

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Monday, February 4, 2019 – Regular Meeting**

7:00 p.m. - Board of Aldermen Chambers - City Hall

**Members present:** Ms. Palmer, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Normand, Ms. O’Sullivan, Mr. Green, Ms. Pitone, and President Ballantyne.

**Members absent:** Mayor Curtatone (7:40 p.m.) and Mr. Futrell.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Normand called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. with a moment of silence followed by a salute to the flag of the United States of America. Chair Normand asked Superintendent Skipper to call the roll, results of which were as follows: PRESENT – 7 – Ms. O’Sullivan, Ms. Pitone, Dr. Ackman, Ms. Palmer, Ms. Normand, Alderman Ballantyne and Mr. Green. ABSENT – 2 – Mr. Futrell and Mayor Curtatone.

**II. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

The Somerville High School student representatives Emily Nash and Aislinn Cannistraro were present and reported on the following topics:

- In the recent Northeastern Conference track meet, Somerville Girls placed 3rd overall and Somerville Boys placed 4th overall.
- Seniors are continuing to complete graduation preparations - yearbooks, cap & gown, etc.
- MCAS Biology Sessions begin this week, held in the SHS library.
- Parent Teacher Conferences and Open House will take place this Thursday.
- Somerville Highlander Theatre Co. presents Holy Broth at 7:00pm in the auditorium this Wednesday, February 8<sup>th</sup>.
- AP math students will head to Malden Catholic this Saturday for the second session of the year held by Mass Insight.

Ms. Pitone asked the student representatives if the new proposed Powderhouse Studios innovation school has been a topic of conversation among students at Somerville High School. Ms. Pitone asked the students to find out and report at a later meeting if they haven’t heard anything as of right now. Both Ms. Cannistraro and Ms. Nash said they have not heard anything but will ask around and report at a later meeting.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Residents Kristen Strezo and Christine DeWeese then gave public comment. Ms. Strezo and Ms. DeWeese started by saying that #MeToo has been a topic of much public conversation. Emma Brennan Bryant, a sexual misconduct resource advocate, works for Cambridge Health Alliance as part of the SHS Teen Connection center. Ms. Strezo and Ms. DeWeese asked that her information be shared with all students at Somerville High School as a Title IX resource. Sexual harassment policy is communicated to all students and teachers. We want consent taught every year from elementary school to high school. Right now, some students aren’t getting health education until junior year. It’s important that we have clear and consistent messaging about consent for all of our students.

Cindy Weisbart, Somerville resident, homeowner, and high school history teacher in Cambridge, came to speak in support of Powderhouse Studios. She believes that we should be integrating a school into the 21st century and preparing students for that future. STEAM and resource access are critically important. Ms. Weisbart appreciates the school’s cohort model. Process for building innovation school has had deep integrity — not expensive or isolated. This is a model for all students — not something that stands alone. Plan is for the school to be integrated. This is thrilling and exciting — and especially because it was developed by Somerville residents.

Veronica Barron also came to speak in support of the Powderhouse Studios school proposal. Many things that inspire me about this school. Worked recently for a food access nonprofit — wrap around services for youth. Important for a school to be modeling these features and work in partnership with other schools in the district. As someone who works in the arts, Somerville is an exciting place. Arts integrated into holistic experience in the district. Robust experience that enriches society. Ms. Barron said she hoped School Committee would support the Powderhouse Studios proposal.

**IV. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

**A. District Report**

Congratulations to our **Art students and educators** for their outstanding work throughout the year, and for recently earning recognition from the state for entries at the Statewide YAM Exhibit 2019, and the Scholastic Art & Writing Competition, sponsored by the SMFA at Tufts and the Boston Globe.

Somerville received statewide awards for entries in the following grade levels: Kindergarten, Grade 4, Grade 6, Grade 8, High School, and Overall K-4. These awards were sponsored by Sargent Art Company and the MA Art Educators Assn. Somerville received 6 of 17 awards, competing against many entries from districts throughout MA. Entries will be displayed at the statewide YAM Exhibit 2019, located at the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza in Boston, and will be open weekdays February 11-March 27 (closed weekends and President's Day). A YAM Family Celebration will be held Sunday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 12:00-4:00pm that includes an Awards Ceremony at 12:30pm.

The following SHS students recently earned Scholastic Art & Writing awards:

- Tyler Gaffney earned 4 Gold Keys – art teacher is Mrs. Jessica Howard
- Simone Gwynn earned 1 Honorable Mention – art teacher is Mrs. Jessica Howard
- Nikolas Protopapas earned 3 Honorable Mentions – art teachers are Ms. Chau & Mrs. Howard

Congratulations to all and thank you for your tremendous work and for representing your school, your district, and your city with distinction!

I would like to remind the community that School Committee **Winter Office Hours** are continuing through February 10<sup>th</sup>. Please stop by any of their office hours, which are being held at locations throughout the city, to share your thoughts about the upcoming school year budget and the proposed new innovation school, Powderhouse Studios. You can learn more about Powderhouse Studios at [www.somerville.k12.ma.us/powderhouse-proposal](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/powderhouse-proposal). You'll also find a listing of the School Committee Winter Hours on that site.

Speaking of Powderhouse Studios, the second of two **Public Hearings** on the proposed new school will take place this Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 6:00pm at the West Somerville Neighborhood School. The community is invited to attend to learn more about this proposal and share their thoughts about the plan. In addition, a Powderhouse Studios Community Presentation will take place on Tuesday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School. We encourage you to join us at both of these important sessions.

We want to remind you that this Thursday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, the Somerville Prevention Services, Somerville High School PTSA, and Somerville's Health and Human Services Department will host a discussion on Marijuana, Vaping and Youth. Learn more about the changing landscape of these products in our communities, and their potential impact on youth. **Marijuana, Vaping & Youth: A Discussion for Adults**. The event takes place Thursday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 6:00-7:30pm at the SHS Highlander Café/Culinary Arts Bistro.

