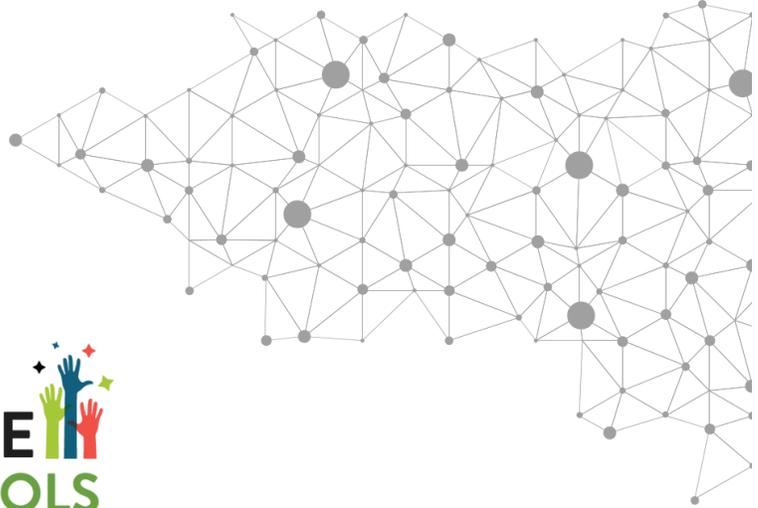


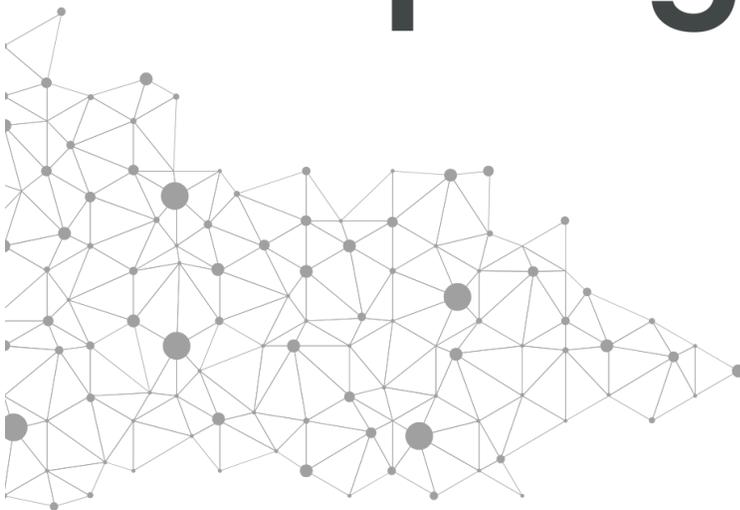
Draft - March 2, 2026



winter hill community innovation school

educational program

somerville's new
school building at
115 Sycamore



MODULE 3: PRELIMINARY DESIGN PROGRAM

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1 | INTRODUCTION - VISION & PRIORITIES

SPS VISION

We envision a student-centered learning community where every student – honoring their unique strengths and background – is empowered to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally through tailored supports and equitable access to opportunity.

SPS MISSION

Our primary mission is to cultivate inspired learners who are equipped to make a positive impact on the world. We achieve this by fostering rigorous and joyful learning environments where students, families, staff and community partners collaborate with a shared commitment to academic excellence and well-being.

SPS VALUES

Somerville Public Schools believes in:

- Empowering every child to realize their potential to become leaders and achieve **academic excellence** through academic rigor, a commitment to consistent, high standards, and access to caring and attentive adults.
- Embedding **equity and access** into every aspect of our school culture and community by maintaining a multicultural, multilingual, and inclusive school community, and disrupting and eliminating roadblocks to quality outcomes through strategic systems and practice.
- **Prioritizing the whole child**, recognizing that their social, emotional, mental, developmental and physical health are foundational pillars for academic success.
- **Using data to drive decision-making** to inform strategic initiatives, measure progress, and continuously improve student outcomes.
- Cultivating robust partnerships and **engagement with families** and community stakeholders, prioritizing the essential need for collaboration, family partnership, and shared accountability.
- **Sharing responsibility** across staff, students, families and community members to promote a culture of collaboration, transparency, and mutual respect.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Priority #1 – Academic Excellence

Establish a shared instructional framework that advances academic achievement for all students. We will foster a strengths-based mindset, promote equitable outcomes, and provide targeted supports based on student need by prioritizing high-quality curriculum, instructional rigor, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), and engaging learning experiences. This work will include a focused commitment to

strengthening supports for multilingual learners and students receiving special education services. We will achieve this by implementing the goals and action items outlined below.

Priority #2 – Equity & Access

Equity and access are foundational values that guide every aspect of our work. While reflected throughout this strategic plan — including within Academic Excellence — this priority sharpens our focus on expanding equitable access to programs, supports, and structures. We are committed to reducing opportunity gaps, fostering belonging, and ensuring every student has what they need to succeed. We will achieve this by implementing the goals and action items outlined below.

Priority #3 – Wellness & Joy

Invest in the wellness and joy of students and staff as essential conditions for success. By proactively supporting social-emotional well-being, cultivating positive school cultures, and creating environments where students and adults feel valued and connected, we strengthen our entire community. We will achieve this by implementing the goals and action items outlined below.

Priority #4 – Family & Community Engagement

Strengthen family and community engagement to build a collaborative and inclusive system of support for students. By deepening partnerships with families and community organizations, improving communication, and creating meaningful opportunities for shared decision-making, we ensure that students thrive both in and beyond our schools. We will achieve this by implementing the goals and action items outlined below.

**For more information on the District's Strategic Plan and priorities, please visit our Strategic Plan Website page at <https://somerhill.k12.ma.us/strategicplan>.*

Project Specific Visioning

In Fall 2025 and Winter 2026, members of Somerville Public Schools engaged in a series of Educational Visioning sessions facilitated by Educational Planner Mike Pirolo and Educational Consultant Paul White of My Learning Place Integrated Design, Inc., in partnership with Perkins Eastman. These sessions were part of a collaborative planning process to guide the New School Building Project and ensure that future design decisions are grounded in the district's educational priorities and the school's Innovation School identity.

Through interactive workshops, structured protocols, and reflective dialogue, participants engaged in a thoughtful, step-by-step process designed to elevate high-level thinking in the following areas:

- Educational, architectural, and community priorities
- Developmental traits and needs of PK–8 learners
- Current and reimagined student experiences
- A shared vision of teaching and learning in a PK–8 Innovation School
- Learning environments that foster belonging, inclusion, and support for the whole child

Throughout the process, participants reflected on how students experience Winter Hill and Brown today, what learners need to thrive across developmental stages, and how spaces, schedules, and systems can be intentionally designed to support both academic growth and social-emotional well-being. The summary that follows highlights the key themes and outcomes that emerged, capturing Somerville's collective vision for a future-ready, inclusive, and community-centered PK–8 model Innovation School.

Overarching Goals and Priorities

The visioning process surfaced a clear and cohesive set of guiding educational goals that will inform future planning and design decisions for the new school building at Sycamore Street:

- A school community where every student, educator, and family feels known, valued, and a strong sense of belonging
- An inclusive and responsive environment that supports specialized programs, multilingual learners, and diverse developmental needs in integrated and affirming ways
- Learning experiences that are hands-on, project-based, interdisciplinary, arts-integrated, and authentically connected to community partnerships
- Flexible, purposeful, and human-centered spaces that support movement, collaboration, sensory needs, and multiple modes of teaching and learning
- A Welcome Center and community hub model that provides space for family connection, wraparound services, and engagement beyond the instructional day
- A future-ready facility that is adaptable, multi-use, sustainable, and designed to evolve alongside the needs of students and the broader community

Together, these goals articulate a shared vision for the new school building as both a PK–8 Innovation School and a vital community resource — a place that balances safety with openness and centers belonging, equity, and opportunity for all learners.

Developmental Considerations & Impacts

Participants explored the developmental characteristics of learners across the PK–8 continuum, emphasizing the importance of environments that thoughtfully balance play with structure, independence with guidance, and collaboration with opportunities for regulation and reflection. Students were described as benefiting from movement, sensory-aware spaces, access to outdoor learning, meaningful relationships with trusted adults, and opportunities for both small-group engagement and unstructured social interaction.

These reflections reinforced the need for developmentally responsive — yet intentionally connected — elementary and middle school experiences. Participants supported upper and lower school structures that acknowledge differences in autonomy, identity development, and instructional approaches, while maintaining shared spaces that foster community and belonging. Design implications included separate yet connected entrances and circulation patterns, advisory structures in the middle grades, flexible gathering and dining spaces, integrated sensory supports, access to wellness resources, and environments designed first around what is best for children, rather than operational efficiency.

Teaching, Learning, and the Vision of the Future School

Across all sessions, participants envisioned the new school building as a PK–8 Innovation School defined by experiential, student-centered, and community-connected learning. They imagined learning experiences that are project-based, interdisciplinary, arts-integrated, and STEM-rich, woven into daily practice and supported by flexible schedules and thoughtfully designed spaces. Educators emphasized inclusive co-teaching models and robust specialist programming — including visual arts, music, theater, performing arts, movement, and real-world problem-solving — to ensure that all learners are actively engaged and challenged.

The Innovation School identity was described not as a label, but as a commitment to flexibility, autonomy, restorative practices, inclusive excellence, and high expectations for every student. Participants also highlighted partnerships with local organizations to create “living labs” and authentic learning experiences, while underscoring the value of common planning spaces, professional learning hubs, and structures that foster adult collaboration, creativity, and innovation.

Design and Physical Space Implications

Participants envisioned a future new school building that is welcoming, adaptable, and intentionally organized to support both learning and well-being across the PK–8 continuum. Key design considerations include:

- Distinct yet connected upper and lower school areas that respond to developmental needs
- Flexible classrooms designed to accommodate multiple adults, co-teaching, and varied instructional approaches
- Dedicated sensory rooms and built-in sensory supports within classrooms
- Outdoor classrooms and age-appropriate playgrounds integrated throughout the site
- Centralized shared spaces, including gyms, performance areas, specialist classrooms, and a learning commons that support both academic and community use
- A highly visible and accessible Welcome Center that serves as a hub for family engagement, basic needs support, and emotional connection
- Well-designed gathering spaces that prevent overstimulation and promote safety, including smaller lunch areas and calming environments
- Opportunities to showcase student work, creativity, and cultural identity throughout the building

The facility is envisioned as an active contributor to school culture, belonging, inclusion, and innovation. Flexibility, adaptability, and multi-use functionality are essential to ensure the school can grow and evolve alongside the needs of students, staff, and the broader community.

Community Vision

Ultimately, the school communities envision an environment that centers belonging, nurtures the whole child, and reflects the diversity and strengths of Somerville. A school where inclusivity is visible everywhere. A school where students are challenged academically, supported emotionally, and given meaningful choices in their learning.

The future school building at Sycamore Street will reflect a commitment to equity, adaptability, collaboration, and community partnership. It will serve not only as a place of learning for children, but as a hub for families, educators, and neighbors; a school that embodies innovation through experiential learning, celebrates diversity, and creates a sense of pride and possibility for generations to come.

Participants

[Dr. Rubén Carmona](#) Superintendent of Schools
[Courtney Gosselin](#) Principal of Winter Hill
[Christopher Ames](#) Principal of Brown School
[Amara Anosike](#) Chief of Staff and Strategies
[Danielle Barry](#) Facilities Transportation and Safety Coordinator
[Dr. Jessica Boston Davis](#) Asst. Supt. of Academics
[Ildelfonso Arellano](#) Director of Special Education
[Paulina Mitropoulus](#) Director of Multi-Lingual Education
[Ruth Santos](#) Director of SFLC (Somerville Family Lrng Collab)
[Rosanna Paribello](#) Director of Community Schools (after school & summer programming)
[Khin Mar](#) Project Manager, City of Somerville
[Marisa MacDonald](#) Asst. Director of Special Education
[Ryan Williams](#) PTA
[Meghan Phillips](#) Parent
[Chris Templeman](#) Parent
[Ann Fullerton](#) Parent
[Emily Spicer Hankle](#) Parent, PTA President
[Peter Doherty](#) Parent
[Jennifer Fostel](#) Parent
[Kara Dodd](#) Resource Room Teacher
[Christine Stone](#) Parent
[James Hines](#) Parent
[Kayla Burgess](#) Grade 6 Math/Science Teacher
[Cathy Ward](#) Music Teacher
[Jessica Gutierrez](#) Bilingual School Adjustment Counselor
[Cayla Puglisi](#) Music Teacher
[Kristin Stier](#) PK - 8 Music teacher
[Dayshawn Simmons](#) Grades 7/8 Social Studies Teacher, and SEU President
[Chuck Graham](#) Teacher
[Gwyneth Davies](#) Teacher
[Karen Johnson](#) School Nurse
[Laurie Gagnon](#) Parent
[Lindsay Weaver](#) Newcomer Program Teacher

[Shauna Powers](#) Parent

[Marla Aguirre](#) School Liaison

[Beverly Mosby](#) Supervisor of Music and Theatre Arts

[Michelle De Paula](#) Home Visit

Tim McCormack Parent

[Mike Pirollo](#) MLP Integrated Design, Inc. Educational Planner

[Paul White](#) MLP Integrated Design, Inc. Educational Consultant

[Robert Bell](#) Perkins Eastman Architect

[Lisa Pecora](#) Perkins Eastman Architect

[Sean Burke](#) PMA OPM

[Nick Masse](#) PMA Associate OPM

2 | GRADE & SCHOOL CONFIGURATION POLICIES

Current Configuration Policies

Winter Hill Community Innovation School serves students from Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade, providing a continuum of learning for early childhood, elementary, and middle grades. In contrast, the Benjamin G. Brown School is a K–5 elementary school, focusing on foundational and intermediate grade-level education.

Proposed Configuration Policies

As part of the visioning process, participants — including staff, community members, administrators, and public officials — examined the developmental characteristics of learners across the PK–8 continuum. The discussions emphasized the need for environments that thoughtfully balance play with structure, independence with guidance, and collaboration with opportunities for regulation and reflection. Students were described as benefiting from movement, sensory-aware spaces, access to outdoor learning, meaningful relationships with adults, and opportunities for both small-group engagement and unstructured social interaction.

These insights highlighted the importance of developmentally responsive yet connected early childhood, elementary, and middle school experiences. Participants supported upper and lower school structures that acknowledge differences in autonomy, identity development, and instructional approaches, while maintaining shared spaces that foster community and belonging. Design implications included separate yet connected entrances and circulation paths, advisory structures in the middle grades, flexible gathering and dining spaces, integrated sensory supports, access to wellness resources, and environments designed first and foremost around what is best for children rather than operational efficiency.

With these priorities in mind, planning continues to explore ways to create a unified building that also provides a distinct and developmentally appropriate experience for elementary and middle grade learners.

