



## SOMERVILLE EDUCATORS UNION

Good Evening.

My name is Dayshawn Simmons, I am a resident of Ward 7, a middle grades educator, and the proud President of the Somerville Educators Union. This evening I wanted to highlight the partnership between the district and the SEU in addressing student needs in our district. I want to start by saying that not everything is perfect and some pieces haven't been perfect for a while. Our educators work tirelessly and they are tired. That said, what we've found to be true is that the district is willing to listen and make moves to be responsive to address the issues.

This was evident during the budget process last year as district leadership, school committee members, and the SEU advocated fiercely for a budget that saw additional millions of dollars added which begins to correct the decades of under-investment in education to put in place the supports Somerville students deserve.

This year, we are seeing more manageable workloads for special education providers and social emotional educators which means more protections for student service delivery. The district also met the SEU with codifying the best practices for reading and math intervention to maximize the success of those programs while attempting to avoid educator burnout in the process. These were important priorities to the SEU during the bargaining process and we are thankful that the district made some real commitments



## SOMERVILLE EDUCATORS UNION

in these areas. Admittedly, this progress is not as fast as we proposed, but we fully accept it is a step in the right direction.

Perhaps one of our biggest priorities during the bargaining process last spring was to find a way to work together to implement a true co-teaching model in the district to better meet the needs of each student in front of our educators. We understand that such an initiative costs more than the budget allocated to implement district-wide, and we appreciate the district naming it as priority for them as well as. This year we have East Somerville and Winter Hill piloting a co-teaching model with a working group of educators, administrators and family behind them documenting the best practices and procedures as we work to scale up the co-teaching model in future years. Again, not as fast as we hoped, but we know it's coming.

In talking with my union colleagues in other districts, this is not the typical partnership. Somerville Public Schools in recent years has continually made an effort to maintain a solid working relationship with the SEU so that we can produce the best outcomes for students. That doesn't mean we always agree - we sometimes don't. What I appreciate is that we are still able to have the conversation and move past disagreements to do what is best for our students. So, on behalf of the SEU - thank you. There is a great deal of work ahead and we appreciate the commitments to going in a better direction.