

OUT OF SCHOOL TIME

STRATEGIC PLAN



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OST VISION STATEMENT

Somerville Public Schools is committed to offering equitable access to a vibrant portfolio of Out of School Time opportunities that support student's academic, social, and emotional development from early childhood through high school and beyond. In partnership with families and community organizations, we offer a connected system of programs, with clear, consistent and affordable fee and financial assistance structures.

Full-time afterschool programming, including Community Schools and El Sistema, which anchor our Out of School Time system and provide high-quality expanded learning experiences centered on student growth and belonging.

OST Clubs offer students diverse pathways to explore interests, build skills, and deepen learning through arts, academics, clubs, and hands-on experiences.

Youth development, mentoring, and workforce pathways that support students' long-term success through leadership development and career-connected learning that prepares them for college, careers, and community engagement.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME BY THE NUMBERS

FULL-TIME AFTER SCHOOL

- Community Schools and Apollo (1055 students)
- El Sistema (75 students)

SUMMER & SCHOOL VACATION

- Community Schools Vacation Program (180 students)
- Summer Calculus Project, Music, CTE, BAM
(over 1500 students)

OST Clubs

- Buildwave (50 students)
- Danger Wizards (55 students)
- Robotics (60 students)

PARTNER PROGRAMS

- Soccer with Borders (40 students)
- Girl Start (25 students)
- Farrington Nature (30 students)
- Knowva Future Lab (25 students)



BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

LISTENING SESSIONS

Engaged families through two listening sessions to better understand their experiences, needs, and priorities.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Meets weekly and consists of staff from:

- SPS OST Department
- SFLC
- City of Somerville SomerPromise Department

Meets weekly

EXTERNAL CONSULTANT

Partnered with an external consultant to assess the current OST landscape, including program quality, access, and system alignment.

WORKING SESSIONS

The Out of School Time Steering Committee convened for a series of working sessions, totaling approximately eight hours, to review data, identify key challenges, and define shared priorities.

OST LISTENING SESSION DATA

Strengths

- **Variety and quality of OST programming** (10 comments): *"My child is enjoying the after school activities, such as environmental club, D&D, glad that it's not just sports."*
- **Positive relationships and quality of OST staff** (15 comments): *"Both of my kids do not want to be picked up early. They know who my kids are. There is a genuine care for the kids and the work." "My daughter loves leading clubs as a peer mentor."*
- **Increased access for immigrant families** (11 comments): *"The access for immigrants has increased, providing interpretation, in person assistance, pre-registration for underrepresented communities."*

Barriers

- **Communication that's accessible, transparent, and equitable** (31 comments): *"The expectation that this newsletter is the only form of communication is not great. We need to have multiple channels for families to learn about offerings."*
- **Financial strain** (11 comments): *"The fee system. Increase fees [and] create a more dynamic sliding scale. Increase the rack rate and offer more robust financial aid."*
- **Access for students with disabilities** (6 comments): *"Expanding summer and out of school time programming will be important, will take a lot of funding, but on the hearts and minds to do this."*

WE HEARD, AND THIS IS WHAT WE ARE DOING...

- **Celebrating strengths and remain committed to continuous improvement**
- **Communication that's accessible, transparent, and equitable**
 - ◆ Implementing a centralized system to manage data, attendance, registration, health records and more
 - ◆ SPS Website is consistently updated to reflect current offerings and important dates
 - ◆ Working closely with Communications Department to create consistent messaging district-wide
- **Financial Strain**
 - ◆ Developed a unified sliding scale that applies to all paid programming, ensuring sustainable and equitable access
 - ◆ Simplified the application process for financial aid
- **Access for students with disabilities**
 - ◆ Partnering with the Special Education Department to build capacity & develop regular training

OST GOALS & PRIORITIES

Goal 1: Further Develop a Coherent and Aligned Out-of-School Time System

Action Steps (1–3 years):

- **Define and document the full OST program model** – Community Schools, Partners, OST clubs, teacher-led clubs, day-time programming
- Position the **OST Steering Committee as the centralized body** for program alignment and oversight
- Establish **regular alignment structures District-wide** with school-based staff and OST Site-Directors
- **Clarify ownership and oversight** of daytime and after school enrichment programs (e.g., BAM, WOW, Springboard)
- Use **data to assign and align programming** across schools based on student and family needs

OST GOALS & PRIORITIES

Goal 2: Establish a Sustainable and Equitable Financial Model

Action Steps (1–3 years):

- Implement a **unified sliding scale** fee structure across all programs
- Launch a **simplified application and income declaration** process for scholarships
- Identify **additional funding sources**, including grants, city partnerships, universities and opportunities for donations
- Communicate **clear expectations** around enrollment, payment, and financial assistance
- Regularly review participation and access data to ensure **equity and access**

OST GOALS & PRIORITIES

Goal 3: Strengthen Operational Systems and Staffing

Build the infrastructure needed to run programs effectively and sustainably.