Proposed PK–8 Configuration Framework

The unified PK–8 model will be intentionally structured to create two developmentally distinct but connected learning communities:

Lower School (PK–5)

Our focus will be on foundational literacy and numeracy, play-based and experiential learning, and strong family engagement. We will also enhance the early childhood experience by building on the effective systems established at the Capuano School, which provide a proven blueprint for coaching, hands-on learning, and community-connected experiences for our PK and Kindergarten students.

Upper School (6–8)

Structured around advisory, interdisciplinary teaming, increasing student autonomy, and expanded access to electives, STEM, and applied learning opportunities.

The building will reflect this structure through:

- Separate yet connected entrances and circulation patterns
- Age-appropriate gathering and lunch spaces
- Dedicated upper school collaboration zones
- Shared specialist spaces to promote community cohesion

This configuration ensures developmental alignment while maintaining a unified school culture.

Results from our K–8 Capacity Study indicate that the District is experiencing significant space limitations. The proposed changes outlined below respond directly to these documented needs. For example, Winter Hill Community Innovation School has seen steady enrollment growth, particularly in AIM for students on the autism spectrum and in the MLE/Newcomer Academy (grades 5–8), programs that serve some of our highest-need and most vulnerable students.

At the Brown School, the facility lacks a dedicated science lab, computer lab, gym or physical education space, art and music classrooms, and a common area for assemblies or family meetings. The building is not fully ADA accessible and presents challenges for students requiring OT, PT, or other services, which are sometimes delivered in hallways.

District-wide, increasing enrollment in certain grade bands is creating broader capacity constraints. The Brown School, as the district's only K–5 school, feeds primarily into Kennedy and West Somerville Neighborhood Schools for 6th grade. Rising enrollment at Brown, Kennedy, and West Somerville Neighborhood Schools has resulted in more 5th graders at Brown and fewer available seats at the middle schools. Projections indicate that this trend will continue, creating additional demand for middle school classrooms if enrollment remains steady.

After-school and out-of-school time (OST) programming is also limited relative to community needs. SPS funds and manages OST across district facilities, serving approximately 2,000 students, with many families on waitlists. Because the City of Somerville does not operate a youth center, families rely on SPS for academic enrichment and child care.

To address these challenges, proposed actions include:

- Adding middle-grade classrooms to accommodate enrollment growth at the Brown School
- Expanding sub-separate autism classrooms to meet the needs of students requiring specialized supports

These steps aim to ensure that all students have equitable access to high-quality learning environments, academic supports, and enrichment opportunities.

3 | CLASS SIZE POLICIES

Current Class Size Policies

Winter Hill Community Innovation School

Winter Hill offers a wide range of programming to meet the needs of all learners. In addition to general education classrooms, the school hosts the District's middle grades (6–8) Newcomer program and the AIM program for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Class sizes are structured to support effective instruction and student learning. In general education, Kindergarten classes have a maximum of 25 students, while Grades 1–8 have a maximum of 26 students per class. SEI-1 classes for Grades K–8 are capped at 20 students, and physical education classes have a maximum of 30 students. These limits help ensure that every student receives the attention and support needed to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Current Class Size Policies

Benjamin G. Brown School

The Benjamin G. Brown School operates on a straightforward K–5 model without specialized programming. In the upper elementary grades, average class sizes are at or below 20 students, while lower elementary classrooms exceed 20 students. The school has two class sections per grade, for a total of 12 grade-level classrooms.

The building includes a counseling suite where the school social worker and counselor-educator meet with students, and the adjustment counselor has a separate office. A special education suite is shared by several service providers as well as the reading specialist, supporting a range of student needs.

Class size guidelines are designed to support effective instruction, with Kindergarten classes capped at 25 students and Grades 1–5 capped at 26 students per class.

Proposed Class Size Policies

While no changes are proposed to the policy on maximum class sizes, the average class size used to determine space needs aligns with the MSBA guidelines, which set the average at 18 for Kindergarten and 23 for grades 1–8, ensuring the average remains below the maximum. Similarly, SEI or ELL classrooms, such as those in the Newcomer Academy, are planned with class sizes below the maximum and within a preferred range of 8–12 students to support targeted instruction and individualized learning.

Specialist departments will not operate independently. The facility and schedule will intentionally support cross-disciplinary collaboration. Shared planning time and adjacency of specialist spaces will enable authentic interdisciplinary work.

Examples of collaborative structuring include:

- Theater + Music collaborative productions
- STEM + Art design challenges
- Engineering + Math applied problem-solving
- Cross-Grade exhibitions and showcases

Facility Implications

ThMiddle school collaboration space / project space

Upper school Upper elementarycollaboration commons
e specialist rotation model requires:

- Dedicated Theater/performance space
- A fully equipped STEM/Engineering lab
- Flexible Art and Music rooms
- Shared exhibition spaces
- Adequate storage for materials and equipment

These spaces are essential to deliver the educational model described above.

5 | TEACHING METHODOLOGIES AND STRUCTURE

Administrative and Academic Organization

Winter Hill School Administration

Principal Courtney Gosselin
Assistant Principal Mrs. Rocio Camargo Ruiz
Dean of Students Brendan Buckland
Dean of Students Evan McAlear
Counselor Educator Karina Ribeiro
Counselor Educator Jessica Gutierrez
Counselor Educator Tara Stead
Social Worker Emily Thies

Benjamin G. Brown School Administration

Principal Christopher Ames
Dean of Students Eve Rybnick
Counselor Educator Kate Melilo
Social Worker Julie Schmidt

Current Academic Organization

Winter Hill Community Innovation School

Winter Hill Community Innovation School is the Somerville Public Schools district's only Innovation School, offering a model of limited self-governance and a deliberate, innovative approach to meeting student needs. The school serves PK–8 mainstream classes, Grades 6–8 English Language Learners, and Somerville students with special education needs in grades K–8.

Current Academic Organization

Benjamin G. Brown School

The Benjamin G. Brown School has 12 general education inclusion classrooms serving grades K–5. Every class includes students with IEPs and multilingual learners. Because of the school's relatively small size, nearly everyone knows one another, fostering a strong sense of shared responsibility for each student's success. Within this close-knit learning community, there is a strong emphasis on academic growth, enrichment opportunities, social-emotional learning, and meaningful family and community engagement.

Proposed Academic Organization

Under either enrollment scenario — approximately 690 seats or a combined 925-seat configuration — the core design principle is to intentionally reduce the perceived scale of the building, ensuring that a strong sense of belonging and community is maintained throughout.

The school will be organized into **two primary academic zones**: (a) Elementary School (PK–5), and (b) Middle School (6–8). Within each zone, grade-level neighborhoods will be created to foster smaller learning communities. This structure supports age-appropriate design, developmentally responsive practices, and a strong “small school” feel within a larger facility.

Leadership Structure and Coherence

To ensure coherence across the PK–8 model, the proposed structure maintains a single Principal overseeing the entire school. While some PK–8 schools operate with co-principals or separate principals for elementary and middle grades, this approach prioritizes unified instructional leadership and a consistent school culture across all grade levels.

To support both scale and developmental differences, the proposed structure includes one Principal responsible for PK–8 instructional coherence and strategic oversight, along with two Assistant Principals: one assigned to Elementary (PK–5) and one assigned to the Middle Grades (6–8).

This configuration provides age-specific leadership while preserving a unified academic vision, consistent expectations, and vertical alignment across the school.

Proposed Administrative Distribution (925 Enrollment Model)

Main Administration	Elementary Grades	Middle Grades
Principal	Assistant Principal (PK–5)	Assistant Principal (6–8)
General Office / Waiting Area	Secretary / Waiting Area	Secretary / Waiting Area
Social Worker	Dean (PK–5)	Dean (6–8)
Nurse Suite	3 Counselors	2 Counselors + 1 NCA

Administrative and student support staff will be strategically positioned within academic zones so that leadership, deans, and counselors are integrated into the daily routines of students and instruction. This approach enhances accessibility, visibility, supervision, and relationship-building. Ideally, student-facing leadership offices will be located within or adjacent to grade-level neighborhoods, potentially on each floor, to maintain close proximity to the learners they support.

Central Community Core

Shared spaces will be centrally located to serve as the heart of the school, reinforcing unity across PK–8. These include:

- Main administrative entrance
- Family welcome and waiting areas
- After-school programming space
- Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC)
- Shared performance and gathering spaces

Locating these areas centrally reinforces the building as both an academic hub and a community anchor, while the zoned academic neighborhoods maintain developmental appropriateness and scale.

Curriculum Delivery Methods and Practices

Our curriculum and instructional approach provides numerous opportunities for students to collaborate in groups with their peers. Group sizes are flexible and vary depending on the content area and lesson. Classrooms are arranged so that all students can see and engage with projected materials that support learning.

In general education, PK, Kindergarten, and 1st grade classrooms include one educator and one paraprofessional. All students in Grade 3 and above have access to a Chromebook to support learning.

In our AIM classrooms, technology plays a critical role. Students may use communication devices to support their communication skills, and devices such as iPads may also serve as reinforcers.

Specialized courses, including music, art, physical education, theater, and library, require dedicated spaces. Music classes, in particular, need additional rooms for instrumental choice programs such as band, strings, and choir. Spanish is offered to students in Grades 7 and 8.

Students in the AIM program require classroom-accessible bathrooms to support Activities of Daily Living (ADL) skills, and some may have individualized toileting plans. Classrooms should be large enough to include a sensory space and at least three individual workstations (cubicle style) for discrete trial programs, with built-in lockable cabinets to minimize distractions.

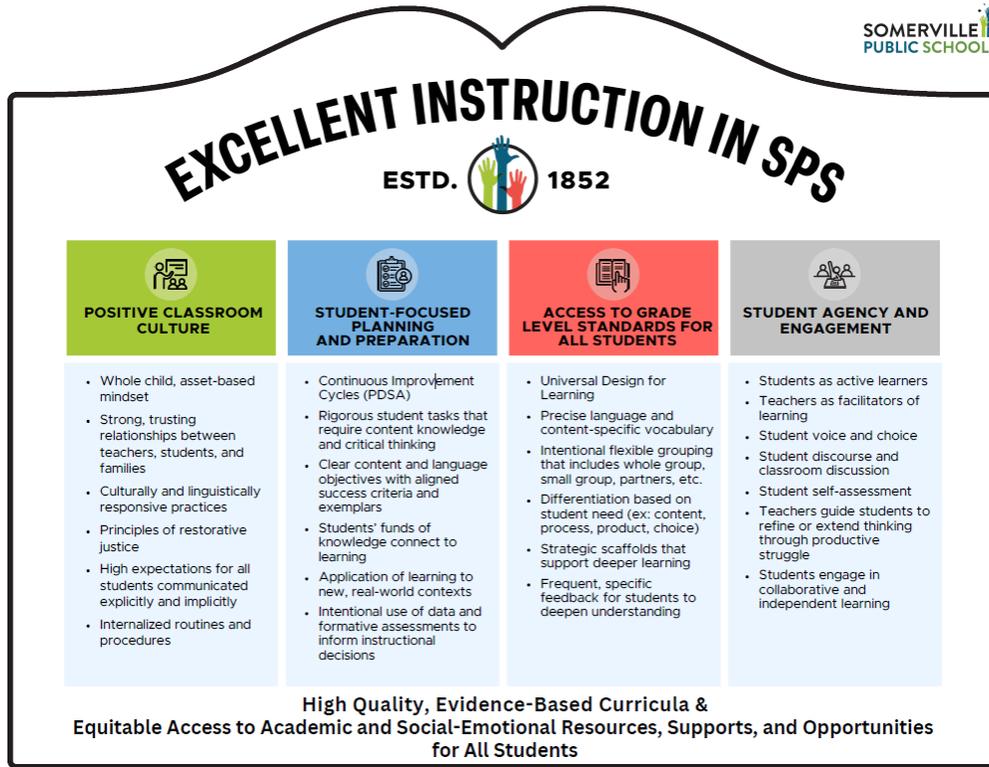
A dedicated sensory room with appropriate equipment is essential for AIM students, as is a separate classroom for upper-grade students to work on ADLs and transitional or vocational skills. This space should include a kitchen, bed, and workstation to accommodate vocational tasks such as envelope stuffing or using a mock cash register.

Additionally, separate spaces should be provided for individualized and small-group (3–5 students) specialized instruction by service providers. Physical therapy areas should be large enough to support gross motor skill development.

Current Methods and Practices
Current Vision of Excellent Instruction

During the 2024–2025 school year, we convened all academic administrators — including principals, assistant principals, department chairs, curriculum and data coordinators, and leaders from the Special Education and MLE departments — to develop a Vision of Excellent Instruction for Somerville Public Schools (see Figure 1 below). Drafts of the Vision were then shared with all educators during two district-wide professional development sessions, and revisions were made based on their feedback. The result is a clear, shared vision that will guide the year ahead, fostering cohesion and alignment across all instructional initiatives. This vision informs professional development, instructional rounds, coaching, and common planning time.

Figure 1:



Proposed Curriculum Delivery Methods and Instructional Practices

The instructional model for the future school building at Sycamore reflects the district’s commitment to inclusive excellence, culturally responsive practice, and applied learning. Community visioning sessions highlighted the importance of belonging, hands-on engagement, interdisciplinary learning,

and spaces that foster collaboration and student voice. The curriculum delivery framework is designed to respond to these priorities, aligning instructional approaches, scheduling structures, and spatial design to support meaningful and equitable learning experiences for all students.

Inclusive and Co-Taught Instruction

Instruction across the unified PK–8 model will emphasize inclusive, co-taught classrooms wherever appropriate. Special education and multilingual services will be integrated within general education settings to ensure equitable access to grade-level content while promoting collaboration among educators. Service delivery will focus on push-in support, flexible grouping, and data-informed interventions within the classroom to meet the needs of all learners.

To support this model, the building must include:

- Classrooms sized to accommodate co-teaching models
- Adjacent small-group rooms within each grade cluster
- Purpose-built spaces for specialized programming, including AIM classrooms with sensory supports
- Shared planning areas to facilitate collaborative instructional design

This structure enables inclusive practice to be embedded rather than peripheral.

Interdisciplinary and Project-Based Learning

Consistent with the Innovation School model, curriculum delivery will feature interdisciplinary and project-based learning experiences across all grade levels. Students will participate in applied problem-solving, performance-based assessments, and public exhibitions of learning that connect academic content to real-world contexts.

In the middle grades, interdisciplinary teaming will support coordinated instruction across content areas, while specialist programs — including Theater (currently offered in the middle grades), STEM/Engineering, Art, Music, Physical Education/Wellness, and World Language — will be integrated into thematic units when appropriate.

The building must support this instructional approach through:

- Flexible classrooms with movable furnishings
- Shared collaboration zones within grade-level neighborhoods
- Exhibition and presentation spaces for public showcases
- Dedicated STEM/Engineering labs
- Purpose-built Theater/performance space with appropriate acoustics and flexibility

These spaces ensure that interdisciplinary work is supported structurally, not dependent on temporary scheduling adaptations.