For one night only, the Highlander Theatre Company will be hosting a performance of **"Holy Broth"** this Friday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm at the Somerville High School Auditorium. Holy Broth is the story of Ashley, a Puerto Rican girl from Philly, who is getting a D in Spanish, and how – with the help of an old soup recipe and some family history – she creates a new language with her grandmother. Friday's performance of Holy Broth will be part of an evening of performances and honors that will include the induction of new members into the International Thespians Society. On Saturday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, the Highlander Theatre Company presented Holy Broth at the Emerson College High School Drama Festival, and earned praise from adjudicators for their strong performances, costume/makeup design by SHS student Athena Parkman, and Direction by SHS senior Valerie Farley. Tickets are Pay-What-You-Can for SPS students and staff and \$10 for the general public. Tickets are available at the door or online at [highlandertheatre.org](http://highlandertheatre.org).

- Powderhouse Studios Presentation

At this time Superintendent Skipper directed the attention back to Chair Normand for the Powderhouse Presentation introduction.

Chair Normand asked members around the horseshoe to share any Powderhouse Studio questions they may have at the moment.

Mr. Green was curious to know what the salaries of Powderhouse Studios Limited team members are? Could we see the 2018 990 for the nonprofit? Who are receiving funds from the organization? He also had some questions pertaining to the lease. It looks like more space than needed is being leased, what are the arrangements for the space? How would the leasing work? Somerville Public School is not a party to the lease, correct? How would this work if the school was authorized from 0 to 4 years, what happens afterwards?

Ms. O'Sullivan asked for some clarity on the schedule and expectations for students. She wants more information on how group learning activities would take place when students are on different schedules. Ms. O'Sullivan wants to know more about how staff get digital literacy licenses, especially as students are on boarding. She also asked for some more definition on governance and what types of decisions they would be making.

Ms. Pitone said she had several questions. She asked that leasing information be made public, and that at a minimum, general terms and actual cost per square foot be provided by the Powderhouse Studios team either in writing or at a regular meeting. How does having a separate entity that has the contract to the space work? What if the 501c3 nonprofit defaults? What would happen then to Powderhouse students? Outplaced students are referenced in the proposal, Ms. Pitone wonders, if the district does not currently have the skillset to serve outplaced students, how will Powderhouse Studios provide that skillset? How will the board of trustees and director of Powderhouse Studios work with the superintendent? Will this school be in consultation with or under supervision of the superintendent? What kind of support would central office have to provide to PHS to make sure it launches successfully? Ms. Pitone also asked for more detailed information on Intellectual Property and how it works?

Dr. Ackman was curious to know more about how student vacations work. And in terms of the 1000-hour project and expected time frames of completion for graduation, how do we make sure students stay on track? Dr. Ackman also asked about budget and whether a finalized proposed budget had been received.

Superintendent Skipper replied that on Wednesday they are going to put forth the budget of what the school would cost based on the positions as part of the innovation proposal and the original cost from the Powderhouse Studios original budget from 2015. The district is working with the applicant to develop an accurate and detailed budget.

Ms. O'Sullivan asked if the budget would be put forth at the public hearing on Wednesday. Superintendent Skipper said it would be provided prior to the hearing and would be made available to the public.

Dr. Ackman asked some questions on Mr. Futrell's behalf. How do you think it would work out if the Powderhouse Team and the District Administration do not agree on a building level implementation of policy? What if that policy included purchasing of equipment where Powderhouse might assert the authority to purchase with XQ dollars instead of district dollars?

Chair Normand made a request again for a comprehensive budget. Is there anything to prevent Powderhouse Studios Limited 501(c)3 from applying for the same grants as other district schools or the entire district? Student per capita is based on 180 days and yet staff salaries are based on a longer year, how does that math work? Chair Normand asked the applicants to please provide a student teacher ratio model which takes into account fluctuation and student attendance. When do we see the lottery formula? She requested a copy of the 2017 Innovation Plan with a record of all amendments and votes taken. Who is currently on the Powderhouse Studio's payroll and what does the hiring process look like for them if this becomes a district school? Is there an upper age limit for who can attend Powderhouse Studios?

Ms. Palmer would like to build on a few of her colleague's questions. She appreciates Mr. Green pursuing the Powderhouse Studios Limited 990 Forms, and Ms. Normand requesting payroll information but thinks the district should have access to all Powderhouse finances. In terms of the out of district placement questions asked by Ms. Pitone and Ms. Normand she wants to add that when talking about Powderhouse Studio's reflecting the diverse population of the district Special Education and English Language Learner populations are not being talked about. She wants to make sure this is more clearly and honestly defined. Ms. Palmer would like more information on the mechanics of the lottery and whether and how it will be reflective of the district.

Mayor Curtatone arrived at 7:40pm

Andre Green asked how much of the education design will be co-constructed? What procedures will be put in place to address gaps in students incoming educational inequities?

Ms. Pitone shared some process questions. If and when will the administration share their suggestions for changes or deletions to the 2017 Innovation Plan? When will administration share their perspective on the proposal? Intellectual Property is a real sticking point for her and she would need to know more about that before the vote.

Ms. Palmer then reviewed language of the Innovation Statute. She made a request that counsel advise on rights of approving an Innovation School under the statute. One understanding based on her reading is that School Committee have to approve the school for up to three years. What are we exactly voting on?

President Ballantyne asked, in terms of process, why doesn't School Committee just express their sticking points or stopping points at the next meeting? Chair Normand asked if anybody had an area of concern at the moment that would keep them from supporting this school proposal.

Ms. O'Sullivan said she needs the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year school budget figures and wants sample projects mapped to standards.

Green agreed with the school budget and open books about current finances. He would also need more information on how this affects the lease and to actually see the weighted enrollment algorithm. How will the school keep its promise to diversity and equity?

Dr. Ackman made a request for a detailed monthly timeline of completion goals to be able to successfully launch the school by August 2019, should this be approved.

Ms. Normand set a deadline to receive this information by February 14<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. O'Sullivan wanted to add to Dr. Ackman's request and make sure that the Powderhouse Studios Limited hiring process is also disclosed and included.

Ms. Pitone said she was unclear about the chain of authority relative to the district. Is the Superintendent or Board of Trustees in charge of the school?

