discuss and deliberate about each section—making informal decisions, which are marked throughout the minutes—but only formally vote on a final plan at the end of their deliberations.

The specific wording of that vote may be found in the 5 January 2017 minutes:

DECISION: We will make a decision about the final plan/school design by voting on a document at the end of our discussions and debrief, rather than voting on individual pieces.

- *Steve YES*
- *Molly YES*
- *Mario YES*
- *Carrie YES*
- *Shaunalynn YES*
- *Alec YES*
- *Bakhtiar YES*
- *Ben YES*

More detail on the current proposal for Intellectual Property regarding Powderhouse. There has been recent reference made to the “current proposal” about IP, but I don’t think we’ve seen that. I don’t know if there’s been additional work done. The only thing I’ve seen has been the “priority to benefit the staff and students” single paragraph. But more recently there’s been references to a licensing office. Behaving like a public university takes resources. Until the parameters are documented, but right now it’s hard for me to understand. I’m uncomfortable with the original language, and there’s a reference to something we haven’t seen. It takes legal help in order to administrate this.

The current proposal the District and Powderhouse have been discussing can be found [here](#). It is modeled on a number of policies implemented by public school districts across the country, not specifically those of public universities, though the proposal does refer to a couple of public university examples since a similar legal question of public funding is at play in those examples.

For further detail, refer to the question, “How will intellectual property work at Powderhouse?” in the previous Q&A provided to School Committee. An excerpt from that response is included here for convenience:

The current proposal guarantees the District retains license-free and unrestricted access to all intellectual property generated at Powderhouse, and would prohibit staff from benefiting commercially from their intellectual property. Current proposals also propose a governance and review structure (similar to those in place at public universities) for overseeing intellectual property decisions.

The current proposal was developed after consultation with the State Ethics Commission, intellectual property attorneys, and district counsel.

The purpose of the proposed policy is to ensure that creators of intellectual property at Powderhouse (e.g. staff, youth, and partners) do not lose ownership by virtue of their work at Powderhouse. In contrast to examples like public research universities (which depend on monetizing intellectual property through technology transfer, university presses, research grants, licensing, and similar), public schools are not generally permitted to monetize the intellectual property of staff or youth without putting agreements in place to that effect.

There is significant precedent for intellectual property generated for educational purposes to be shared with its creators. Selected resources are included below, including exemplary policies from Massachusetts and nationwide implementing policies

sharing ownership. Additional resources are provided surveying the legal questions public teachers and professors have raised regarding intellectual property. Many of these have been raised by the de facto treatment of teachers' intellectual property as their own (e.g. there are dozens of Somerville educators who sell or share lesson plans online through platforms like [Teachers Pay Teachers](#)).

Exemplary policies

- [The Cedarburg School District](#) and [Tewksbury Township's IP policies](#)
- [San Jose Unified's contract](#) (starting on p89)
- [The McCall Donnelly School District's intellectual property policy](#)
- [Mankato Public School District's IP policy](#) providing for joint ownership
- The various IP policies of UMass universities, including [UMass Dartmouth](#), [UMass Lowell](#), [UMass Amherst & Boston](#), and [UMass Worcester](#).

Research and related materials

- [These two](#) summaries from the American Association of University Professors
- [This SETDA policy brief](#)
- [Hays](#) is the governing decision in sustaining the "teacher exception" (for work-for-hire copyright) past the Copyright Act of 1976.
- ["The New Cognitive Property"](#)
- ["Public K-12 Teachers Creation of Nontraditional Educational Works: To Rely on the Teacher Exception or Explore Other Options?"](#)

We've received some samples of contracts that are in place, as well as some verbal agreements, but I would think we would want to know more specifically who these contracts are with.

[The Powderhouse Studios team is seeking clarification on what is entailed by "verbal agreement" — the team has met with hundreds of stakeholders at this point, and there are a wide variety of opportunities in various stages of maturity, many of which depend on approval (which is why they have yet to mature to the point of an executed contract or MOA). In keeping with the spirit of this question, evocative examples of such preliminary relationships have been included here. If Members intend a narrower definition of "verbal agreement", the Powderhouse Studios team would appreciate guidance so as to tailor these materials to better respond to Members' inquiries.]