Developmentally Responsive Practices

The PK–8 model allows for intentional alignment across grade spans while honoring developmental differences.

PK–5 instruction will emphasize:

- Foundational literacy and numeracy
- Structured routines and play-based learning
- Experiential and inquiry-driven instruction
- Strong family partnership

Grades 6–8 will incorporate:

- Advisory structures that support identity development and belonging
- Interdisciplinary teaming
- Increased student autonomy and leadership opportunities
- Expanded elective exploration, including Theater and STEM
- Capstone and exhibition experiences

The physical layout will reflect this by creating distinct but connected elementary and middle-grade academic zones. Zoning will preserve a small-school feel within a larger facility while maintaining unified leadership and instructional coherence.

Culturally Responsive and Community-Connected Learning

Visioning sessions highlighted the importance of honoring student identity, cultural background, and multilingual assets. Curriculum delivery will incorporate culturally responsive pedagogy, diverse texts and materials, and meaningful opportunities for student voice and representation.

Community partnerships, family engagement spaces, and performance venues will provide students with opportunities to share their work publicly and connect learning to local organizations and civic life. Shared family spaces and centrally located areas for community use reinforce the building's role as both an academic hub and a community anchor.

Vertical Alignment Across PK–8

A unified PK–8 model strengthens curricular coherence and smooth academic transitions. Cross-grade collaboration and shared professional learning will ensure that instructional practices intentionally build from early childhood through middle grades.

The facility must support:

- Common planning areas for grade-level and vertical teams
- Flexible meeting spaces for interdisciplinary collaboration

- Instructional zones designed to evolve over time as programming expands

This design ensures that curriculum delivery is not only aligned to district vision, but operationally supported by the physical environment.

English Language Arts/Literacy

A good introduction to literacy (reading) needs a strong foundation. In early grades, our curriculum and instruction strive to build that strong literacy foundation. The National Reading Panel defines effective reading instruction includes phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. These concepts are also reinforced by the latest research on literacy development and dyslexia. Together, these five pillars make up the components of successful reading instruction by shaping learners' brains to learn to read and understand the written English language.

Current Language Arts/Literacy

In PK, we use the SEE Every Child curriculum. In grades K-5 we use FunDations, DIBELS, and i-Ready (grades 3 and up). In the 2024-2025 school year we are partnering with the Hill For Literacy to go through a curriculum review process.

In middle grades, the purpose of our ELA curriculum is to help students to discover and further develop the joy of reading and expression. Students will gain a broad understanding of the world and the human experience through reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students will develop skills to investigate and analyze a text. They will also express their thinking orally and in writing, and consider multiple perspectives and audiences. Our curriculum is standards-based, intellectually challenging, invites critical thinking, and encourages discourse. In grades 6-8 we use the Fishtank Curriculum.

Proposed Language Arts/Literacy

The new PK–8 facility will support stronger vertical alignment and more consistent implementation of structured literacy practices in the early grades, alongside rich, discourse-based instruction in the middle grades.

At the elementary level, literacy instruction will continue to emphasize systematic phonics and foundational skill development, while also expanding opportunities for oral language growth, knowledge-building texts, and small-group, differentiated instruction.

At the middle grades level, ELA will emphasize:

- Close reading of complex texts
- Analytical and argumentative writing
- Structured academic discourse
- Cross-curricular literacy integration
- Performance-based assessments and public presentation of learning

The unified PK–8 model supports greater collaboration across grade spans, ensuring that literacy instruction builds intentionally from foundational decoding to advanced analysis and composition.

Inclusive co-teaching structures will ensure multilingual learners and students with disabilities have access to grade-level texts with appropriate scaffolds embedded within the classroom environment.

Facility Implications

To support this instructional model, the facility must include:

- Classrooms sized to accommodate co-teaching models
- Adjacent small-group rooms within grade-level clusters for intervention and progress monitoring
- Dedicated literacy intervention spaces
- Flexible collaboration areas to support discourse and writing workshops
- Library/media spaces that support independent reading, research, and small-group instruction

Purpose-built spaces will allow literacy instruction to be delivered with fidelity and flexibility across PK–8.

Mathematics

Current Mathematics

Our math curriculum and instructional practices emphasize conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and real-world application. Over the 2024–2025 and 2025–2026 school years, we are implementing the Illustrative Math (IM) curriculum in grades K–5 through a phased approach. This year, IM is being used districtwide in grades 3–5, while some K–2 classrooms are early adopters and others continue with the SPS-developed curriculum. By 2025–2026, all K–2 classrooms will implement IM.

The IM curriculum is designed to support students' understanding and application of mathematics, creating a coherent and connected learning experience from K through 8. In the middle grades, IM ensures a strong and seamless transition from the elementary program, maintaining continuity in mathematical thinking and practice.

Proposed Mathematics

In the new PK–8 facility, mathematics instruction will be delivered through a fully implemented K–8 Illustrative Mathematics framework, supported by collaborative planning and vertically aligned professional learning.

At the elementary level, instruction will emphasize:

- Mathematical discourse and reasoning
- Hands-on problem-solving
- Concrete-to-abstract conceptual development
- Targeted small-group intervention based on formative data

In middle grades, the model will prioritize:

- Collaborative problem-solving
- Justification and critique of reasoning
- Application of mathematics to real-world and interdisciplinary contexts
- Acceleration pathways that maintain conceptual integrity

The unified PK–8 model will strengthen vertical alignment, allowing educators to collaborate across grade spans and ensure smooth progression from foundational numeracy to advanced middle-grade mathematical reasoning.

Inclusive co-teaching practices will ensure multilingual learners and students with disabilities engage in grade-level problem-solving with embedded scaffolds and strategic supports.

Facility Implications

To support this instructional model, the facility must include:

- Classrooms designed for collaborative learning and small-group problem-solving
- Adjacent intervention spaces within grade-level clusters
- Flexible furniture arrangements to support math discourse
- Shared planning spaces to facilitate vertical team collaboration
- Dedicated STEM/Engineering labs to support applied mathematics integration

Purpose-built instructional spaces will allow mathematics instruction to move beyond procedural practice and fully support discourse-based, problem-centered learning.

Science, Technology, and Engineering

We believe that strong science education nurtures a child’s curiosity about the world while developing critical inquiry and problem-solving skills essential for college and career readiness. On any given day, students might be designing experiments about matter, constructing bridges, or creating websites focused on energy conservation.

Current Science, Technology, and Engineering

Since 2016, we have partnered with a team from Boston University to develop science units for grades K–5, all built around anchoring phenomena that help students make sense of key scientific

concepts. In grades 6–8, the STEMscopes curriculum was adopted beginning in 2019 to continue building a rigorous, hands-on science experience.

Proposed Science, Technology, and Engineering

Within the unified PK–8 model at the new school building, science instruction will build upon this strong foundation and expand opportunities for applied, interdisciplinary, and lab-based learning.

At the elementary level, science will continue to emphasize:

- Phenomena-based inquiry
- Hands-on investigation
- Engineering design challenges
- Scientific discourse and evidence-based reasoning

At the middle grades level, the model will deepen:

- Laboratory-based experimentation
- Data analysis and modeling
- Integration of science and engineering practices
- Cross-curricular connections with mathematics and STEM

The unified PK–8 structure will strengthen vertical alignment across science domains, ensuring that foundational inquiry skills in elementary grades intentionally build toward advanced analytical and experimental practices in middle grades.

Science instruction will also integrate with the expanded STEM/Engineering program to provide students with authentic design, testing, and revision cycles.

Inclusive co-teaching practices will ensure multilingual learners and students with disabilities engage fully in grade-level scientific investigation with embedded supports.

Facility Implications

To support this instructional model, the facility must include:

- Dedicated science labs for grades 6–8 with appropriate safety features and equipment
- Flexible elementary science spaces designed for hands-on investigation
- Integrated STEM/Engineering lab spaces
- Adequate storage for materials and experimental equipment
- Collaboration areas for project-based and interdisciplinary work

Purpose-built science and STEM spaces are essential to support a robust, inquiry-driven curriculum aligned to district vision and state standards.

Social Studies

We believe the purpose of Social Studies is to help students develop into effective, informed, and engaged citizens of local, national, and global communities. Our curriculum promotes values of compassion, empathy, curiosity, perspective taking, and respect for human differences.

Current Social Studies

We strive to provide knowledge & skills for students to investigate interests and critically analyze information. Currently, we use an educator-developed, standards-based curriculum. We are also in the process of implementing the Investigating History Social Studies curriculum.

Proposed Social Studies

Within the unified PK–8 model at the new school building, Social Studies instruction will be delivered through a vertically aligned framework that emphasizes inquiry, civic engagement, and interdisciplinary connections.

At the elementary level, students will engage in inquiry-based units that build foundational understanding of community, geography, and historical thinking skills.

At the middle grades level, instruction will deepen students' ability to analyze primary sources, evaluate multiple perspectives, engage in civil discourse, and connect historical study to contemporary civic issues.

Across PK–8, Social Studies will incorporate:

- Structured academic discussion and debate
- Project-based and research-driven learning
- Integration with literacy instruction
- Opportunities for student voice and public presentation

The unified PK–8 model will support vertical collaboration among educators to ensure that civic reasoning, historical analysis, and critical thinking skills develop intentionally over time.

World Languages

Current World Languages

The World Language Department recognizes research showing that students who learn another language achieve higher academic performance, gain cognitive benefits, and develop a more positive attitude toward the language and its speakers. Middle school Spanish instruction was introduced in the 2012–2013 school year.

Proposed World Languages

Spanish instruction in the middle grades should have a dedicated classroom to preserve scheduling flexibility and support future program growth. A designated space would allow the school to offer Spanish as a special or elective if schedules change, align with common practices across other SPS schools, and promote instructional consistency and program development.

Within the unified PK–8 model at the new school building, middle grades Spanish instruction will continue with a dedicated classroom to ensure program continuity and scheduling flexibility.

The district will also explore gradually introducing world language exposure at the elementary level. With a robust specialist rotation in place, there is an opportunity to pilot developmentally appropriate Spanish offerings. Elementary world language exposure, if implemented, would focus on:

- Foundational vocabulary and oral language development
- Cultural awareness and appreciation
- Integration with literacy and social studies content

A unified PK–8 model would support intentional vertical alignment, creating a coherent pathway from early exposure to proficiency in the middle grades.

Facility Implications

To support this model, the facility should include:

- A dedicated middle-grade Spanish classroom
- Flexible specialist spaces that could accommodate future elementary world language programming
- Technology infrastructure to support language acquisition

This approach preserves current program integrity while allowing for thoughtful and phased expansion aligned with district priorities and staffing capacity.

Academic Support Programming Spaces (e.g., EL academic coaches, etc.)

Social Emotional Learning & Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

Somerville Public Schools supports students' social and emotional development through a districtwide Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework. Social-emotional learning (SEL) is delivered through explicit instruction, embedded classroom practices, and tiered interventions designed to foster healthy identity development, emotional regulation, empathy, responsible decision-making, and positive relationships.

Current Social Emotional Learning & Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

The district follows a three-tiered model:

Tier 1 (All Students): Universal SEL instruction and positive school climate practices are delivered through Second Step (PK–8), PBIS, restorative community circles, responsive classroom practices (in select schools), and culturally responsive classroom management.

Tier 2 (Some Students)

Targeted small-group or short-term individual interventions are initiated through Student Support Teams.

Tier 3 (Few Students)

Intensive individualized supports include behavior intervention planning, counseling services, wraparound supports, and collaboration with community agencies.

The district is in its second year of full implementation of the Second Step curriculum, which includes 20 lessons for K–5 and 26 lessons for Grades 6–8. A districtwide MTSS Specialist role was introduced in 2025–2026 to strengthen system coherence, data tracking, and alignment among general education, special education, and mental health services. SPS also continues its partnership with Boston Children’s Hospital to develop a consistent and aligned MTSS model across the district.

Proposed Social Emotional Learning & Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

Within the unified PK–8 model at the new school building, the SEL and MTSS framework will operate as a unified, vertically aligned system designed to ensure:

- Consistent implementation of Tier 1 SEL instruction across grade spans
- Stronger data-driven decision-making
- Earlier identification of behavioral and emotional needs
- Embedded co-teaching and inclusive practices
- Clear transition supports between elementary and middle grades

The unified PK–8 structure will allow for:

- Shared professional learning for deans, counselors, social workers, and SEL specialists
- Coordinated behavioral expectations across grade spans
- Consistent restorative practices
- Smoother student transitions within a single school community

The MTSS Specialist will continue to collaborate with school leaders and instructional staff to ensure interventions are systematic, monitored, and aligned to academic supports.

Coaching structures will support Tier 1 implementation by strengthening classroom management, culturally responsive instruction, and SEL integration within academic content areas.

Facility Implications

To support an effective SEL and MTSS system, the facility must include:

- Confidential counseling offices for individual and small-group support
- Dedicated Student Support Team meeting spaces
- Proximity between counselors, deans, and administrators within grade-level zones
- Flexible spaces for restorative circles and mediation
- Family engagement space to support wraparound services
- Dedicated workspace for instructional coaches near classrooms

Purpose-built student support spaces are essential to ensure privacy, dignity, and effective delivery of services within a unified PK–8 model.

Coaches

Current Coaches

SPS employs early education coaches for PK and K, coaches in ELA and math for grades 1–5, and four part-time, districtwide middle grades coaches across core academic areas (social studies, science, math, and ELA). As the district moves toward a model that includes at least two full-time coaches dedicated to Winter Hill, alongside part-time coaches who split their time between teaching and coaching, it is critical to provide dedicated office and desk space for instructional coaches near classrooms.

Proximity to classrooms enables effective in-the-moment coaching, collaborative planning, confidentiality, and smooth transitions between instructional roles. Purposefully designed, classroom-adjacent coach workspaces provide the infrastructure needed to sustain a coherent, scalable district coaching model and maximize the impact of instructional support on teaching and learning.

Proposed Coaches

Multilingual Education

Our Multilingual Education strategy focuses on the implementation of equitable and effective programming and services for multilingual learners and their families in Somerville from initial identification through reclassification.

Current Multilingual Education

The Sheltered English Immersion Program (SEI–1) serves immigrant newcomer students who are beginning to learn English. It is designed to address their unique cultural and linguistic needs and is intended as a temporary program, with students transitioning as their English proficiency develops.

The Sheltered English Immersion General Education Program (SEI–Gen Ed) supports students at transitional levels of English proficiency, fully integrating them with fluent English-speaking peers while providing ESL instruction in an inclusive setting.

The Sheltered English Immersion Program Special Education (SEI–Special Ed) is for students in a substantially separate classroom alongside English-fluent peers, with placement determined by a student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) have experienced gaps in schooling and, in grades 2–8, are placed in SEI–1 classrooms. At the high school level, some participate in the Goal Program through the adult education department, typically earning an Adult High School diploma from the City of Somerville.