Chair Normand asked colleagues to thoughtfully draft amendments to the Innovation Plan and come prepared with those for Executive Session on Wednesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Normand then invited Shaunalynn Duffy to give the Powderhouse Studios presentation

Ms. Duffy said that tonight's presentation will focus on facilities, scheduling, staffing and district policies.

At the last school committee meeting there was talk about how a lot of the model around the curriculum and staffing falls out of real focus on individualization; that projects are a way by which we are trying to create learning experiences that are really focused on personalization for young people. The same kind of approach is being taken with the space they are hoping to be in at the Powderhouse campus. Here is an overview of some of the planning that has already happened around the space.

The Powderhouse team was first pulled into this project by a group called The Collaborative Living Project, which is a senior living group that was looking to build an aging in place community. They were really interested in being based in a mixed-used development, The Powderhouse team shares the excitement and vision of being in a mixed used development and are looking forward to collaborating with neighbors. There has been initial talk with the Collaborative Living Project folks about opportunity for youth mentorships and opportunities for artist to share work. Powderhouse Studios will also be responsible for shared resources and amenities that are in the space specifically, a makerspace workshop space, community function hall which will be called The Hub, as well as a 2D and 3D art space that PHS will be responsible for programming which will feature student work as well as allowing them to curate and program those artistic spaces. There is also a lot of excitement about building these spaces from the ground up and how the type of work they are hoping will happen at PHS can play out in a space that's really well matched to that type of work. One of the questions in the question and answer portion tonight was around sharing some of the materials around the design of the complex. Those were shared but wanted to include some more information in this presentation.

In terms of positions, we talked about it a little bit last week but wanted to share out a more position by position staffing chart. One of the commitments we're making in the first few years is to being over-staffed. There has been a lot of talk during these presentations about starting small and growing slowly being really important to us, to make sure we're able to be successful as a school. But also that we're able to be successful in integrating with the district and working well with the systems and protocols that are in place. Overstaffing is a big part of that.

Next, I want to touch base on how the schedule is going to play out. PHS is going to take a gradual release model in terms of the independence that young people will be able to exercise over the work that they are doing. This is also reflected in the proposed schedule. In large part it's because when we're doing projects, we're thinking about 2 things we want to be true about time. One is that we know that we'll need longer blocks of time and two, we know people are going to want to use time in a way that's responsive to the projects that youth are doing. And here we've included two weekly schedule samples of what students might experience at Powderhouse Studios.

We're proposing PHS as a year-round school. The school itself, as it is currently negotiated with the union, would be open for 240 days a year and would close during federal holidays, some maintenance days, and some of the traditional school breaks. Staff would work 220 of those days, so they'd be staggering vacations in order to make those ratios work. Families would be scheduling individualized schedules in coordination with staff. We're imagining that any time off that young people take, other than sick days, would be scheduled in coordination with staff.

A big part of why all this scheduling flexibility is possible is because we are doing a longer day and a longer school year. We are exceeding the 990 hours of student learning time by quite a lot. So, the ability to take a sport every single quarter would still meet the amount of student learning time necessary.

The next portion of the presentation Ms. Duffy said would focus on some evocative policies that we're thinking about and why we are seeking autonomies within them. As well as how we are hoping to operationalize a lot of these pieces. When we're talking about policies we're thinking about both operational things, like scheduling and how absences are logged, but also thinking about larger scale policy thinking that needs to happen around how we can provide access to spaces and equipment that we may have at our campus. So thinking about the Community Hub and maker space. We know this is work that Somerville Public Schools has done before, so questions around this have already been answered but we want to make sure we do it right. Something else we're thinking about is Information Technology support specifically around physical computing. There are some other policies that are laid out in the Innovation Plan that I am not going to go through one by one, but specifically wanted to call out that the way we're hoping to identify and operationalize these policies is as a group that's made up of representatives from Central office who are in charge of managing those systems for the district already. Whether those systems are around curriculum, finances, Special Education, Human Resources etc. and having them be in communication helping the Powderhouse team to set up the systems within the school and integrate them into the district.

That is the last of what is being presented tonight by PHS.

Dr. Ackman thanks Ms. Duffy and stated that Powderhouse is committed to full site-based transparency. If the district was involved in this grant making process, I would like to see transparency up until this point. Who pays for district counsel representatives? Who pays for them? Where are they housed?

Mr. Resnick responded to the extent possible, we want to make budget details transparent. This is so the public can understand such things as funding for Powderhouse field trips and student projects.

Superintendent Skipper added that the spirit of the district integration cabinet was that a group would help support the implementation of school practices and policies. This is very common with school start ups.

Ms. Pitone commented that overstaffing seems common across all four years. What is the teacher to student ratio in other schools?

Superintendent Skipper explained that we are trying to be creative about how PHS would live within or near the PPA after the grant award is expired. Co-directors could become a single director in year four, and/or the school could pursue dual-licensure for some positions. This is hard to estimate until students have enrolled in the school.

Mr. Green had a quick follow-up question. We don't know the student population, could ELL and SPED populations be underrepresented?

Superintendent Skipper replied that we don't have consensus on the algorithm. At first blush, our legal had some concerns about the qualifiers for the algorithm. We would suggest that ELL students level 3 or higher would be appropriate at Powderhouse Studios. We are always evolving programs for out of district students to try to serve them in-district. I would not see an out-of-district student leaving the district and then returning to Powderhouse.

Mr. Green noted that schedule assumes breakfast and lunch, but he don't see how that is administered? How would kids being fed at Powderhouse Studios?

Mr. Resnick responded that the breakfast program in the morning would be similar to how Somerville Public Schools does this at other schools. School lunch and students eventually being able to get lunch off-campus. This would be worked out with the district working group. Mr. Green said that he's not seeing lunch aides or custodians as part of the plan.

Dr. Ackman asked: has anyone on your team ever started a school? Mr. Resnick responded no.

- 2019 – 2020 Schools Calendar

MOTION: Motion by Ms. Palmer to approve 2019 – 2020 School Calendar with SHS early release days added, update Passover day and Easter day. Seconded by Mr. Green.  
Motion approved via voice vote.

Ms. Palmer added that parents would appreciate a short memo on why the first day of school falls on the Wednesday before Labor Day.