Relative to Powderhouse's previous response to this question, we understand the request for additional information to be the names of the individuals and organizations involved. The previous responses is included here, with that additional information provided.

Given Powderhouse's focus on integration with the community and the complexity of starting a new school, it may come as no surprise that there are a wide variety of existing and potential partnerships and relationships in various stages of maturity.

Only a selection of verbal agreements and partnerships are listed, since Powderhouse has been engaged in a very wide variety of partnership conversations. A representative selection has been included, with a brief summary of the agreement/partnership.

Contracts and vendors

- 1. Design, development of software supporting Powderhouse's Individualized Learning Plan — Jared Cosulich, Joey Hess*
- 2. Design, development of Powderhouse's operations manual and district integration plan — Thérèse Mckinny-Wood*
- 3. Architectural consulting, project management, and design services, including the development of workshops and educational programming for youth and staff — StudioMLA*
- 4. Legal counsel for support and advice on issues including but not limited to real estate, municipal finance, civil rights, and so on — Cole Civil Rights and Safe Schools Consulting, Krokidas & Bluestein, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Kopelman and Paige*
- 5. Accounting and auditing services, including support designing a full transparency and auditing system — KLR Accounting*
- 6. Technical consulting on the design and development of auditing, certification, and transparency systems for enrollment — ORCAA*
- 7. Translation services and support — One Hour Translation, Boston Language Institute, Welcome Project*
- 8. Various software services (e.g. Google Suite, Dropbox, etc.) — Various*

Verbal agreements, partnerships, exploratory work

N.B. per note above, these are a representative sample.

- 1. FabFoundation, regarding the design and development of Powderhouse's workshop space, as well as training and support for Powderhouse youth and staff. — Sherry Lassiter, Luciano Betoldi, Neil Gershenfeld*
- 2. Somerville Media Center, regarding media training and equipment at Powderhouse's campus. — Erica Jones, Heather McCormack, Brian Zipp*
- 3. Davis Square Martial Arts, regarding sharing space and programming opportunities. — Mark Carletti*
- 4. Supernormal, regarding the development of data-driven workshops to inform the design and redesign of Powderhouse's campus. — Elizabeth Christoforetti, Will Cohen*

5. *Massachusetts School Building Authority, regarding the design and development of workshops for youth and staff engaging the design and redesign of space to support learning and creative work. — Barbara Hansberry, Jack McCarthy*
6. *Lesley University, regarding the development of Powderhouse's fellowship for staff, including around Professional Standards of Teaching, Social Work, English Language Learning, and Subject Matter Knowledge requirements for Digital Literacy and Computer Science. — David Nurenberg, Sue Cusack, Kristina Lamour Sansone, Katherine Showaza, Amy Rutstein-Riley, Patricia Crain de Galarce*
7. *Woodrow Wilson Academy of Teaching and Learning, regarding the design and development of Powderhouse's fellowship for staff, targeting Digital Literacy and Computer Science skills. — Deb Hirsch, Dan Coleman, Rupal Jain, Jim Tracy*
8. *MIT Teaching and Learning Lab, regarding the development of organizational management and design training for Powderhouse staff and research collaborations. — Justin Reich, Eric Klopfer*
9. *Harvard Graduate School of Education, regarding the design and development of Powderhouse's fellowship for staff and research collaborations. — Karen Brennan, Linda Nathan, Chris Dede, Paul Reville*
10. *Northeastern University NExT Network, regarding the design and development of Powderhouse's fellowship for staff and research collaborations. — Chris Unger, Michaela Duffy*
11. *Collaborative Living Project, regarding the development of intergenerational programming and mentorship at Powderhouse's campus. — Reebee Garofalo, Janine Fay*
12. *Nervous System, regarding the design and development of a collaborative, generative sculpture and associated workshops for youth and staff. — Jesse Louis-Rosenberg, Jessica Rosenkrantz*
13. *CAST, regarding research collaborations around Universal Design for Learning. — Jenna Gravel, Bill Wilmot, Janet Gronneberg, Jennifer Levine*

Questions for Somerville Public Schools Central Office

Finances

We need a comprehensive budget for Powderhouse, not just a staffing plan. This is a fundamental piece of information we need to be able to make an informed decision. What are all the expected costs and income?