Bilingual programs include the Unidos K–8 Dual Language Program and the Sonrisa Prekindergarten Program, both housed at the East Somerville Community School, with Sonrisa serving four-year-old students from Spanish-speaking families.

Proposed

See above, *Proposed teaching and learning overview* section.

Student Guidance and Support Services

(e.g., social support, METCO, after school programs, anti-bullying programs, etc.)

Current Student Guidance and Support Services

The Student Services Department in Somerville Public Schools is committed to supporting the social, emotional, and academic well-being of all students. Across the district, each school is staffed with embedded counselor educators and school-based social workers who work directly with students and families to ensure access to guidance, support, and resources that promote healthy development and successful learning.

At Somerville High School, every student is assigned a school counselor who partners with them throughout their high school experience and helps them plan for life after graduation. The School Counseling Department works closely with students and families to support academic progress, social-emotional growth, and postsecondary planning. Through a comprehensive, preventative, and

developmentally appropriate school counseling program, the department helps students build the skills and confidence needed for college, career, and other postsecondary pathways.

The district also collaborates with community-based providers to expand access to services that support student wellness and address a range of needs. These partnerships strengthen the network of care available to students and ensure families can connect with appropriate supports when needed.

A key component of the district's commitment to safe and supportive school environments is the Somerville Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Developed over nine months with input from parents, educators, administrators, community partners, and experts from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the plan outlines the district's comprehensive approach to preventing and responding to bullying. Since its submission to the state in December 2010, the district has continued to implement the plan through ongoing training and information for students, families, and staff on strategies to reduce bullying and increase awareness of available resources and supports.

Together, these efforts reflect the district's commitment to ensuring that every student is supported, safe, and prepared to thrive both in school and beyond.

School Counselors

Liz

Each school in the District has embedded school-based Counselor Educators and School-based social workers to support the social, emotional wellness of our students. We also partner with community-based providers to support our students.

The Counselor Educators at our PK-8 schools include:

Ryan Healy, Argenziano School
Mercia Pianes, (bilingual), Argenziano School
Kate Melillo, Brown School
Jacqueline McCarthy, Capuano Early Childhood Center
Carlie Calioro, East Somerville Community School
Rebekah Prescott, East Somerville Community School
Eugenio Suazo, East Somerville Community School
Maureen Cullinane, East Somerville Community School
Catricia Morris, West Somerville Community School
Tara Stead, Winter Hill Community Innovation School
Jessica Gutierrez, (bilingual), Winter Hill Community Innovation School
Karina Ribeiro, (bilingual), Winter Hill Community Innovation School

The School-based Social Workers at our PK-8 schools include:

Lisa Stahl, Argenziano
Julie Schmidt, Brown School
Nadia Kury, Capuano Early Childhood Center
Nora Sheehan, East Somerville Community School
Egla Malaj, Healey School
Molly Sherry, Kennedy School

Lucia De Rosa, Next Wave / Full Circle
Tori Bauer, Somerville High School
Stephanie Joseph, West Somerville Community School
Emily Thies, Winter Hill Community Innovation School

The Counselors at Next Wave / Full Circle include:

Dan McCaul, Counselor
Nikki Artavia, Adjustment Counselor

College and Career Readiness Counseling:

All Somerville High students are assigned to a school counselor. The School Counseling Department team members support students and families as students progress through high school and beyond. The mission of College and Career Readiness Counseling is to facilitate the academic, personal/social, and career development for all students through a School Counseling Program that is comprehensive, preventative, and developmentally appropriate.

Kelly Albrecht, Highland Community Bilingual School Counselor
Melanie Banks, Beacon Community School Counselor
Ashley Costa, Bilingual Adjustment Counselor
Lindsey Dobbins, School Counseling Department Chair
Anne Eden, Elm Community Multilingual School Counselor
Anne Irwin, General Education Adjustment Counselor
Melanie Kessler, Director of College & Career Readiness
Justin LaBerge, Beacon Community School Counselor
Elly Mullins, Rise Program Coordinator/School Adjustment Counselor
Alyssa O'Donnell, General Education Adjustment Counselor
Julie Phylis, Registrar & Data Supervisor
Jeremy Rischall, Highland Community School Counselor
Natalia Ruiz Toro, Broadway Community Bilingual School Counselor
Kayla Schutte, College & Career Counselor

Preventing Bullying, Cyberbullying and Retaliation Plan

The Somerville Public Schools (SPS) Bullying Prevention Plan was created over a period of nine months and was informed by comments from parents/guardians and community members, teachers, administrators, community partners and other experts from the PK-12 Student Support Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. SPS submitted its plan for addressing all components of the Massachusetts Anti-Bullying legislation on December 9, 2010.

Following approval of the Plan by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the District began implementing the plan by providing training and information to students, families and staff on:(a) ways they can reduce incidents of bullying, and (b) resources and services available to them.

Out of School Time Programming

Student learning and enrichment extend beyond the school day through programs offered after school and during school vacations. SPS is committed to providing high-quality out-of-school-time (OST) opportunities to all students, both through district-run programs, such as the Community Schools Afterschool Program, and in partnership with community organizations.

The goal of these OST initiatives is to ensure equitable access to enrichment, academic support, and engaging activities outside of typical school hours. These programs are designed to complement the classroom experience, giving students the chance to explore their interests, receive additional academic support, and participate in community-building activities. Somerville students have a variety of opportunities to engage with OST programs, including academic and music instruction, as well as hands-on and creative activities in dynamic learning spaces.

After School Programming

Current After School Programming

Somerville Public Schools offers a wide range of after-school and out-of-school programs that engage students academically, socially, and creatively. Elementary students can join SPS Community Schools, a full-time, fee-based program at each school, where they explore curriculum-aligned enrichment like rock climbing, LEGOs, gardening, and martial arts. Middle and upper elementary students can participate in El Sistema Somerville, a full-time music program offering intensive instruction in strings, winds, and brass through rehearsals, private lessons, and chamber music.

Apollo After School at the Argenziano and Kennedy Schools provides project-based learning while supporting social-emotional growth and positive relationships. Free referral programs include Becoming A Man (BAM) and Working on Womanhood (WOW) for social-emotional development, Enroot for immigrant high school students, and Future Lab by Knovva Academy for hands-on, curriculum-aligned enrichment.

Students can also join weekly clubs led by instructors or community partners, and vacation programs provide full-day academic and enrichment opportunities. Summer offerings include SPS Adventure for rising K–6 students, open-enrollment programs in Career and Technical Education, robotics, music, The Calculus Project, and SHS orientation, along with referral-based programs targeting academic growth.

Together, these programs create inclusive, engaging spaces where students extend learning, explore new interests, build skills in leadership and teamwork, and grow socially, emotionally, and academically beyond the school day.

Proposed After School Programming

DUE

Out-of-School Time & Extended Learning

Current Out-of-School Time & Extended Learning

Somerville Public Schools offers extended learning opportunities through a mix of district-operated Community Schools programming, vendor partnerships, enrichment clubs, referral-based programs, and summer offerings. These programs address academic, social-emotional, enrichment, and childcare needs for students across PK–8 and high school.

Programming is delivered across multiple buildings with differing space configurations, which can limit consistency in access, scheduling flexibility, and alignment with the instructional day.

Proposed Out-of-School Time & Extended Learning

The new school building at Sycamore presents an opportunity to design an embedded and integrated extended learning system aligned with the school's instructional vision.

Rather than operating as a separate afterschool structure, the proposed model will:

- Integrate extended learning with project-based instructional themes
- Expand enrichment aligned to STEM, theater, music, and applied learning
- Provide structured academic support connected to the IM, ELA, and science curricula
- Maintain core Community Schools programming to support families
- Create greater autonomy at the building level to design offerings responsive to student interest and community needs

The Innovation School model enables the consolidated building to strategically align budget, staffing, and programming decisions, creating expanded enrichment pathways—particularly in STEM and applied learning—while maintaining access to childcare and referral-based supports.

This model strengthens continuity across elementary and middle grades, allowing students to build and deepen their interests over time rather than participating in disconnected offerings.

Facility Implications

To support a robust and integrated extended learning model, the facility must include:

- Dedicated afterschool program space
- Secure and flexible entry/exit zones for extended day programming
- Shared access to STEM labs, theater space, and specialist classrooms
- Storage for enrichment materials and equipment
- Community-use space that supports family engagement and evening programming

Purpose-built shared spaces are essential to ensure that extended learning is not an add-on, but an integrated extension of the school's instructional vision.

6 | TEACHER PLANNING

Current Teaching Plan: Common Planning Time

During the 2024–2025 school year, we initiated a significant shift in practice by implementing Common Planning Time (CPT) for educators in grades PK–8. The purpose of CPT is to establish consistent, structured time within contractual hours (through early release Wednesdays) for planning and collaboration across grades, departments, and schools. This dedicated time is designed to improve lesson quality, instructional effectiveness, co-teaching practices, and student achievement. Students are dismissed every Wednesday at 1:00 p.m. to provide regular opportunities for educator collaboration.

Common Planning Time includes structured activities such as analyzing student work using shared protocols; previewing upcoming units and planning instructional adjustments; collaborating around students who require additional support or extension; planning grade-level initiatives connected to student learning; coordinating co-teaching; reviewing student achievement and behavioral data; and reflecting on districtwide priorities, including restorative practices, student discourse, and new curriculum implementation.

Both school-based and district-based CPT leaders facilitate these sessions, supported by a range of wraparound structures. Wednesday afternoons are organized into four types of experiences for educators: individual planning sessions totaling 12 sessions at 1.75 hours each; school-based team CPT sessions totaling 10 sessions at 1.5 hours each, during which principals may hold five 30-minute rotating grade-level meetings over the course of the year; cross-district team CPT sessions totaling 10 sessions at 1.25 hours each; and four districtwide professional development sessions at 1.5 hours each, totaling six hours of district PD.

Proposed Teaching Plan

See above, *Proposed teaching and learning overview* section.
CRHIS- see format:

7 | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Current Professional Development

All SEU Unit A Educators are required to complete a comprehensive professional development program that includes 6 hours of choice-based learning from the SPS Professional Development Catalog, 12 hours of school-based professional development, 6 hours of department-based professional development, and 6 hours of embedded professional learning aligned with district priorities.

SEU Unit C Paraprofessionals are required to complete 6 hours of choice-based professional development from the SPS PD Catalog, school- or department-based sessions offered on Wednesday afternoons, or other pre-approved professional learning activities, in addition to 6 hours of embedded professional development aligned with district priorities.

Other school staff and SPS partners are encouraged to participate in professional development opportunities as space allows, reinforcing a districtwide culture of inclusive, collaborative learning and continuous growth.

A space that fits all staff for professional development purposes is crucial.

Proposed Professional Development

- **DUE:** Describe the proposed changes to professional development and associated rationale or provide a statement that no changes are proposed (include retraining and/or additional certifications of staff who will be changing grade levels or disciplines as a result of proposed changes and the associated timeline).

8 | PRE-KINDERGARTEN

(e.g., Special Education only, tuition programs, locations, full day, half day, if applicable)

Somerville Public Schools offers a variety of tuition-free preschool programs to meet the needs of all students: Pre-Kindergarten, Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECIP), and AIM (Adapt, Include, Motivate).

Current Pre-Kindergarten

The Pre-Kindergarten program in Somerville Public Schools serves four-year-old children in the year before kindergarten. The school day runs from 8:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. and includes universal free breakfast and lunch for all students. Enrollment is determined through a lottery system, with classrooms located throughout the city at the Michael E. Capuano Early Childhood Center, Albert F. Argenziano School, Arthur D. Healey School, East Somerville Community School, John F. Kennedy School, West Somerville Neighborhood School, and Winter Hill Community Innovation School.

The Sonrisa program, a bilingual prekindergarten classroom at East Somerville Community School, serves four-year-old students from Spanish-speaking families. Using an 80/20 instructional model, children receive 80% of their instruction in Spanish to build foundational literacy and 20% in English. Students in the program have the opportunity to affirm their cultural heritage while developing age-appropriate literacy and language skills in both Spanish and English.

The Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECIP) is an inclusive, multi-sensory program designed for children ages three to five who have been identified as needing specially designed instruction due to a disability. ECIP classrooms integrate peer partners from the community to support inclusive learning, providing a rich, language-based, and developmentally appropriate curriculum that benefits students with and without disabilities. Classrooms are located at the Capuano Early Childhood Center, and peers considered for admission must be three years old and screened.

The Adapt, Include, Motivate (AIM) classrooms at the Capuano Early Childhood Center serve students on the autism spectrum who require specialized instruction. The program supports unique needs in communication, social interaction, sensory experiences, and adapting to routines. Students receive individualized instruction in substantially separate classrooms, with opportunities to join general education when appropriate. A team of specialists—including a BCBA, occupational therapist, speech and language pathologist, and counselor—guides instruction using Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) strategies, multi-sensory approaches, and total communication. Teaching occurs in one-on-one, small group, and large group settings, with a focus on skill generalization and independence.

Additionally, Somerville Family Learning Collaborative supports families across the district with a strong focus on early childhood. For our youngest learners, the Collaborative offers parent support groups, multilingual and specialized playgroups, early literacy home visits, and programs to ease transitions to kindergarten. These services help families build skills, confidence, and connections that set children up for success from the very start. Beyond early childhood, the Collaborative also provides resources for all SPS families, including enrollment support, multilingual services, basic

needs and housing assistance, school-based liaisons, volunteer opportunities, and family workshops and events. Together, these programs create a network of support that strengthens both children and families across the Somerville Public Schools community.

Proposed Pre-Kindergarten

DUE

The Somerville Family Learning Collaborative is addressing significant access and service challenges for families, especially those with the highest needs. The current location at 167 Holland St. is difficult to reach, often requiring long walks or multiple bus transfers, which discourages families from returning. The facility also lacks a dedicated welcome or waiting area, and families often have to wait in hallways. Limited storage for essential items like diapers, food, or clothing further prevents the Collaborative from functioning as a fully supportive resource.

The solution is a new Family Welcome Center within the new school building, centrally located to serve the entire city. This multilingual, one-stop hub creates a community anchor for SPS families, providing support from early childhood through graduation. The center houses a variety of SFLC programs and services, including the Enrollment Office for in-person registration support, health services, and language testing; Early Childhood Family Supports such as playgroups, parent support groups, and the Parent Child+ home visiting program; and the Office of Basic Needs and Housing Support Services, which includes the SFLC clothing and basic needs pantry. This new space is designed to be welcoming, accessible, and fully equipped to meet families' educational, social, and practical needs.

See also, *Proposed teaching and learning* overview section above.

9 | KINDERGARTEN

(e.g., full day, half day, locations, if applicable)

Kindergarten teaching and learning is full-day and grounded in the Common Core Standards, the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and the curricular approaches adopted by Somerville Public Schools.