President Ballantyne commented that her daughters advocated for school to start before Labor Day.

Mayor Curtatone added that we used to be overwhelmed with half-days. We should discuss having school on Good Friday.

## **V. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

### **A. School Committee Meeting for Rules Management: January 14, 2019 (Ms. Palmer)**

Rules Minutes/Report

Called to order at 6:50 pm

Attendees: Dr. Emily Ackman, Laura Pitone, Dr. Jeff Curley SPS COS, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Almi Abeyta and Caitlin Kelly, SPS Wellness Coordinator

The one item on the agenda was a revision of the proposed Wellness policy crafted by the Wellness Committee in the spring of 2018. This fall, the SC requested that the draft Wellness Policy be modified to separate what is policy (which is what is required and why) from district practice or procedures (how the goals of the policy will be implemented.) The goal of SC policy is to provide clear direction of what the district is doing and why it is doing it, but allow district staff the appropriate flexibility to establish and adjust practice or procedures, under the Superintendent's leadership, to meet the goals of the policy.

With this direction, an updated policy was submitted to the Rules subcommittee. Overall, the committee was impressed with the broadened scope that the Somerville Wellness Committee has introduced to include social/emotional health. The traditional policies primarily reference physical education/activity and health/nutrition This policy was reviewed and minor edits were made/and discussions had including:

- File number change from EDF (referred to as "Meal Plan Charge" in samples) to ADF (based on MASC and other district policy manuals, referred to as "Wellness Program")
- Including Pre in addition to K-12 for health, nutrition and physical education - This may result in changing in current programming, with the addition of Health education for Pre-K - 3rd (currently 4-8 and high school) and PE for Pre-K students.

- Editing to emphasize promoting healthy lifestyles first, then reference to childhood obesity
- The committee appreciated the inclusion of a definition for the word Wellness. There was discussion about the how descriptive the definition should be, for example explicitly stating elements including physical, social and emotional health (which ARE included in the intro.) Considered specifically listing elements of mental health, such as realizing potential, coping with normal stressors in life, working productively and making contribution to the community. But the consensus was keeping the definition about the wellness experience and process, versus aspiration outcomes, would be more authentic and useful for all students and families.

Due to time constraints, the committee did not walk through the details of the policy in comparison with the recommended MASC policy (2006) or policies for other districts (i.e. Cambridge adopted 2018), which include significantly more detail. There is the expectation that additional questions may be put forward during the regular school committee meetings.

A motion made by Dr. Ackman, seconded by Ms. Pitone, to approve the policy, with minor edits, and bring forward to the full School Committee. Motion approved.

We also discussed the potential scope of future meetings. Policies that the rules committee expects to receive over the next few months include Controlled Choice policy (from legal council), Equity Policy (scope from Long Range), Homework Policy (from Educational Subcommittee). There was a question about increasing practice of policies coming from other subcommittees and what function Rules should play in the process. Additional policies mentioned were for Distribution of Information district wide, as well as consideration of a separate policy for translation and interpretation for distributed information.

7:30 Motion to adjourn by Dr. Ackman, 2nd by Ms. Pitone, motion passed

MOTION: Motion by Ms. Palmer, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to accept the report of the Subcommittee Meeting for Rules Management of January 14, 2019.  
Motion approved via voice vote.

### **B. School Committee Meeting for Long Range: January 16, 2019 (Ms. Normand)**

Report of the School Committee meeting for Long Range Planning from January 16, 2019 at 8 Bonair Street,

Present: School Committee members: Emily Ackman, Dan Futrell, Lee Erica Palmer, Andre Green, Laura Pitone, Paula O'Sullivan, and Carrie Normand. Also in attendance were Superintendent Mary Skipper, Assistant Superintendent Almi Abeyta, Chief of Staff Jeff Curley, Data Coordinator Kenya Avant and Superintendent Fellow Jessica Boston Davis facilitated the meeting.

The school committee continued its work on developing an equity policy as the foundation document for our multipronged district-wide equity initiative. At this meeting, the School Committee discussed at length how to frame the policy to be both broad enough to cover all students and specific enough to address the needs of historically underserved populations, both in terms of access to opportunities and supports needed to be successful. We also discussed the distinction between developing policy and designing an implementation plan, but we did not yet resolve how to proceed. There was agreement about the need for a policy to include specific language about reporting to the School Committee about progress made towards equity goals and some discussion of what accountability might look like. There was also agreement about the need for high expectations and clarification for intended outcomes.

The next Long Range Planning meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 13, 7:00 pm, Central Office, 8 Bonair St.

MOTION: Motion by Ms. Normand, seconded by Ms. Palmer, to approve the Long Range Subcommittee Report of January 16, 2019.  
Motion approved via voice vote.

### **C. School Committee Meeting for Finance and facilities: January 30, 2019 (Mr. Futrell)**

Tabled until next meeting.

## **VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **A. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual**

The following policies are being presented this evening for second reading:

- Homework Policy

Ms. Palmer started off by saying this is really exciting work. This is a huge improvement and appreciates the district's and homework committee's work. She is very happy to see a lot of her amendments reflected. Ms. Palmer then asked: How would cumulative homework time be calculated by teachers?

Dr. Abeyta responded this issue has come up in conversations with principals. We are working on common planning time and early release Wednesday to help teachers work through this issue.

MOTION: Motion by Ms. Palmer, seconded by Ms. O'Sullivan to change cumulative amount of homework to collective impact.

Ms. Pitone commented that both should be included because of the literal aspect of "cumulative amount of homework". Ms. Palmer changed her amendment to include both "cumulative homework and collective impact".

Motion approve via voice vote.

Ms. Palmer pointed out where the policy states "shall be assigned over district observed holidays". On the School calendar it states that long term assignments will not be given on the holidays listed on the calendar, which aren't district observed holidays. She is looking for some consistency.

Ms. O'Sullivan agreed that there should be some consistency and thinks language around this should be added to the policy.

Mr. Green made a motion, and then after discussion, withdrew the amendment.

Ms. Palmer asked a question regarding homework not being assigned over these holidays and what the spirit of the statement was, it seems like this might be hard to comply with.

