

To: Ms. Liz Eldridge, Member, Somerville Public Schools School Committee

From: Dr. Jessica Boston Davis, Assistant Superintendent of Academics

Cc: Dr. Rubén Carmona, Superintendent
Dr. Emily Ackman, Chair, Somerville Public Schools School Committee
Ms. Kathleen Seward, Humanities Coordinator of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Date: February 18, 2026

Subject: Partnership with Springboard Collaborative via DESE's Early Literacy Tutoring Grant

Background:

In late January, SPS was awarded with [DESE's Early Literacy Tutoring Grant](#). The grant matched SPS with [Springboard Collaborative](#) to lead and implement Early Literacy Tutoring services. SPS previously partnered with Springboard during the 2022–2023 school year through a similar grant. This grant is specifically focused on first grade students performing below benchmark, as measured by DIBELS (students scoring in the strategic or intensive ranges).

Program Overview:

- **Staffing:** Springboard will hire SPS staff (Unit A, C, or student teachers) as tutors. SPS will pay the staff directly, then Springboard will reimburse SPS. Each teacher can tutor up to 10 students. Compensation is the rate indicated in the CBA (\$30 per hour).
- **Professional Development:** Springboard provides PD for staff on small group literacy instruction. Professional development is virtual and will begin the week of 2/23. Tutoring takes place after school, two - three times a week, for two 30 minute sessions.
- **Family Engagement:** Tutors will also hold approximately three family engagement meetings during this time.
- **Timeline:** The tutoring will be six - eight weeks and run from approximately March 9th - May 8th.

Implementation Overview:

- **Recruitment Efforts & Challenges:**
 - Although we were awarded with a grant that could support tutoring for first-grade students at every school, implementation is limited by the number of staff who serve as tutors. At this point in the school year, many educators are already committed to additional responsibilities (e.g., Instructional Leadership Teams, Common Planning Time leadership, mentoring, and District Instructional Leadership Team roles), making after-school recruitment more challenging.
 - An additional constraint was the compressed timeline between our initial award meeting with DESE—when we first learned the required implementation schedule—on Friday, January 30, and the staff confirmation deadline of Friday, February 13. This required posting positions, communicating the opportunity, recruiting, and hiring within a two-week window.

- Despite these challenges, the district made a strong, coordinated recruitment effort and achieved some success. Strategies included district-wide email outreach, leadership meeting announcements, direct outreach to staff who tutored in 2022, and targeted communication with student teachers.
- **Location Update:**
 - While we initially hoped to support multiple schools, we have currently recruited four teachers and one program manager, all from a single site. Because program capacity is directly dependent on the number of SPS tutors hired—and all current applicants are from the East—**Springboard has recommended narrowing the scope of implementation to East Somerville Neighborhood School.**
 - Although this differs from our original plan, the decision is supported by data. Middle of the Year (MOY) DIBELS results identify East as a priority site, as it has the largest number of first-grade students scoring in the strategic and intensive ranges (39 students).
 - We have confirmed with Springboard that the program start date cannot be delayed to allow for additional recruitment.
- **Student Recruitment:** Once we return from February break and confirm all staff, families and caregivers of all eligible students at East will be notified.
- **Curriculum:** Springboard's tutoring model, like Somerville's curriculum, is aligned with guidance from the National Reading Panel and will supplement the curricular materials educators use during the school day. [Here is a link to an overview of the Springboard curriculum.](#)

Additional Considerations:

- **Data Sharing:** Springboard and SPS will have a data sharing agreement where we will report DIBELS data before the start of tutoring and after it concludes (MOY and EOY data). We can share the aggregated data.
- **Expansion:** We will explore other Out-Of-School learning and tutoring opportunities like this for other grades. If additional grants become available we will certainly apply.

Conclusion:

We are very grateful to DESE for this grant opportunity and very excited to partner again with Springboard, which has consistently been a strong and effective implementation partner. Despite some challenges with a very compressed timeline, we are enthusiastic about the opportunity to launch the tutoring program at East in just two weeks, and look forward to the impact it will have on our students.