Current Kindergarten

Academic standards are designed to ensure that all students, regardless of their starting point, are prepared for success in the next grade level, in college, and in their future careers. Clearly defined standards help families and educators work in partnership to support student achievement. Some students may require additional support to meet grade-level expectations, while others benefit from more complex and enriched learning experiences that extend beyond the standard. Teachers design daily instruction based on these standards, individual student needs, and the unique strengths of their school community.

In English Language Arts, Kindergarten students use FUNdations for phonics and Heggerty for phonological awareness, and the district is in the process of implementing the Wit & Wisdom curriculum. Students' reading progress is monitored using the DIBELS assessment to ensure timely support and continued growth.

In Reading, students develop early literacy skills, including print concepts, phonics, decoding, and word recognition. They engage with texts by identifying characters, settings, and story events, retelling stories, recalling key facts in nonfiction, and exploring poetry. Students practice asking questions, making connections, visualizing, and noticing descriptive language, while classroom discussions build respectful listening, speaking, and collaborative skills.

In Writing, students practice expressing ideas daily through talking, drawing, and writing. They learn to write a title, a complete sentence, and connected sentences with a beginning, middle, and end. Instruction emphasizes phonetic spelling, high-frequency words, proper letter formation, spacing, and conventions. Programs like Thinking, Drawing, Writing and Handwriting Without Tears support translating thoughts into written language and developing strong handwriting skills.

In Mathematics, students engage with the Illustrative Mathematics curriculum, which is implemented districtwide in grades K–8. Kindergarten students learn to count objects accurately, compare groups and written numbers, and determine which quantities are greater. They act out and represent addition and subtraction word problems, build fluency within five, and solve problems within ten. Students also identify and name shapes regardless of orientation or size and begin developing a strong conceptual understanding of number relationships and operations.

In Science, Kindergarten students explore foundational concepts through hands-on investigation. They learn how pushes and pulls affect motion, how sunlight warms materials, and how materials can change between solid and liquid depending on temperature. They study how plants and animals grow and change over time, what living things need to survive, and how plants make their own food using light. Students observe patterns in weather, learn how people prepare for different weather conditions,

examine how plants and animals can change their environments, and consider ways individuals can reduce their use of natural resources.

In Social Studies, students develop an understanding of community, citizenship, and respect. They learn appropriate school behaviors and demonstrate respect for peers, teachers, community helpers, property, and national symbols. They explore cultural diversity within their community, including family customs and celebrations, and practice handling disagreements in constructive ways. Students create and describe simple maps using location words, learn about the roles of community helpers and various occupations, understand basic uses of money, and study national holidays and important United States symbols.

Social-emotional development is integrated throughout Kindergarten. Using the evidence-based Second Step curriculum, students build self-regulation, empathy, problem-solving, and a sense of belonging. Lessons, led by teachers with counselor support, focus on listening, attention, following directions, and managing emotions. Students practice empathy, calm strategies, and respectful conflict resolution, laying the foundation for long-term academic and social-emotional success.

Somerville Public Schools provides each student with 40 minutes per week of instruction in General Music, Library/Media, Visual Art, Theater and Physical Education. The specialists at each school are available to give you more detailed information about specific skills addressed.

Proposed Kindergarten

See above, *Proposed teaching and learning* overview section.

10 | LUNCH PROGRAMS

(e.g., number of servings, District kitchen, full-service kitchens, warming kitchens, etc.)

Somerville Public Schools’ Food and Nutrition Services Program is committed to providing free, nutritious, and culturally responsive meals to every student, while operating fully within all federal and state regulations. Our mission is to nourish every student with high-quality, inclusive meals served in welcoming school environments that foster healthy habits and support academic success.

Current Lunch Programs

During the 2024–2025 school year, the department served roughly 900,000 meals across 11 cafeterias, including 260,000 breakfasts and 650,000 lunches, without service disruptions. A key milestone was the opening of the Argenziano production kitchen, allowing expanded scratch cooking and the return of many student-favorite menu items.

Previously, the district’s primary production kitchen was at Winter Hill, preparing meals for nearly 5,000 students daily and over 30,000 meals each summer for school programs and community partners. Over time, Winter Hill space was repurposed for educational programs like AIM, forcing Food and Nutrition Services staff to operate out of converted basement spaces.

Today, Winter Hill and Brown function as satellite kitchens, with meals prepared at ESCS and Argenziano and transported daily. Winter Hill serves about 300 lunches daily (80% participation) and Brown serves about 150 (63% participation). Transitioning either to full production would require major capital upgrades, highlighting the need for strong centralized production capacity.

While the Argenziano kitchen represents progress, it is not large enough for long-term district-wide demand. A new, fully equipped production kitchen is essential to ensure continuity, efficiency, and compliance, with commercial-grade equipment, walk-in refrigeration, proper ventilation and fire suppression, and a workflow designed to sustain high-quality meals for students.

The current Winter Hill has 5 lunch waves of two grades each.

Recess & Lunch Master	Monday / Tuesday / Thursday / Friday		Wednesday		1/2 Day Wednesdays (first day, 11/26, 12/23, last day)	
	Recess	Lunch	Recess	Lunch	Recess	Lunch
PK / K	10:45 - 11:05	11:05 - 11:25	10:45 - 11:00	11:00 - 11:15	10:00 - 10:20	10:20 - 10:40
Grades 1 / 2	11:05 - 11:25	11:25 - 11:40	11:05 - 11:25	11:25 - 11:40	10:30 - 10:45	10:45 - 11:05
Grades 3	11:40 - 12:00	12:00 - 12:15	11:35 - 11:50	11:50 - 12:05	10:50 - 11:05	11:05 - 11:20
Grade 4	11:40 - 12:00	12:00 - 12:15	11:40 - 11:55	11:55 - 12:15	10:40 - 11:05	11:05 - 11:20
Grades 7 / 8	12:05 - 12:20	12:20 - 12:35	12:40 - 12:55	12:25 - 12:40	(Cross Street)	11:25 - 11:40
Grades 5 / 6	12:30 - 12:45	12:45 - 1:00	12:25 - 12:40	12:40 - 12:55	11:30 - 11:45	11:45 - 12:00

Proposed Lunch Programs

5 lunch waves of two-grades each is expected to continue, but with a larger enrollment and more students per wave. The intent, however, is to size the cafeteria for half the enrollment per MSBA space summary default. This would be for the sake of long-term flexibility, larger audiences or gatherings as a cafetorium, multipurpose use and to support community programs that overlap the school day.

The district must include a fully equipped, commercial-grade production kitchen in the design of the new school building. This kitchen will function as a central hub for food production, capable of preparing and distributing large volumes of high-quality meals in full compliance with USDA National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and Massachusetts DESE requirements.

The production kitchen must be designed to support high-capacity scratch and batch cooking, bulk preparation, rapid cooling, safe holding, and efficient distribution. It should accommodate commercial-grade equipment and infrastructure, including walk-in refrigerators and freezers with sufficient cubic footage for multi-day storage, high-capacity combi ovens, tilt skillets, steamers, and kettles, as well as blast chilling capability to support cook-chill production models. The kitchen must also provide dedicated dry storage for palletized deliveries, separate receiving and loading access for vendor shipments, properly engineered exhaust hoods and make-up air systems, NFPA-compliant fire suppression systems, and adequate floor drainage, trench drains, and washable surfaces to meet sanitation standards.

The overall layout must prioritize operational efficiency, food safety, labor productivity, and regulatory compliance. The facility should meet current needs while allowing flexibility for future enrollment growth and expanded program offerings, including summer feeding, after-school programs, and emergency meal service operations. Without a full-scale production kitchen, the district's ability to safely and cost-effectively produce meals in alignment with federal reimbursement standards would be severely constrained.

11 | TECHNOLOGY INSTRUCTION POLICIES AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

(e.g., labs, in classroom, Media Center, required infrastructure, etc.)

Technology is a critical component in advancing educational goals in today's connected world. It enables students to access information, analyze data, synthesize ideas, and express their thinking creatively. Technology brings the world into the classroom, enriching instructional approaches to meet the needs of diverse learning styles, while also serving as a tool to increase efficiency in classroom management and student assessment.

Current Technology Instruction Policies and Program Requirements

Somerville Public Schools provides a range of hardware and software to support teaching, learning, and administration. Chromebooks are issued to every student from grade 3 onward, supporting both in-class and at-home learning. The HP Chromebook 11, equipped with Chrome OS and an 11-inch HD LED anti-glare display, accelerates the district's movement toward cloud-based applications. The Aspen Information System offers robust administrative functionality for tracking student and staff information and generating reports. The Finalsite MessagesXR platform allows administrators to record, schedule, and send personalized voice messages to thousands of students, families, and staff in minutes.

Classroom workstations, including HP Elite and Pro models or Lenovo Think series, are powered by the latest Intel® processors, ensuring students and staff have the performance needed for modern learning. Interactive projectors and displays, such as Epson laser projectors with finger-touch capability or large TouchView LCD touchscreens, transform traditional wall space into a collaborative, hands-on digital workspace. These tools support multimedia engagement and enable students to interact directly with lessons, fostering collaboration and accommodating multiple learning modalities.

Proposed Technology Instruction Policies and Program Requirements

Proposed enhancements to technology align with the district's overall vision for teaching and learning, providing the infrastructure to support innovation, student engagement, and instructional excellence across all grade levels.

12 | MEDIA CENTER / LIBRARY

The Library Media Department is central to fostering information-literate students who can locate, evaluate, and effectively use information across a range of formats, including text, audiovisual materials, digital resources, and web-based content. Information literacy is most impactful when integrated directly into subject-specific activities, such as research projects, presentations, and other classroom assignments, allowing students to apply skills in meaningful, authentic contexts.

Current Media Center / Library

In addition to instruction, the Library Media Department provides dedicated spaces and resources that support all Somerville students in becoming future-ready members of the community. Each year, students districtwide participate in the Somerville Hour of Code, a hands-on, collaborative experience that engages learners in coding, computational thinking, and digital literacy while reinforcing critical thinking, creativity, and technological fluency.

Proposed Media Center / Library

The media center will be designed with separate zones for elementary and middle grades, reflecting the school's overall structure and supporting age-appropriate content, resources, and furnishings. Within the media center, students will also have access to shared activity and maker spaces, including light video and audio recording, stop-frame animation, and a computer lab, fostering creativity, collaboration, and hands-on learning.

To accommodate the scheduling of specials, where each class participates once per week, the media center will provide the equivalent of two teaching stations. This ensures that instruction can occur efficiently within the 30-period weekly cycle, meeting the needs of a classroom count that exceeds thirty students.

See above, Proposed teaching and learning overview section.

13 | VISUAL ARTS PROGRAMS

(e.g., in-classroom, specialized area, etc.)

Somerville Public Schools offers a rich and comprehensive visual arts program designed to support both student learning and the integration of the arts into the broader curriculum and social-emotional development. Research demonstrates that participation in visual arts fosters visual awareness, creative problem-solving, intellectual growth, and self-expression.

Current Visual Arts Program

The district's Visual Arts Department is staffed with 13 highly qualified, certified Art Educators who serve the diverse SPS community. The curriculum is grounded in state standards for Visual Arts instruction across grades K–12 and provides a sequential, balanced program that encourages students to explore both real and imagined worlds as part of their educational growth. Instruction emphasizes creative and aesthetic learning, motivating students to engage their imagination, develop technical skills, and express themselves through a variety of media. Exposure to diverse media and global cultures further supports creative discovery and the development of artistic voice.

Assessment is individualized and reflective of each student's stage of growth and development in the Visual Arts. The program's sequential and cumulative structure ensures that students build skills over time, make aesthetic judgments about their own work and the work of others, and develop a foundation for future opportunities and careers in the arts.

Somerville's vibrant arts community, which has the highest number of artists per capita outside New York City, provides unique opportunities for collaboration. The SPS Visual Arts Department partners with local artists, arts organizations, and area colleges and universities to enrich student learning and connect classroom instruction to real-world artistic practice.

Proposed Visual Arts Program

See above, Proposed teaching and learning overview section.

14 | PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAMS

(e.g., music, dance, drama theater, in-classroom, specialized area)

The mission of the Somerville Public Schools Music Arts program is to inspire and engage every student in active music-making through a sequential and creative curriculum that nurtures the human spirit and promotes cultural understanding.

Current Performing Arts Programs

Music instruction in SPS is designed to provide students with multiple avenues for participation and growth. Free instrument instruction is offered in applicable grades, allowing students to explore musical skills at no cost. Students in grades 6–8 have the opportunity to join city-wide music ensembles by invitation, including the All City Middle School Chorus, Band, and Orchestra, fostering collaboration and high-level performance experiences.

Beyond the school day, the district offers the El Sistema After-School Music Program, which serves students from elementary through middle grades, with the East Somerville Community School hosting the innovative strings program. Summer programming further expands musical opportunities, with a two-week orchestra program that includes chamber music, improvisation, chorus, technique, music theory, and full orchestra rehearsals for woodwind, brass, and string instruments. Students showcase their learning through a performance for families and the community at the conclusion of the program.

The Arts offerings extend into theatre as well. Middle school students have the chance to participate in the All-City Middle School Musical, an inclusive production supported by the Highlander Theatre Company, with rehearsals and performances held at the Centennial Auditorium at Somerville High School. At Winter Hill Community Innovation School, theatre is offered to all students as a fifth specialist class, where learners explore movement, character development, story creation, and writing, providing a hands-on, collaborative, and expressive arts experience that complements the broader curriculum.

Proposed Performing Arts Programs

See above, Proposed teaching and learning overview section.

15 | PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Somerville Public Schools Health and Physical Education Department provides students with a 21st-century approach to health and physical education, offering contemporary concepts and rich, hands-on experiences in a collaborative and supportive environment.

Current Physical Education Programs

The district implements the SPARK curriculum for physical health programming, a research-based framework dedicated to promoting lifelong wellness. SPARK supports teachers of Pre-K through 12th grade students by providing curriculum, staff development, follow-up support, and necessary equipment, all designed to foster healthy habits and active lifestyles.

Through SPARK, students are encouraged to enjoy and seek out physical activity, develop and maintain acceptable levels of physical fitness, and build a variety of fundamental movement and manipulative skills to experience success and confidence in both current and future physical activities. The program also emphasizes social skills and cooperation, helping students navigate movement environments respectfully by sharing space and equipment, demonstrating good sportsmanship, and engaging in positive, collaborative interactions with peers.

Proposed Physical Education Programs

See above, Proposed teaching and learning overview section. [Also refer to Special Education for the Adaptive PE program.](#)

16 | SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

(e.g., in-house, collaborative, facility restrictions)

Somerville Public Schools provides a comprehensive continuum of services for children and youth with disabilities, serving students from ages three through twenty-two. All referral, evaluation, and placement procedures are guided by federal and state special education laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The district is committed to ensuring that students receive an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment, tailored to their individual needs.