As the Powderhouse team understands it, this budget was presented in School Committee's executive session on 13 February 2019. Additional expected costs and income are awaiting District input.

[Awaiting District input]

One of the things that's useful for me for conceptualizing is when we find out what the district expense is. Starting to have examples of the equivalent cost — that's what I'm looking for. Hugely important, urgent.

[Awaiting District input]

There have been several questions about how much support Central Office would have to provide to PHS to be successful. There was a reference to a 0.1 to 0.2 FTE made, referencing legal translation, nursing. It didn't necessarily reference oversight, policy development, operations, curriculum, cross-district sharing — components of work that I think exist, that may be included in 0.1 or 0.2. I'm not expert, but I would think it would be more than that.

Powderhouse's reference to 0.1–0.2 FTE was intended as operational support *per department*, not total. The cross-district sharing functions were expected to be part of Powderhouse's responsibility, and are part of why both outside contracting and additional leadership roles are included in Powderhouse's staffing plan.

[Further clarity on this question is awaiting District input.]

I'm also curious about the level of effort by Somerville Schools in this process — from staff, legal council, other consulting — from the window of when this was brought forward to the School Committee (January). How much time is being spent on this? I'm really curious as to how much we've invested since this came to light. Just an idea of how much.

[Awaiting District input]

Process

(1) If and when in the process will administration share with the school committee any areas of concern or elements of the plan they would recommend changing, adding, or removing? At this point in time, it's been a collaboration between administration and the applicant to go through this process and evolve the plan, but at some point I think the school committee needs to hear how administration feels about where we are today — acknowledging that we're not where we want to be. We've all been very clear that this has been complicated, and initiating a new model for learning is complicated. So, I'm not totally surprised, but at some point we have to hear [these recommendations].

[Awaiting District input]

(2) Very specifically, when will administration make their recommendation regarding whether or not they would recommend adopting PHS? This is something I've gotten from more than one constituent — "This sounds like an exciting idea. How does the Superintendent feel about it? Are they supporting this? And right now I don't have an answer for that?" At some point, it had been mentioned that it would come on March 4th, which is the date we're going to vote. I personally would feel incredibly uncomfortable if that was the date we we're getting the recommendation because that's the date we're supposed to do our final deliberation. I would hope that in a previous meeting there would be time allocated to deliberation and to do good deliberation we have to hear from administration. I think the date on that is the 25th of February.

[Awaiting District input]

I know in the questions it was very clear, that we're just doing a yay or a nay. But a lot has been invested here. A lot of energy has been put into this buy the district, by the applicant. I don't know if there's a place in the process where SC members could say "I have a real issue with X-thing," or, "I'm really excited about Y — can we take this one further?" So it's not all necessarily negative, but one thing I keep bringing up is IP. That is a real stopping point for me, to not understand how that is going to work. There are other things for other members, as well as myself, that could be stop-gaps — not stop-gaps, but places that we could take pause, where we would love to share and get that out sooner rather than later. If there's a chance to make that happen for all of this investment that everyone has done, that would be great.

[Awaiting District input]

This innovation school law isn't very clear. I would like to request that our counsel advise us on what our rights are in terms of approving an innovation school, under the statute. Can we approve it for one year, if we have to approve it? Or is it a minimum of three years? I'd like to know exactly what we're voting on when we do vote in a month.

[Awaiting District input]

Requests for additional information

At the 4 February School Committee meeting, prompted by Madame President Ballantyne, several School Committee members made requests for additional information to inform their vote. These requests are recorded here; where appropriate, answers are linked elsewhere in this Q&A.