Dr. Abeyta replied that the spirit was the students not be assigned homework over a long vacation or holiday break.

MOTION: Motion by Ms. Palmer, seconded by Mr. Green to add the sentence directly from the calendar "long term assignments will not be due on any of the district holidays" to the homework policy.  
Motion approved via voice vote.

Superintendent Skipper agreed that adding this sentence made sense in terms of clarity.

MOTION: Motion by Ms. Palmer, amend to clarify grades 3-5 and 6-8 should read 30 minutes' maximum "per day" 2 to 3 nights per week and 60 minutes' maximum "per day" 2 to 3 nights per week, seconded by Dr. Ackman.

Ms. Pitone made a suggestion to substitute "per day" with "limited to" within parentheses in front of "2 to 3 nights per week".

Motion approved via voice vote.

MOTION: Motion by Ms. Palmer, seconded by Mr. Green to strike "final" from in front of grade in the last sentence of the Grades K-2 section.  
Motion approved via voice vote.

Ms. Palmer asked how would we implement this policy.

Superintendent Skipper replied that she intends to bring the policy to principals at the principal's meeting next week and review the policy with them, so they in turn could review it with staff. We need to make the principals aware of this change, so they can communicate to their staff. Dr. Abeyta agreed.



Mr. Green asked for some clarification of whether this means implementation would be "immediatelyish" as opposed to in the fall.

To which Superintendent Skipper responded yes.

MOTION: Motion by Ms. Pitone to approve amended homework policy, seconded by Ms. Palmer.  
Motion approved via voice vote.

- Workforce Diversity Policy

Ms. Palmer said that counsel did get back to us on a few minor changes and there are a few substantive changes. Counsel wanted us to change the first sentence from "the goal of this policy" to "a goal of this policy" and move the first sentence to become the last sentence of the first paragraph. The second change is to change "under represented population" to "district staff". Also to make the same exact change on paragraph 4. The Human Resources Department also reviewed this and they added a fourth step to the hiring process which is "Recommendation for hire". Otherwise the final sentence should have "Human Resources" in front of "administration".

Mr. Green thanked all of the staff and counsel for their work on this.

MOTION: Motion by Ms. Palmer, seconded by Dr. Ackman, to approve policy with changes outlined by Ms. Palmer.  
Motion approved via voice vote.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Report out of Fall Office Hours**

Ms. Pitone gave her report out of Fall Office Hours.

Mr. Green: constituents talked to him about homework policy, the needs of diversity hiring workforce. And the Healey playground, especially the tot lot.

Dr. Ackman added that for her most of my constituent comments were around the need for more staff diversity.

Ms. Normand said the most consistent thing was asking for more consistent pre-K access to the west side of Somerville.

### **B. Powderhouse Report out on First Public Hearing** (Chair Normand)

Ms. Normand gave the following report.

MOTION: Motion by Ms. Normand, seconded by Mr. Green to approve the Powderhouse First Public Hearing report.  
Motion approved via voice vote.

Ms. Palmer asked that the PHS Public Hearing link be shared.

### **Field Trips** (Recommended action: approval) **April 16, 2020 – April 23, 2020**

A group of Somerville High School Juniors and Seniors will visit Southern California to explore STEM fields and increase student engagement in Science. Transportation via airplane and charter bus. Student cost may vary from \$0 - \$2000.

Field Trip tabled pending a change.

## **VIII. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

### **Ms. Palmer**

Ms. Palmer would like to see the School Memorandum of Understanding with the School Resource Officers and meet some of the officers.

Superintendent Skipper said we will invite some of the STEPS officers and Chief Fallon to come speak to School Committee. School Administration will develop a memo on this.

**Mr. Green**

Mr. Green would like if the memo had data on interactions/incidents with SRO's over the last five years. Ms. Skipper said we don't really have arrests, but she would like to share data and more information about the STEPS Program. Superintendent Skipper said the Director of Student Services Rich Melillo will work on this.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Prior to adjourning, Dr. Ackman expressed the School Committee's condolences for the following people who recently passed away:

Patricia Keane, Sister of Kathleen Donahue, Paraprofessional at the Healey School.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:56 p.m. via voice vote.

**Related Items**

Agenda

2019 – 2020 School Calendar Powderhouse

Studios Presentation Powderhouse Studios

Questions and Answers

Homework Policy

Workforce Diversity Policy

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE,  
MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
BOARD OF ALDERMEN CHAMBERS  
REGULAR MEETING – FEBRUARY 4, 2019 – 7:00 P.M.**

**Somerville Public Schools - School Committee Vision Statement/Goals**

We believe in developing the whole child - the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical potential of all students - by providing students with the skills, opportunities, and resources that will nurture innovative ideas, foster pride in diversity, inspire students to become lifelong learners and empower them to enrich their communities.

- Goal #1: Increase achievement and access for all students. Reduce all performance gaps by half.  
Goal #2: Develop and implement a comprehensive PreK-12 social-emotional learning framework that provides students with the skills they need for social and academic success.  
Goal #3: Increase engagement with the community to reflect the community in which we live.  
Goal #4: Continue to develop and implement innovative ways of measuring student academic performance and school quality such as formative assessment, performance-based tasks, and whole quality indicators.  
Goal #5: Develop a comprehensive plan for Universal Kindergarten Readiness that supports intellectual, physical, and social/emotional growth from birth to Pre-K.  
Goal #6: Develop and implement a strategy to recruit, develop, and retain a diverse and talented staff.

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Call to order with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

**II. REPORT OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES III.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**IV. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

**A. District Report**

- 2019-2020 School Calendar
- Powderhouse Studios Update

**V. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

**A. School Committee Meeting for Rules Management:** January 14, 2019 (Ms. Palmer)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Rules Management of January 14, 2019.

**B. School Committee Meeting for Long Range Planning:** January 16, 2019 (Ms. Normand) MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Long Range Planning of January 16, 2019. **C. School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities:** January 30, 2019 (Mr. Futrell)

MOTION: To accept the report of the School Committee Meeting for Finance and Facilities of January 30, 2019.

**VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**A. Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual**

The following policies are being presented this evening for second reading:

- Homework Policy
- Workforce Diversity Policy

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Report out of Fall Office Hours**

**B. Powderhouse Report out on First Public Hearing** (Chair Normand)

**C. Field Trips** (Recommended action: approval)

**April 16, 2020 – April 23, 2020**

A Group of Somerville High School Juniors and Seniors will visit Southern California to explore STEM fields and increase student engagement in Science. Transportation via airplane and charter bus. Student cost may vary \$0 - \$2000.

**VIII. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

**SOMERVILLE  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**2019-2020  
School Calendar**

**Important Dates**

AUGUST '19				
T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
	27	28	29	30

SEPTEMBER '19				
T	W	TH	F	S
9				
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

OCTOBER '19				
M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

NOVEMBER '19				
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DECEMBER '19				
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23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

JANUARY '20				
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FEBRUARY '20				
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17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

MARCH '20				
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			12	13
		18		
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

APRIL '20				
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MAY '20				
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JUNE '20				
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15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

**Quarters**  
 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 8/28 11/1 (45 dlys)  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 11/4 1/21 (5 days)  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 1/23 3/31 (45 doys)  
 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 4/1 6/11 (45 days)

**Half-Day Wednesdays**

Aug. 28  
 Sept. 18  
 Oct. 2, 16  
 Dec. 11  
 Jan. 8, 22  
 Feb. 12  
 Mar. 11, 25  
 Apr. 1  
 May 6, 20  
 Jun 10

Augus – 2 days  
 10 – Sda! MM  
 26 – t day for Staff Pld. Oewl.  
 27 – Stall Pld. O...lopn'nt, Ponlo Report  
 28 – t day for Slude<>ts H2 (1/2 day)  
 30 – ttiSchad (OIliceoOpen)  
 \$cptc!mbor – 20 days  
 2 – No scl:lol Labor Oay  
 3 – 1 day for Klndergarten and PK students  
 30 – Rosh Hashanah  
Oct: tob!!f – 22 days  
 1 – Rosh HaManah  
 9 – ypm Kipptr  
 14 – scllool – Incl!genous People. - Oay  
 27 – !> wah Begjns  
 November!r – 17 days  
 5 – No scl:lol – Ek!t!on Oay Prof. Devel! .8.12/  
 PTA Conf. 12:30-2:30  
 11 – No School-Veterans Oay  
 27 – B<lg11 Than!sglw.g Rceoes of noon  
December – 1 \$days  
 23 – Begin Wmer Seq>> OriCf'rlc:t Cbrj:;qnas-  
 IWSand k'mnraa 12061  
 73 – HamJtl@h Rtoin  
 Ianyarv – 21 dan  
 ■ -No school – New Y. - (\$day  
 2 – Classes resume  
 20 – tti scllool – Martin luther King Day  
February – 1S dan  
 s – Iunar New Year  
 17-21 – February Vacation (include \$R-residents'  
 Oay)  
 Marsh – 22 days  
April – 16 days  
 10 – Good Fnday  
 19 – pasr,oyer begjos/fAyr  
 20-24 – AP<i!Vacation (inclJdes Patoots  
 Oay)  
 May – 20 daya  
 5\* – Ramadan begiM  
 25 – no scllool – Memorial Oay  
 29 – Class Oay (tentative)  
 Jyne – 9days  
 1 – fld at-filr  
 12 – Last day of ocllool (180 dlyo)  
 19 – 185th day

Hall-Day All Students PK-12  
 Medal Dates for SHS Seniors  
 Maj...  
**Dams undertined above represent the district's major religious and cultural holidays.** Observance allowed and isiMuc 1\;lildays begin at undown o!lthe preceding day. Scmerville Public Schools staff members will do their bet to refrain from scheduling one-twe events, field ips,# athletic cemper!tJOn\$. audit-ons, tests quiUeoiO< theoe doyo. Long-term assignmets .;unO< bo due on the day of cxthe day aft.,ono of these holidays, \* Est.m t.ed

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 please C!Q!CMt Kaiehc:mc smiagoo--  
 b.ac'f! d!12 wrmtk up!b



PREFACE

This presentation was prepared for the Somerville School Committee regarding Powderhouse Studios, regarding the proposed logistics of Powderhouse's staffing, schedule, and operational policies.



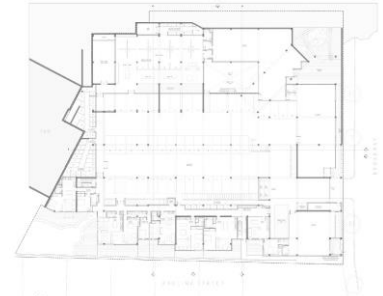
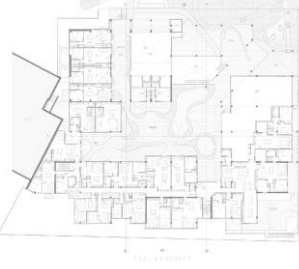
UNITING LEARNING WITH LIVING AND WORKING

Powderhouse Studios will be located at the most use... Powderhouse Studios provides an environment at the intersection of the Collaborative Living Project (CLP)...



GREAT SPACES RHYME

Just as other projects are designed to... Great Spaces Rhyme is a design philosophy that...



START OVERSTAFFED
To begin the process of staffing, the first step is to identify the roles and responsibilities that will be needed to support the program...

Staffing table with columns for Role (Program Designer, Project Manager, Youth Advocate, Narrative, Computation, Induction, Cultural Competency, Social Work, Admin) and rows for Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4.

STAFFING ROLES
Faculty: 30-40 youth, DLCS credentials, Experience doing creative projects...
Specialists: Computation specialist, Narrative specialist, SPED, ELL credentials...
Leadership: Staff will be organized into a leadership team...

STAFFING PLAN
Staffing plan table with columns for Role (Program Designer, Project Manager, Youth Advocate, Narrative, Computation, Induction, Cultural Competency, Social Work, Admin) and rows for Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4.