Current Special Education Programs (ideally provide a chart that shows what programs are currently included)

Specialized Classrooms and Programs serve students who require a highly modified curriculum delivered in separate classrooms rather than general education settings. Each program is designed to provide academic, behavioral, and social support within a self-contained environment. Classrooms are staffed with a certified special education teacher and at least one teacher assistant, with additional support provided as needed. Instructional methodologies are individualized to meet student needs and align with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Special education instruction occurs throughout the school day and includes individual and small-group formats. Students also participate in general education experiences—such as music, art, physical education, recess, lunch, and supported academic classes—when appropriate.

The **Early Childhood Intervention Program** (ECIP) at the Michael E. Capuano Early Childhood Center serves both children with and without Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in a multi-sensory, developmentally based prekindergarten setting. ECIP includes substantially separate classrooms as well as integrated classes of up to 15 students, with fewer than half of the children having identified disabilities. The program follows the same developmental benchmarks and curriculum as the general prekindergarten program, emphasizing a language-based approach to support individual learning differences. Activities occur in individual, small-group, and large-group settings to ensure that all children are challenged and supported to achieve their full potential.

The **Adapt, Include, Motivate** (A.I.M.) program serves students from prekindergarten through grade twelve at the Michael E. Capuano Early Childhood Center (PK–K), Winter Hill Community Innovation School (1–8), and Somerville High School (9–12). The program supports students with unique learning needs that impact verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, sensory processing, and adapting to changes in environment or routine. Students receive individualized instruction within substantially separate classrooms, with opportunities for integration into general education as determined by their educational team. Instruction is supported by a clinical team including a BCBA, occupational therapist, speech and language pathologist, and counselor. The program relies on Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) strategies, including discrete trial training, errorless learning, prompting hierarchies, and incidental teaching, alongside multi-sensory and total communication approaches. Instruction is delivered in one-on-one, small-group, and large-group settings, with behavioral supports and individualized plans designed to promote skill generalization, independence, and success across environments.

Somerville Public Schools offers a comprehensive range of specialized programs to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities across all grade levels. The **Life Skills Program**, available at John F. Kennedy School (K–8) and Somerville High School (9–12), serves students with moderate to severe disabilities across multiple domains, including language, motor skills, social-emotional development, and cognitive functioning. Instruction focuses on functional academics, social skills, self-advocacy, and safety, delivered through direct, differentiated, and specially designed teaching in a multi-sensory, context-rich environment, using a modified curriculum aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

The **Specialized Kennedy Intensive Program (SKIP)** and **Specialized High School Intensive Program (SHIP)** support students with complex learning profiles who are unable to access the general education curriculum. These programs emphasize the development of communication, mobility, social, and independent daily living skills, and provide instruction on standards through entry points designated by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Students may also receive support for daily living skills and medical needs, as appropriate.

The **Social and Educational Enrichment at Kennedy (SEEK)** program, serving Grades 1–6 at John F. Kennedy School, is designed for students needing additional support with coping skills and emotional regulation to successfully interact with peers and access the curriculum. Academic instruction is delivered at grade level in multi-graded, self-contained classrooms, with therapeutic supports provided individually and in groups. Inclusion with general education peers is available during specialist classes and, when appropriate, in grade-level content classes. Student behavior is monitored through structured systems, ensuring targeted support for social-emotional growth.

At the **Arthur D. Healey School**, multi-graded classrooms serve students who require significant curriculum modification and access standards through entry points. These students often demonstrate a wide range of cognitive abilities and are substantially below grade level. Inclusion opportunities are provided during lunch, recess, and specialist classes, with additional integration into co-taught grade-level classes at the middle school level when supported and scaffolded.

The **Language-Based Learning Disability (LB/LD)** program at Albert F. Argenziano School (grades 4–6) provides a developmentally appropriate, multi-sensory, and sequenced phonics-based curriculum designed to support students with language-based learning disabilities. Instruction targets expressive and receptive language skills across all areas of the curriculum, fostering independence and academic motivation.

At Somerville High School, the **PATH Program** serves emotionally vulnerable students who are at risk for school failure due to social-emotional challenges. Counseling supports are embedded through individual and group sessions, focusing on coping, social skills, and self-advocacy, with integration into general education environments when appropriate.

The **Transition Program**, for students ages 18–22 at Somerville High School and off-campus locations, supports students who are completing IEP goals beyond traditional high school timelines or pursuing a Certificate of Completion. This program emphasizes vocational training, travel and community skills, functional life skills, self-advocacy, and independence. Students spend more than half of their time in community-based settings, including job sites, dual enrollment at local colleges, or other experiential learning opportunities.

Across all schools, Resource Room support is provided for students with mild to moderate disabilities placed in general education classrooms. Small groups of up to twelve students receive instruction tailored to their IEP goals, which may include support in reading, math, writing, organization, and other academic areas. Instructional strategies are individualized to meet student needs while remaining aligned with Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, ensuring that every student receives meaningful and accessible learning opportunities.

Grades PK–12 at all SPS schools:

- Inclusion Opportunities
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Counseling
- Adaptive Physical Education
- BCBA Services
- Teacher of the Visually Impaired
- Orientation and Mobility
- Assistive Technology
- Teacher of the Deaf

Winter Hill Special Education Administration

Special Education Department Coordinator Jared Wickham
Special Education Program Director - AIM Laura Walley
Special Education Department Coordinator - AIM Keveny Landry

Benjamin G. Brown School Special Education Administration

Special Education Department Coordinator Dorothy Scally

SPS Special Education Administration

Ildefonso Arellano, Director of Special Education
Marisa MacDonald, Asst. Director of Special Education
Siobhan Aberdale, Special Education Coordinator, Capuano Early Childhood Center
Laura Walley, Special Education Program Director - AIM, Capuano Early Childhood Center & Winter Hill
Keveny Landry, Special Education Department Coordinator, Capuano Early Childhood Center & Winter Hill
Jared Wickham, Special Education Department Coordinator Arthur D. Healey School & Winter Hill
Will Verbits, Special Education Department Coordinator, John F. Kennedy School
Kate DeLisi, Special Education Department Coordinator - SEEK, John F. Kennedy School
Dr. Iris Miller, Special Education Department Coordinator, AFAS & WSNS
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Mariana Stewert, Special Education Coordinator, ESCS & SHS Specialized Programming
Jack Haverty, Special Education Coordinator. Next Wave & Full Circle
Dorothy Scally, Special Education Coordinator, Benjamin G. Brown School & Out of District Programming

Special Education IEP Team Leads

AJ Barillaro, Somerville High School

Katie Beadle, Winter Hill AIM Program
Megan Brown, Arthur D. Healey School
Kelli Buote, Albert F. Argenziano School
Anthony Gregory, West Somerville Neighborhood School
Danielle Higgins, East Somerville Community School
Marissa Ninni, Capuano Early Childhood Center
Mike Rizzo, Somerville High School
Jennifer Zacharias, John F. Kennedy School
Jenny Long, Next Wave, Full Circle & Benjamin G. Brown School

Current Special Education Needs at Winter Hill School

The school is ADA accessible; however, accessible entrances, circulation routes, and overall accessibility within the building present ongoing challenges, particularly given the high proportion of students with complex needs, including those with disabilities attending Winter Hill. Currently, accessible entrances are shared with an active loading zone, which also serves as the main entry point for middle school students each morning. Because of the school's layout, this entrance provides the closest access to outdoor spaces capable of safely accommodating all middle-grade students.

Winter Hill has experienced steady and, in some cases, increased enrollment, particularly in specialized programs such as AIM for students on the autism spectrum and the MLE/Newcomer Academy for grades 5–8, which serve some of the district's highest-need and most vulnerable students. To support these programs and the existing classroom configurations, staff and administrators have relied on numerous movable partitions as makeshift classroom walls. While these partitions provide temporary solutions, they are inefficient and allow sound to bleed between classrooms, which negatively impacts student learning. Additionally, non-instructional areas such as closets, showers, and locker rooms have been repurposed to accommodate staff offices, food service operations, or shared spaces for critical, often confidential, meetings between counselors, students, and families. No current school or municipal facility provides the space, accessibility, or infrastructure necessary to fully support the expansion and needs of these programs.

The lack of adequate space has a significant impact on counselors, educators, and staff who require private areas for student or family meetings. Similar to how classrooms have been divided to create additional space for core academics, non-traditional areas have been converted to accommodate support services. For example, three resource room teachers share a single full-sized classroom; AIM staff, including related services personnel, work out of converted closets and IT storage areas; occupational therapists use offices that double as service spaces and a sensory room; there is no separate sensory room for students in AIM or general education; and ELL specialists, including the grade 6 SLIFE teacher, teach newcomer ELL classes in small classrooms that must be shared among multiple staff members.

Because of the building layout and conditions, staff and administrators spend a substantial portion of the day addressing issues related to accessibility, classroom and office space, pest control, ongoing building repairs, temperature regulation, and other operational needs. The school has only one functional conference room, which is insufficient for required or critical services such as IEP meetings, Student Support Team meetings, intervention sessions in reading and math, dean/parent conferences, and educator planning time. School counselors have offices that accommodate no more

than 2–3 students, limiting their ability to conduct small group work, and there is no dedicated space for interventionists or tutors. This constrained environment affects the district's ability to provide consistent, high-quality support services and programming.

Current Special Education Needs at the Brown School

The Brown School is not ADA accessible, and existing accessible routes and entrances are extremely limited. Students receiving occupational therapy or physical therapy services often must work in hallways or other non-traditional spaces due to the lack of appropriate, dedicated areas for these supports. This limitation affects both the quality and consistency of services provided and underscores the need for a facility that can accommodate all students' accessibility and service needs.

Proposed Special Education Programming (ideally provide a chart that shows what programs will be included with each design enrollment)

We intend to continue all Special Education Programs. In order to accommodate the needs of the rich diversity of learners that we serve, we envision classrooms that incorporate technology as a critical component. Students in our AIM classrooms require the use of communication devices in order to access their communication skills. In addition, devices such as iPads are needed as reinforcers.

Students in our AIM program require access to bathrooms within the classroom space to work on Activities of Daily Living (ADL) skills. Students may also have individualized toileting plans, which require access to a bathroom within the classroom. We propose classrooms that are large enough to accommodate a sensory space and a minimum of three individualized workstations (cubicle style) to access their discrete trial programs. The classroom should be equipped with built in cabinets that lock in order to minimize distraction.

We are also proposing a sensory room for our students in the AIM program with appropriate sensory equipment. A separate classroom should be devoted to work on ADLs and transitional/vocational skills for the upper grades. The classroom should be equipped with a kitchen, bed, and a workstation to accommodate various vocational tasks (e.g., stuffing envelopes, mock cash registers, etc.).

Separate spaces in all classrooms should be considered to provide individualized and small group (3-5 students) specialized instruction, including for each of the service providers. Physical Therapy spaces should be large enough to work on gross motor skills.

Given the space limitations and significant need, we are proposing the following:

- Additional sub-separate autism classrooms for AIM to accommodate the increased enrollment, including based on current kindergarten enrollment
- Additional small spaces for related services and providers, such as speech, OT/PT, and a School Adjustment Counselor
- 4 spaces for resource rooms teachers to deliver specialized instructions to non-AIM special education students

WINTER HILL COMMUNITY INNOVATION SCHOOL	PROPOSED PROGRAM						
	WHCIS (690 STUDENTS K-8) + PK			WHCIS+BROWN (925 K-8) + PK			
ROOM TYPE	ROOM NFA ¹	# OF ROOMS	AREA TOTALS	ROOM NFA ¹	# OF ROOMS	AREA TOTALS	
SPECIAL EDUCATION			22,200			26,000	
Self-Contained Special Education Classroom (Gr	900	8	7,200	900	8	7,200	AIM T3
Self-Contained Special Education Classroom (Gr	900	2	1,800	900	2	1,800	AIM T3
Self-Contained Special Education Classroom (Gr	900	1	900	900	1	900	AIM T1
Self-Contained Special Education Toilet Room	60	8	480	60	8	480	
Self-Contained Special Education Toilet Room	60	2	120	60	2	120	
Life Skills Suite	600	2	1,200	600	2	1,200	aim+gen
Resource Room (Grades K-6)	450	2	900	450	3	1,350	
Resource Room (Grades 7-8)	450	1	450	450	2	900	
Small Group Room (SLP/Speech & Language)	450	5	2,250	450	6	2,700	2aim,1nca
Small Group Room (Reading & Math Coaches)	450	2	900	450	4	1,800	1 each
OT/PT	450	1	450	450	1	450	
OT/PT Sensory	300	1	300	300	1	300	
Work Rooms	450	4	1,800	450	5	2,250	6-8 in ea.
- Adjustment Counselor	9.5 couns + 9 para's in workroom			9.5 couns + 9 para's in workroom			
- Behavioral (BCBA)	3 behav. in workroom			3 behav. in workroom			
- OT/PT Office	2 OT/PT in workroom			2 OT/PT in workroom			
Meeting Space within Work Rooms (1 on 1)	100	8	800	100	10	1,000	2/wrk rm
Meeting Space within Classroom Clusters	100	9	900	100	18	1,800	2/wrk rm
AIM Director	150	1	150	150	1	150	
Department Coordinator	150	1	150	150	1	150	
IEP Team Leader	150	1	150	150	1	150	
IEP Conference	300	1	300	300	1	300	
Small Conference	200	1	200	200	1	200	
Regulation Space (stand-alone)	200	4	800	200	4	800	ea.floor

Workrooms vs Offices (space summary has workrooms for Adj, Behav, OT/PT & Gen Ed Paras) the model we talked about in the ELT meetings. Rather than certain related services having their own individual dedicated offices, the district is taking steps to support collaboration and future flexibility by creating intentional suites to house certain related services providers together. These will be teacher facing spaces meaning that they wouldn't pull kids to these rooms. It's really just where their desks and stuff are, and then there would be small group spaces adjacent if they need to pull a small group when they aren't pushing in to classrooms or small group rooms throughout the building.

17 | VOCATIONS & TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS

Non-Chapter 74 Programming

(e.g., vocational, technical, enrichment, STEM/STEAM, project-based programming)

Current Vocations and Technology Programs

Somerville High School Career and Technical Education (CTE) offers dynamic summer programs for all rising 6th, 7th, and 8th graders, designed to provide engaging, hands-on learning experiences in a variety of career pathways. These week-long programs allow students to enroll in one or two weeks and explore areas such as Culinary Arts, Graphic Design, Health Careers, and Cosmetology. Each program introduces students to real-world skills in a supportive high school setting while fostering creativity, confidence, and teamwork. Breakfast and lunch are provided daily, ensuring students are fueled for active learning. Whether students are cooking in a state-of-the-art culinary kitchen, capturing professional-quality images, learning essential health skills, or exploring the art and science of cosmetology, the summer CTE programs offer a rich preview of the opportunities available at Somerville High School and inspire students to begin thinking about their future passions and career pathways.