Ackman

What is the 1, 3, 5 year budget for Powderhouse Studios?

As the Powderhouse team understands it, this budget was presented in School Committee's executive session on 13 February 2019.

O'Sullivan

Connection to standards with samples, more detail. What students will be doing. I need more details on that.

The Powderhouse team's understanding is that Member O'Sullivan had not yet received the Q&A provided to the previous round of School Committee's questions, which included samples of work connections to standards, and so on. The Powderhouse team is awaiting further instruction as to whether those materials are responsive to the Member's original question.

Hiring process — who is part of that, who is making those decisions?

Refer to [“What will the hiring process for Powderhouse Studios be? What will happen to current PHS staff if it becomes a district school? What would that hiring process look like?”](#)

Green

Budget for PHS and more detail on current finances of PHS Ltd.

As to the budget for the school itself, the Powderhouse team understands this budget to have been presented in School Committee's executive session on 13 February 2019. Regarding the finances of Powderhouse Studios, Limited, refer to [this question](#) in the Q&A.

More information on how that affects the lease.

[The Powderhouse Studios team is unclear on what "that" refers to here, w/r/t the budget affecting the lease, and is awaiting clarification. In the interim, links to lease details have been included here.]

For additional information on the lease and Powderhouse's facilities, refer to

- [It seems that Powderhouse is leasing more space than its proposal calls for. How will that space be used?](#)
- [The proposal mentions sublets; how will sublets be used, and what is their purpose?](#)
- [The lease involves a 5y option. What happens to the lease if Powderhouse Studios, Limited defaults on the lease? What happens if the 501\(c\)\(3\) defaults on the lease? What would happen to kids?](#)
- [If at some point in the future, Powderhouse Studios decides to move, what happens to the lease and its relationship to the District?](#)
- [Facility cost, general terms, cost per square foot. Summarized as not a contract.](#)
- [How does having a separate corporate entity which has a contract for the space work?](#)
- [Would the city assume the lease?](#)

Algorithm to be explicit. I want to see what the weight is.

Refer to ["When do we see the lottery formula? I can't understand the mechanics of the lottery. If you pull names, obviously it has be a weighted lottery reflective of the district. I understand the guarantee that it won't open unless it is reflective, but I just want to understand the mechanics of the lottery."](#)

There have been a lot of questions about how the school can maintain its pledge for equity and diversity — what are those systems and procedures?

Assuming this refers to the enrollment lottery in particular, refer to ["When do we see the lottery formula? I can't understand the mechanics of the lottery. If you pull names, obviously it has be a weighted lottery reflective of the district. I understand the guarantee that it won't open unless it is reflective, but I just want to understand the mechanics of the lottery."](#)

Ackman

Detailed outline by month of project plan for starting the school — end of March, end of April, end of May, end of June, end of July, end of August — what the anticipated completion items are in order to successfully get a school off the ground. End of every month, not week by week.

[Awaiting District input — Much of the coordination of this is pending District input and management, and is in large part the mandate of the District Integration Working Group. Past attempts to lay out a specific Gantt chart and project plan have required additional District integration work which was determined to be a premature set of demands on Central Office and Cabinet time. The Superintendent asked that Powderhouse pause this District integration and planning work in November 2018 to await the STA MOA approval and convening of the District Integration Working Group.]

Before this, the Powderhouse Studios team assembled an overview of some of the most essential processes and open questions. Thérèse McKinny-Wood was responsible for this work, and her primary deliverable is available [here](#). In the course that work, Thérèse met with Central Office staff to understand primary operational questions and challenges which Powderhouse might pose, so that Powderhouse could anticipate and begin working on these design challenges in earnest.]

Pitone

Chain of authority to Superintendent — ‘in consultation with’ is not a district school. It says in the plan that the Board of Trustees is in charge of the school.

Refer to [this question](#) in this Q&A regarding governance, and in particular, the intent and provenance of “in consultation with” in the Innovation Plan.