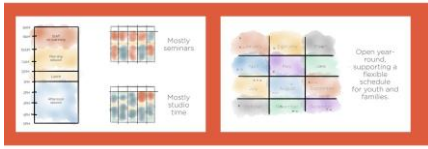
GRADUAL RELEASE MODEL
A graph showing the percentage of time spent in facilitated seminars versus independent internships over a 100% progress toward graduation.

**INDIVIDUALIZED PROJECTS → FLEXIBLE, CONTIGUOUS TIME**

Projects are hard. That's part of why Powderhouse Studios is built around them. You never know exactly how they'll go or what they need to succeed. This means starting through false, adjusting course as you learn, and dealing with problems and questions you never anticipated. This requires large blocks of contiguous, flexible scheduled time.

Similarly, individualization is hard. It requires time for mentoring, for work with youth to discover and cultivate interests, for tailored mentoring around individual needs. These needs cannot always be predicted or scheduled, meaning the Powderhouse's individualization also requires large blocks of contiguous, flexible scheduled time.

Taken together, this means that Powderhouse will be open year-round, and in coordination with families and cohort teams, youth's schedule will be designed to meet family needs while supporting the gradual release model required to scaffold youth's transition to increasing independence, self-efficacy, and self-regulation as they progress toward graduation.



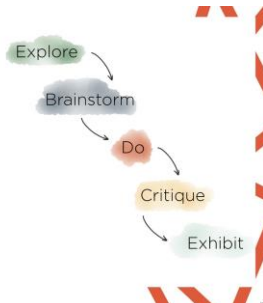
**GRADUAL RELEASE IN A PROGRAM**

Students release project and studio work in a gradual release model, starting with a high level of support and scaffolding, and moving toward independence and self-direction.

Students are supported by a team of mentors and staff, who provide scaffolding and support as they work through their projects and studios.

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**WEEKLY SCHEDULES**

Weekly schedules are designed to be flexible and adaptable, allowing for changes in programming and student needs.

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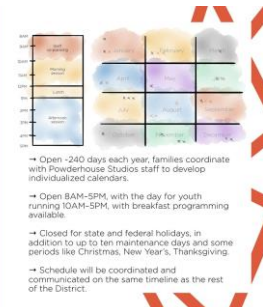
**SCHEDULE CALENDAR**

The schedule will be coordinated and communicated on the same timeline as the rest of the District.

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Find out more about the Powderhouse Studios proposal at

[powderhouse.org/authorization](http://powderhouse.org/authorization)

**HOW ARE POLICIES DEVELOPED?**

Schools are complex. When developing a new model, those complex systems often require new policies to govern everything from attendance tracking to transportation. Many areas for policy development have been identified by the District and innovation team. Governance and policy are essential to the innovation effort. To fully develop and integrate policies, with District practice requires significant effort. The District Integration Working Group will complete District and Powderhouse governance—supported by outside experts as appropriate—and will be responsible for operationalizing Powderhouse design on the District side of things over the coming year.





**[DRAFT, NOT FOR CIRCULATION] School Committee and Constituent Questions about Powderhouse Studios  
last revised 31 January 2019 — DRAFT, NOT FOR CIRCULATION**

[SC Questions Answered](#)

[SC Questions Unanswered](#)

[Constituent Questions Answered](#)

*N.B. Answers primarily written by Powderhouse Studios team, with review and feedback by district Central Office staff. Some questions have been flagged “Awaiting additional district information” where additional information has been solicited.*

## School Committee Questions (Answered)

### Curriculum

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#### **What is a program vs a project? What is the potential scope of projects and programs at the school?**

A program is similar to a class or after-school program. A project describes a unit of work that a student does in a program. Projects would likely start small (~10 hours) and could grow to ~1,000 hours over the course of youth’s time at Powderhouse. Programs also vary in length, but most will likely be 6–12 week programs to begin.

#### **UPDATED: Could we get examples of potential student projects and faculty programs of study? These concrete examples would help to understand what students might actually be doing.**

The Powderhouse team has had the opportunity to work with our design team this year to further develop curricular materials for programs of study, projects, and programs, also mapping those last two prospectively and retrospectively onto standards.

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

You can see prototypes of two smaller-scale, mapped projects called [Ghost Gardens](#) and [Prompts, Poetry, and Pathways](#) and a longer-scale, mapped program in which the team [Collaboratively Built a Drawing Robot](#).

#### **Are there opportunities for students to take World Languages?**

Yes, through cross-registration at local institutions, online classes, and partnerships with several local organizations, including the Boston Language Institute.

#### **How will academic progress and/or gaps be measured at PHS? How often are projects mapped back onto academic standards?**

Student work is regularly mapped back onto standards by youth and staff in weekly and quarterly sessions devoted to documentation. Academic achievement will be measured through a mixture of project critique and standards-aligned retrospective mapping, in addition to traditional measures like the MCAS. References to when youth leave are about generating transcripts for receiving institutions like colleges.

#### **What are the mechanisms by which students will be exposed to curricula and standards (e.g. in Social Studies and Visual/Performing Arts) which may not be covered in their projects?**

Projects are designed and developed with youth and families to ensure broad and individualized coverage (including topics like Social Studies). Youth may elect to cover these topics through other means than projects (e.g. cross-registration), as well.

### Budget

**What policies need to be in place to ensure that PHS's fundraising efforts are part of a comprehensive district plan?**

This will be part of a broader policy review. The Rules Committee is currently debating GBEBD, a new district policy regarding fundraising and solicitation. The Superintendent has authority to approve fundraising activities by school district employees and shall determine and communicate with the principals the circumstances under which fundraising proposals shall require Superintendent or School Committee approval in accordance with law and school district policy. Unless otherwise noted, PHS will be subject to all district policies, statutes, and state regulations not conflicting with the Innovation Plan.

**What is projected cost per student per year once this is up and running?**

Powderhouse's budget is modeled to be sustainable on its *per capita* from the district, which is set to what a charter would receive if it were to open up in the district. Of course, unlike a charter, that money would be staying within the District. The current per pupil for the District general fund is \$16,595. Presumably, this figure may also change in the future pending the District's work toward a [weighted student formula](#).