Somerville's Summer Robotics Program invites students to explore creative computing and engineering alongside members of the Somerville High School Robotics Team. Designed for all experience levels, the program offers a hands-on, project-based environment where students design, build, program, and customize their own robots. Students are grouped by experience to ensure meaningful challenge and growth: advanced participants create soccer bots, music-making robots, or artistic robots using Micro:bit or Arduino platforms; intermediate students tackle real-world challenges inspired by FIRST LEGO League; and beginners explore SumoBots and past Somerville Robotics League challenges to build foundational engineering and coding skills.

Participants also gain experience with modern fabrication tools, including 3D printers, laser cutters, and vinyl cutters, using them to prototype custom parts and design their own summer robotics t-shirts. A defining feature of the program is its near-peer mentorship model, led primarily by high school students with guidance from SPS teachers. This approach empowers teen leaders while creating a supportive environment where younger students can see clear pathways into future robotics and STEM opportunities.

Beyond summer, Somerville Public Schools offers a range of after-school and extracurricular robotics and computer science programs that introduce students to STEM in hands-on, collaborative, and student-centered ways.

With a curriculum led by high school students, the **Somerville Robotics League (SRL)** serves students in Grades 5–8 and is an after-school intramural robotics program founded by Somerville High School robotics team members and SPS staff. Teams of up to 25 students are based at Argenziano, Brown, East Somerville, Healey, Kennedy, West Somerville, and Winter Hill, meeting weekly for 10 weeks. Each team is supported by school-based SPS staff as head coaches, a community volunteer, and two high school students who facilitate challenges and projects. Additional staff from Winter Hill's AIM program provide specialized support for students in the program.

Participants explore design, engineering, coding, teamwork, collaboration, and strategy, culminating in a final showcase and competition at Somerville High School.

The **FIRST Robotics Competition** (FRC) is an international high school program that combines the excitement of competition with engineering, coding, and real-world problem solving. Students design, build, and program robots for themed challenges while developing teamwork, leadership, project management, and business skills. FRC prepares students for careers in engineering, computer science, advanced manufacturing, and other STEM fields. FRC **Team 6201**, led by Laura Peters and Jose Saravia alongside high school mentors, offers hands-on experience in CAD, programming, mechanical engineering, prototyping, and team management. Through FRC and Team 6201, Somerville students gain a nationally recognized STEM experience that blends technical skill, creativity, teamwork, and school pride, preparing them for college and future careers.

For students in Grades 6–8, **FIRST LEGO League** (FLL) is offered at Somerville High School's Fab Lab. FLL is an international program introducing students to STEM through building and programming LEGO robots while solving real-world challenges. Students collaborate to design, build, and program their robots while also working on a research project. FLL emphasizes discovery, teamwork, and gracious professionalism, guiding students in how they approach challenges and work with one another. Local competitions allow teams to showcase their robots and research projects. While some experience is helpful, students are encouraged to begin with SRL or Summer Robotics to build foundational skills.

The district offers **Girls Who Code** for Grades 6–8, a national program aimed at closing the gender gap in technology. Open to all students, it encourages girls and nonbinary students to explore coding and computer science in a supportive, hands-on environment. Launched in 2023, the club teaches Scratch, JavaScript, circuitry, and introductory robotics, while emphasizing Bravery and Community to foster collaboration, risk-taking, and leadership. Enrollment has steadily grown, reflecting strong interest in inclusive STEM pathways.

Proposed Vocations and Technology Programs

See above, Proposed teaching and learning overview section.

Chapter 74 Programming

Current Vocations and Technology Programs

DUE

Proposed Vocations and Technology Programs

DUE

18 | TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

Somerville Public Schools currently provides transportation for students with specialized needs, multilingual learners whose learning school is not their proximity school and free M7 MBTA cards for all students in grades 7-12.

Current Transportation Policies

Somerville Public Schools provides door-to-door transportation for students with specialized needs, including those with disabilities or special education services as outlined in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan. In accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act, transportation is also offered to homeless students of all grades living in transitional housing who continue to attend school in the district.

Multilingual Learner Education (MLE) students receive monitored transportation between their proximity school—the school closest to home—and the school where they receive instruction. Families are responsible for travel between home and the proximity school.

Students in grades 7–12 are provided M7 MBTA Cards, allowing free access to MBTA buses, subway lines, and portions of the commuter rail throughout the school year. M7 Cards are valid 24/7 from distribution through June 30, 2025, and convert to S-Cards in July and August for discounted summer fares.

For daily arrivals and dismissals, students in grades K–8 who use bus transportation are dropped off and picked up at the front of the building, while caregivers drop off and pick up students at the back. Preschool students are also dropped off and picked up at the back of the building, following a slightly adjusted school schedule.

File: EEA - STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

The major purpose of the school system's transportation services is to aid students in getting to and from school in an efficient, safe, and economical manner.

The school system will contract for transportation services. Contracts will be awarded on a competitive bid basis by the Somerville School Committee. Bus contractors and taxi contractors, who will be held responsible for the safe operation of school buses, will comply with all applicable state laws and regulations, including but not limited to:

1. Specifications for school bus design and equipment
2. Inspection of buses

3. Qualifications and examinations of bus drivers (i.e. Criminal Offenses Records Inquiry (CORI) Search and drug testing.)
4. Driving regulations
5. Small vehicle requirements, if applicable
6. Insurance coverage
7. Adherence to local regulations and directives as specified in bid contracts

The Superintendent, working with the bus contractor and other appropriate administrators, will be responsible for establishing bus schedules, routes, stops, and all other matters relative to the transportation program.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [40:5](#); [71:7A, B and C](#); [71:37D](#); [71:48A](#); [71:68](#); [71:71A](#); [71B:4](#); [71B:5](#); [71B:8](#); [74:8A](#); [76:1](#); [76:12Bi](#); [76:14](#)

Revised: January 1996 | Reviewed: December 2008

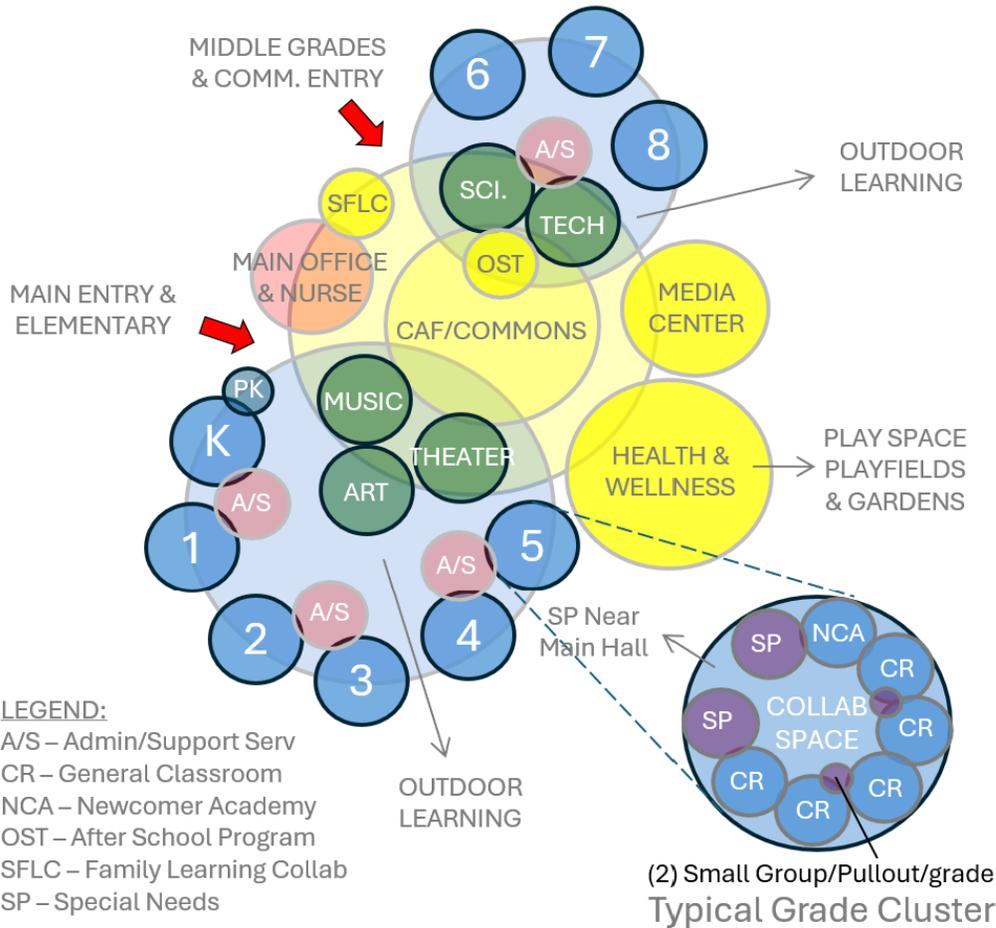
Proposed Transportation Policies

While no changes to current transportation policies and practices are proposed, the traffic flow for bus and caregiver drop-off and pick-up may need to be reconfigured to accommodate the new school facility, its location, and increased size. Bus drop-off areas should remain separate from caregiver drop-off locations and provide direct, convenient access to the school building. Caregiver drop-off zones should be long enough to prevent vehicles from extending onto the main road and should be able to accommodate 15–20 cars simultaneously.

19 | FUNCTIONAL & SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS

The new school building at Sycamore is designed with intentional educational adjacencies to support both learning and community use. Spaces are zoned to separate elementary and middle grades while providing shared and extended areas for broader community programs. Administrative clusters, including assistant principals, deans, and support services, are dispersed throughout the building, with the main administration area connected to the nurse for additional coverage and strong visibility.

Academic neighborhoods are organized by grade level, integrating special education and Newcomer Academy classrooms within the general academic areas. Special education classrooms are also dispersed near main corridors to balance accessibility with inclusion. After-school, family, and community programs are housed within the commons and core areas, providing students with direct access to the arts, STEM spaces, the media center, cafeteria, and health and wellness facilities.



The site is designed with thoughtful adjacencies to support safe, efficient, and flexible use. While bus traffic is currently minimal, any future increase should remain separate from caregiver drop-off areas. The school will have distinct entries for elementary (main) and middle (community) grades, with approaches that are pedestrian-friendly, wide, and buffered from vehicles.

Playgrounds and playfields will be contiguous, easily supervised, and feature age-appropriate equipment zoned for early childhood versus elementary and middle grades. Play areas will have direct connections to the cafeteria and gymnasium to support supervision and program integration.

Although some rooftop space is available, the majority of outdoor areas are intended for community use. Service and loading areas will be discreet and buffered from student spaces, while outdoor learning areas and gardens are being considered to further enrich instructional opportunities.

20 | SECURITY & VISUAL ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

The feasibility study process begins with a kickoff involving first responders, facilities staff, and educational leaders to review existing emergency plans and protocols while understanding access and safety requirements, including height limits, minimum widths, clearances, and other logistical considerations. From the earliest planning phases, such as the PDP, a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) lens guides key decisions. As the project progresses into schematic design and later stages, more detailed discussions will focus on alarms, communications, detection, surveillance, and protective systems.

Planning-level considerations for safety and security in the new school include:

- Clear delineation of school property and controlled community use/access
- Separation of cars, buses, and pedestrian traffic wherever possible, including wide sidewalks and plantings or other buffers
- Isolation of receiving, garbage, and recycling areas from pedestrian zones
- Main entry designed for strong visibility and controlled access through a contained vestibule
- Additional controlled entry points for early childhood, elementary, and middle grades, with a single main entry for visitors after arrival and before dismissal
- Ability to lock off or isolate academic neighborhoods from shared and community spaces
- Interior visibility balanced with natural retreat or get-out-of-sight space within all rooms and suites
- Minimized or eliminated climbable surfaces and hiding places inside and outside
- Dispersed adult presence throughout the school to support supervision and safety

Current Security and Visual Access

Over the past several years Somerville Public Schools has implemented various security measures to ensure the safety of students and staff. Current security measures include the following:

Controlled Access

- Secure, locked exterior doors throughout the school day
- Card reader access on majority of exterior doors
- Visitor management system, including sign-in procedures and visitor badges
- Video surveillance systems monitoring entrances, hallways, and outdoor areas

Emergency Procedures

- Regular emergency drills
- Crisis response plans and protocols
- Trained staff to handle emergencies
- PA system for the main building
- Phones in all classrooms and office spaces
- BeSafe Technology cloud software instant access to site information

Security

- Alarm panels with exterior door activation
- Collaboration with City of Somerville's Office of Emergency Management
- Collaboration with local police and fire departments

Visual Access

- Surveillance cameras on the exterior doors and playgrounds

Controlled Access to Playgrounds

- Fenced-in playground with limited access points
- Adult supervision during recess and outdoor activities

Proposed Security and Visual Access

The new school building at Sycamore will prioritize safety and security, incorporating non-intrusive measures to protect students. These measures will be monitored from a central command center and within the school itself. Key security enhancements will include:

Controlled Access

- All exterior doors and a select number of interior doors will be electrified, and will be controlled by the same access control system used throughout the District.
- Staff members will receive identification key cards/fobs that will provide access to their building.
- Specific access schedules will be assigned to staff members based on their job type and access needs.
- PA capability from any phone in the building with admin code
- Panic controls are located in areas around the building so that any staff member can activate in order to automatically secure the building from an intruder by automatically closing and locking off areas into smaller, more secure spaces.

Security Camera System

- Security cameras will be installed around the entire outdoor perimeter of the school building as well as in entryways, hallways, stairwells, and other select high-traffic interior areas of the school.
- The district will work with school administrators, Facilities, Safety & Transportation Coordinator, Director of Student Services, Commissioner of the Department of Public Works and the Superintendent of Buildings to identify and select the areas in need of security camera installation. Access to the cameras will be given to a select group of administrators.
- All cameras will be tied into the SPS district camera system, in which a minimum of 30 days of recording will be stored.

Intrusion Detection System

The school will also feature a comprehensive intrusion alarm system, including motion detectors and window and door contacts. Multiple alarm zones will be established throughout the building, each monitored via keypad panels. Security codes will be assigned to designated staff based on job function and access needs. In the event an alarm is triggered, notifications will be sent immediately to the Somerville Police Department, the Superintendent of Buildings, and school administrators.

School Emergency Notification System

The school will be equipped with an emergency notification system that integrates with the phone system, PA system, and electronic displays. This system will ensure that emergency alerts can reach the entire school population immediately in the event of a school emergency, lockdown, or evacuation. All phones will have access to the PA system using an administrator code.

Community Entrance

A designated entrance will provide controlled access for community use of the gymnasium, cafeteria, auditorium, and other shared spaces. This ensures appropriate access to these facilities while maintaining the security of the remainder of the building.