Action Steps (1–3 years):

- Fully implement a **centralized system** across all OST programs to streamline and manage data, attendance, registration, health records and more
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of **facilities and space usage**; establish clear space-sharing agreements across schools and partners
- Hire where necessary and strategically leverage current staffing

OST GOALS & PRIORITIES

Goal 4: Establish Clear and Consistent Communication Systems

Action Steps (1–3 years):

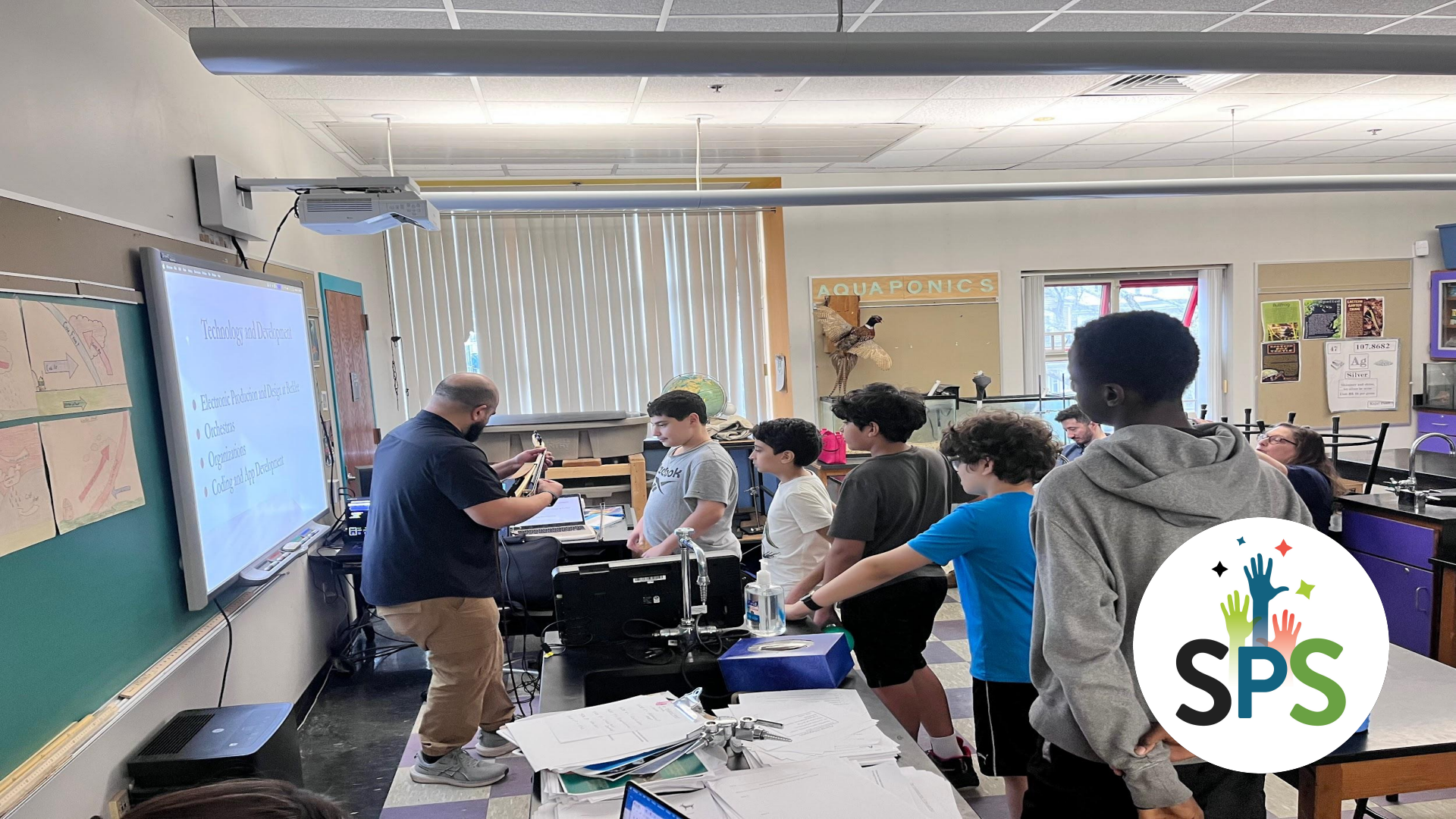
- Develop a centralized **digital catalog** with **integrated registration** of all OST programs
- Partner with the Communications Department and SFLC to ensure timely, proactive, **multi-lingual and accessible** family communication (e.g., program updates, deadlines, changes)
- Establish standardized internal and external communication protocols
- Implement regular **family touchpoints** at each site

SPS Summer Programming

The summer is looking bright...

- Our SPS Summer Programs are almost full!
- We're partnering with new programs to utilize school building space:
 - *Elizabeth Peabody House, Summer Spot, Knowva Future Lab, and BAM/WOW*
- We're using our new centralized system for health, safety and record sharing
- Increase in enrollment in middle school summer programming
 - *CTE, Robotics, Summer Success, and Calculus Project*





Technology and Development

- Electronic Production and Design in Retail
- Orchestras
- Organizations
- Coding and App Development

AQUAPONICS



SPS