Key Safety and Security Design Principles

- Clear delineation of school property with controlled community use and access
- Separation of vehicles and pedestrians, minimizing interaction between cars, buses, and foot traffic through generous sidewalk widths, landscaping, and other protective buffers
- Dedicated separation of receiving, garbage, and recycling areas from pedestrian pathways
- Highly visible and controlled main entry, including a contained vestibule for visitor screening and clearance
- Additional controlled entry points for early childhood, elementary, and middle grades, with a single designated main visitor entrance during the school day
- Ability to secure and isolate academic neighborhoods from shared or community-use spaces when needed
- Strong internal visibility paired with controlled environments, including natural retreat or out-of-sight spaces within classrooms and learning suites
- Minimized climbability and reduced hiding places both inside and outside the building
- Dispersed adult presence throughout the school to promote supervision, safety, and positive engagement

The most recent Medical Emergency Response Plan was submitted to DESE September 1, 2024. Updating our emergency response plan involves forming/gathering our team including school administration, nursing staff, teacher representatives, first responders (police, fire, EMS) and representation from our parent council. Next, we plan for risks that could potentially happen in school or on school grounds. Then we create detailed procedures for different emergencies (lockdown, evacuation, etc.), communication, roles, and resources. We coordinate the plan with local police, fire, and EMS. We train staff and students through drills and exercises. The plan is reviewed at least once a year and resubmitted to the state every three years.

21 | TYPICAL DAY & WEEK IN THE LIFE OF A STUDENT

A typical day for a third grader in Somerville Public Schools is carefully structured to balance foundational skills, creativity, and social-emotional growth. The day may begin with a Responsive Classroom or restorative justice-style community circle, held in the classroom, a common area, or even outdoors, where students build respect, collaboration, and a sense of belonging. Literacy instruction is a core focus, with explicit phonics lessons ensuring students finish the year with a solid foundation to become critical readers. In addition, students rotate through Art, PE, Music, Theater, or Library/Media classes, enriching their creative and physical development.

Throughout the day, students receive targeted interventions, extensions, or practice based on formative assessment data. These activities occur independently, in pairs, or in small groups, with teachers and specialists either “pushing in” to classrooms or “pulling out” students to adjacent small spaces. Flexible arrangements, including shared students across grade-level partners, support personalized learning, ensuring every child receives the tiered instruction needed for success in literacy and mathematics.

Mathematics instruction follows the Illustrative Mathematics curriculum, emphasizing problem solving, group discussion, and real-world application. Lessons include small-group, whole-group, and independent work, with space to move and collaborate. In social studies and science, instruction is guided by state standards, with opportunities to extend learning outdoors in gardens or classrooms designed for hands-on exploration. Recess incorporates Playworks programming, providing structured choices, conflict resolution, and inclusive play that keeps students active and ready to focus afterward.

Literacy instruction continues through the Wit & Wisdom curriculum, where students engage in small-group work, gallery walks, and Socratic Seminars. Flexible seating, magnetic whiteboards, and ample wall space support collaboration and critical thinking. Units integrate history, science, and other humanities, guiding students through the “wonder, organize, reveal, distill, and know” structure to develop vocabulary, content knowledge, and analytical skills. Altogether, the day blends academic rigor, creativity, social-emotional learning, and hands-on experiences to foster well-rounded, engaged, and capable third graders.

Typical Day in the Life of a Student (Grade 3)	
Activity or Subject	Program Details and Educational Benefit
Morning Meeting (15 minutes)	Students participate in a Responsive Classroom or restorative justice-styled community building circle. These could take place in the classroom in a common area, or in an outdoor classroom. The primary educational benefit is fostering a respectful and collaborative learning environment.
ELA - Foundational Skills (15 minutes)	Students receive phonics instruction. Grade 3 is the last year in which tier one instruction includes explicit phonics instruction. The primary educational benefit is ensuring that students have solid foundational skills as they move on to be increasingly critical readers.
Specialist (40 minutes)	Art, PE, Music, Theater, or Library / Media Science

<p>Intervention/Extension (40 minutes)</p>	<p>Students receive learning interventions, extensions, or extra practice, as determined by analysis of formative assessment data. These activities happen independently, in partnerships, and in small groups. During this period there could be teachers/interventionists “pushing in” or “pulling out” to work with students. The “pull out” could be in smaller spaces adjacent to the classroom. Grade-level partners sometimes share students across classrooms during this period, so proximity should be prioritized. The primary educational benefit is ensuring that all students are met at the edge of their proficiency, that all students get the tier two and tier three instruction they require for success in literacy and mathematics.</p>
<p>Mathematics (55 minutes)</p>	<p>Our curriculum is Illustrative Mathematics, which utilizes a problem-solving instructional model. Lessons entail extensive “zooming in and out,” with small-group, whole-group, and independent activities. All lessons include a group discussion at the end that brings coherence to the learning. To facilitate these lessons, there should be ample space for students to shift between working arrangements. The primary educational benefit is to foster not just proficiency in mathematical computation, but to foster collaboration, discourse, and real-world application of mathematics.</p>
<p>Science / Social Studies (40 minutes)</p>	<p>For social studies and science lessons, teachers utilize the state standards to guide instruction, along with a variety of lessons from various curricula that cover those standards. Science lessons in particular, would benefit from the option of working in a school garden or outdoor classroom. The primary educational benefit is to support students in becoming proficient in the related concepts outlined in the content standards, but also to bring the content to life with hands-on experiences. .</p>
<p>Lunch / Recess (40 minutes)</p>	<p>During recess, all students have access to Playworks programming, a partner that supports providing recess choices, conflict resolution, and increased inclusion for all students. The educational benefits of this include more physical activity during recess and fewer conflicts that impact time on learning after recess ends.</p>
<p>ELA - Small Group Instruction (30 minutes)</p>	<p>Grade 3 uses the Wit & Wisdom curriculum, which includes a small-group instruction period. During this period, small groups of students work with a teacher, or participate in collaborative exercises, such as “gallery walks,” and “Socratic Seminars.” These activities often require significant wall space, magnetic whiteboards, and flexible seating. The primary educational benefit is to provide differentiated learning and foster collaboration, discourse, and critical thinking.</p>
<p>ELA - Knowledge Building (55 minutes)</p>	<p>Grade 3 Wit & Wisdom is structured around four thematic units that integrate history, science, and other humanities. Instead of reading in isolation, students read, write, and talk about the unit’s central topic(s). Each lesson is structured by activities around: “wonder, organize, reveal, distill, and know.” The primary educational benefit is that students engage with authentic texts to develop vocabulary, content knowledge, and critical thinking.</p>
<p>Dismissal</p>	

Third graders in Somerville also engage in regular social-emotional learning through the Second Step curriculum, with activities occurring once or twice each week. These lessons give students structured

opportunities to explore healthy relationships, reflect on personal growth, and discuss behaviors that support positive social interactions, fostering self-awareness and emotional regulation. For one quarter of the year, students participate in swimming lessons at a district pool, developing water proficiency and comfort, while also gaining confidence and physical coordination.

In addition, students in Grades 3–5 have the option to take music lessons, either on stringed or band instruments. Learning an instrument has well-documented benefits for cognitive, mental, and physical health, supporting executive functioning, memory, and, in many cases, overall academic performance. Dedicated spaces for these lessons ensure students have an environment conducive to focused practice and creative exploration, allowing them to develop musical skills alongside their academic and social-emotional growth.

Typical Week in the Life of a Student (Grade 3)	
Weekly Activity or Subject	Program Details and Educational Benefit
Monday	Once or twice each week, classes engage in Second Step, our SEL curriculum, activities. This curriculum fosters healthy relationships and behaviors. The primary educational benefit is that students receive opportunities to think about and discuss issues around social-emotional learning, as well as reflect on their own personal development.
Tuesday	For one quarter of the year, our grade three students participate in swimming lessons at the pool in another school in the district. The primary educational benefit is that students become comfortable and proficient in the water.
Wednesday	Students in Grades 3-5 have the option to take classes in a stringed instrument. It has been well-established that learning an instrument improves cognitive, mental, and physical health. These lessons should have dedicated spaces. The primary educational benefits include improved executive functioning, memory, and in many cases, academic success.
Thursday	Students in Grades 3-5 have the option to take classes in a “band” instrument. Students in Grades 3-5 have the option to take classes in a stringed instrument. It has been well-established that learning an instrument improves cognitive, mental, and physical health. These lessons should have dedicated spaces. The primary educational benefits include improved executive functioning, memory, and in many cases, academic success.
Friday	Health

Middle grades students begin their day by gathering in an open space, either outdoors when weather permits or indoors, for an unstructured social period. During this time, students connect with friends, play games like soccer or football, or complete homework. This space is conveniently located near the middle grades academic area and is separated from the elementary arrival zone. While informal, this morning

routine provides developmentally appropriate opportunities for students to reconnect with peers and staff, fostering social engagement and a sense of community.

Following this, students check in with their homeroom teacher, attendance is taken, and phones are collected to minimize distractions throughout the school day. Students then participate in specialist electives, choosing two from music, theater, physical education, digital literacy and computer science, or art, with health required for one quarter of the year. Electives rotate across the week—one on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the other on Tuesdays and Thursdays—ensuring that by the end of 7th and 8th grade, students have experienced all five elective areas.

Mathematics instruction is delivered through Illustrative Mathematics, a problem-solving curriculum emphasizing “zooming in and out” across small-group, whole-group, and independent activities, with a final group discussion to consolidate learning. This approach develops not only computational proficiency but also collaboration, discourse, and real-world application of mathematical concepts.

Students also have two FLEX blocks, providing targeted opportunities for enrichment and intervention tailored to individual needs. Options during FLEX include Read 180 reading intervention, math tutoring or intervention, individual or group counseling with a school counselor or social worker, participation in BAM (Becoming a Man) or WOW (Working on Womanhood) partner programs, Spanish instruction, or personalized iReady learning.

Once a week, students engage in Second Step lessons or restorative justice-style community-building circles, held in classrooms, common areas, or outdoor classrooms. These activities focus on fostering respectful, collaborative environments while teaching social-emotional learning skills.

English Language Arts uses the Fishtank curriculum, which integrates five guiding principles: knowledge-building, diverse and rigorous texts, student-led discussion and collaboration, writing to learn, and intellectual preparation for teachers. Lessons are designed to engage students in higher-level thinking, discussion, and analytical writing, ensuring growth in grade-appropriate literacy skills.

Science instruction is guided by state standards and can be enhanced by hands-on learning in gardens or outdoor classrooms. History is taught through the Investigating History curriculum, emphasizing historical inquiry, empathy, civic engagement, and culturally sustaining pedagogy. These lessons allow students to engage deeply with challenging texts while developing critical thinking, reading, and writing skills.

The day concludes with homeroom, where teachers check in with students and escort them to the indoor dismissal area. Phones are returned, and students leave the building, engaging in informal social interactions that strengthen peer and staff connections. This dismissal area is separate from elementary exits, ensuring smooth and safe transitions.

Typical Day in the Life of a Student - Grade 7	
Activity or Subject	Program Details and Educational Benefit
Arrival (up to 25 minutes before the school day starts)	Students gather in an open space, either outside, whether permitting, or inside. This is an unstructured social time where students hang out with their friends, play games,

	such as soccer or football, or do homework. This area provides easy access to the middle grades academic area of the school and is separate from the elementary grades arrival area. While this is not a structured program, this time in the morning is developmentally appropriate for middle grades students to reconnect with their peers and staff each morning.
Homeroom (10 minutes)	Students check in with the homeroom teacher and daily attendance is taken. Phones are collected for the day. Phone collection is an important policy to remove distractions throughout the school day.
Specialists (40 minutes)	Students choose two specialist electives from music, theater, physical education, digital literacy & computer science, or art. Health is also a requirement for one quarter of the year during this block. Each week, students attend one elective on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Friday, and the other elective on Tuesdays and Thursdays. (Over the course of 7th and 8th grade, students must choose one elective in each of the 5 areas.)
Math (55 minutes)	Our curriculum is Illustrative Mathematics, which utilizes a problem-solving instructional model. Lessons entail extensive “zooming in and out,” with small-group, whole-group, and independent activities. All lessons include a group discussion at the end that brings coherence to the learning. To facilitate these lessons, there should be ample space for students to shift between working arrangements. The primary educational benefit is to foster not just proficiency in mathematical computation, but to foster collaboration, discourse, and real-world application of mathematics.
FLEX Block 1 - intervention / enrichment (30 minutes on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays)	<p>Students have two FLEX blocks to provide increased opportunities for enrichment and intervention, based on students’ individual needs. These opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read 180 reading intervention with trained teacher *math tutoring with tutor or intervention with math interventionist *individual or group counseling with counselor educator, school adjustment counselor, or social worker *BAM (Becoming a Man partner program) *WOW (Working on Womanhood partner program) *Spanish *iReady personalized learning program
FLEX Block 2 - intervention / enrichment (30 minutes on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays)	
RISE Block - Social-Emotional Learning (30 minutes on Wednesdays)	Once a week, students participate in Second Steps lessons or restorative justice-styled community building circle. These could take place in the classroom, in a common area, or in an outdoor classroom. The primary educational benefit is fostering a respectful and collaborative learning environment while teaching specific SEL skills.
English Language Arts (55 minutes)	Our curriculum for ELA is Fishtank, a high quality, standards-based curriculum. Through thematic units and well-structured lessons, this curriculum integrates its five

	<p>guiding principles: (1) knowledge-building to nurture critical thinking (2) diverse, relevant, and rigorous texts (3) student-led discussion and collaboration to build academic discourse skills (4) learning to write and writing to learn (5) intellectual preparation for teachers to prepare them to support students. Lessons are designed for students to think deeply on important topics, share ideas and learn from the ideas of their peers, and write in-depth analysis of the text. The primary educational benefit is to ensure that students are developing grade-appropriate language arts skills through higher level thinking.</p>
<p>Recess / Lunch (30 minutes)</p>	
<p>Science (55 minutes)</p>	<p>For science lessons, teachers utilize the state standards to guide instruction, along with a variety of lessons from various curricula that cover those standards. Science lessons in particular, would benefit from the option of working in a school garden or outdoor classroom. The primary educational benefit is to support students in becoming proficient in the related concepts outlined in the content standards, but also to bring the content to life with hands-on experiences.</p>
<p>Social Studies (55 minutes)</p>	<p>Our curriculum is Investigating History which is comprehensive, authentic, inquiry-based, and standards-aligned. The four principles of this curriculum are: (1) historical inquiry and investigation (2) historical empathy and human connections (3) civic engagement and current world relevance, and (4) culturally sustaining pedagogy. The primary educational benefit is to support students to engage with challenging topics and rigorous texts while becoming better readers, writers, and thinkers.</p>
<p>Dismissal (10 minutes)</p>	<p>Students' last academic block is their homeroom class. Their homeroom teacher checks in with them and escorts them to the indoor dismissal area, where their phones are returned to them and they exit the building. While not a structured program, this is a social time of day where students hang out with peers and check in staff to foster school connections. This area is separate from the elementary dismissal area.</p>