**Once the XQ grant runs out, how will PHS be sustained financially?**

In the short term, Powderhouse's outside fundraising from organizations like XQ, the Barr Foundation, and others can offset the startup and design costs of the school opening. Powderhouse has been budgeted to be sustainable on its per capita from the district, augmented by state programs like the Expanded Learning Time initiative and the Innovation Career Pathways initiative.

**Would PHS receive the same amount per student per school year as other SPS schools or would the amount be prorated to reflect the longer school year?**

The Innovation School legislation mandates that Innovation Schools receive the same per capita as other district schools; PHS would receive the same amount as all other SPS schools. As Somerville's conversations around weighted student formulas progress, the expectation would be that Powderhouse's per capita would be brought under that same policy. Powderhouse does hope to take advantage of state funding available for extended learning time to supplement costs.

**How will student out of school learning (college courses, travel, etc.) be funded?**

All individualized work youth do will be funded by project stipends as part of Powderhouse's operating model. This is part of the school's per capita budget and students will never be expected to fund their own projects.

**Would the district budget fund PHS staff individual projects, studies, or other professional development pursuits? When would these activities take place?**

Yes, as long as these projects are part of their professional and curriculum development. These activities would take place as part of their working duties. Depending on how staff schedule their time, some may occur while students are present, similar to how a teacher in a team-teaching school might attend a conference while their teammate covers for them.

**What is the rent on the space at Broadway and how long is the lease for?**

After the start-up and build out costs to be covered by the developer and funds Powderhouse has raised, the annual rent on Powderhouse's space has been budgeted within its per capita and is sustainable for the course of its 30 year lease. The lease is between the 501(c)(3) non-profit associated with Powderhouse Studios, and doesn't encumber the City or district at all. The District has a copy of the lease for those interested in additional details.

[Schedule](#)

**How much longer of a day is PHS? How does 10-5pm with 1 hour for lunch compare to SHS schedule? How**



### **many days are youth expected to attend per year, or what will be typical?**

Each day is 118 minutes longer than a day at SHS, and the year is longer as well. A day at Somerville High School is 392 minutes long with a 30 minute lunch, or 362 minutes ignoring transition time. A day at Powderhouse Studios is 540 minutes long, with a 60 minute lunch, or 480 minutes ignoring transition time.

Students can choose attended up to 234 days each year, but based on conversations with pre-registered families, it is expected most youth will chose to attend ~200 days each year.

### **How will IEP services be scheduled?**

Our expectation is that schedule flexibility will make scheduling IEP services easier. IEP services can be provided on a regular schedule if that's best for itinerant services.

Extended School Year (ESY) services refer to services outside of school's session. Summer months would be part of the school year, and [the same ESY definitions and processes](#) would apply for any services to be rendered *outside* of Powderhouse's normal school year.

## Enrollment

### **How realistic is it that outplaced students could be served at PHS?**

At the high school level, the majority of out-placements are for emotional/behavioral issues, language based learning disabilities, and spectrum disorders. For many of these students, a smaller, more intimate, and project-based environment may be an especially good fit.

A number of families who are considering outplacement or who have outplaced students have said they would return to the district if offered a spot at Powderhouse.

### **How and when have Somerville families "pre-registered"?**

Over the course of the past year and a half or so, families have been able to pre-register interest in enrolling in the school through Powderhouse's website. This pre-registration simply expands the potential weighted lottery pool. Powderhouse's weighted enrollment lottery guarantees those who enroll in the school will mirror the socioeconomic, demographic, and academic profile of youth in Somerville. The group that has expressed interest is broad and diverse enough to meet the current equity commitments.

### **Based on current district wide statistics, what percentage of each PHS cohort would be ELL and Special Ed students?**

The structure of the lottery puts a statistical floor on these percentages, but no ceiling (in part because quotas for selected populations are illegal). The district expects at least one-third of Powderhouse's enrollment to be ELL and Special Education students.

## Policies & procedures

### **What does it mean for students to "elect to graduate"? Could students choose instead to stay extra years and delay graduation?**

"Elect to graduate" means that students and their families are part of the decision to graduate once they are ready. This element is aimed to ensure readiness and persistence in postsecondary college and career. Powderhouse's model seeks to make the transition from high school more gradual and intentional, ensuring youth and families play a role in that decision-making process.

### **What are "appropriate special education evaluations"?**

In the course of evaluating and determining special education services, there are a wide variety of evaluations and tests that will be administered, as in any SPS school. These include everything from neuropsychiatric

evaluations to assessments like the WISC, DIAL-4, ABS-II, WIAT-II, DIBELS, and others.

**Can we get an elaboration on the "restorative practices" PHS would employ?**

You can read more about some of the approaches [here](#) and [here](#). Both Circle Forward and the Center for Restorative Justice will be PHS partners in the school's design and training work. These practices are intended to supplant the role punitive discipline typically plays.

**What is process for PHS to develop staff evaluations?**

Building leaders, in coordination with the district and Powderhouse's Joint Labor and Management Committee, will work to develop a plan consistent with the Innovation Plan's autonomies and the state's model system.

**Professional development**

**Can you tell us more about staff "on-boarding"? How is this funded and would it count towards years of service?**

On-boarding is a fellowship and residency program. Powderhouse Studios would pay for it; staff are full staff at that time. It will count towards years of service, but not toward the acquisition of professional teacher status and faculty status. Please refer to [the most recent STA carve-out](#) language for more details.

**Staffing**

**Which school hires is the Superintendent responsible for? Does the district have any input in naming Board of Trustees?**

The building leaders are the hiring managers, though the Superintendent signs off on all hiring contracts. The District will have members on the Board of Trustees, including the Finance Director, Special Education Director, and English Language Learner Director. The district will also designate members of the District Integration Working Group, which will be responsible for operationalizing policies and practices in the school.

**Is it possible to get a side-by-side comprehensive comparison of PHS staff and rest of SPS all in one place? Salary, schedule, certification requirements, etc.**

Yes, this information is in the STA MOA.

**How exactly will the Board of Trustees be selected, by whom, with what restrictions, and for what terms?**

Powderhouse Studios is a district innovation school, and therefore the Superintendent and School Committee are ultimately accountable for the proper operation of the school. The daily governance of the school will sit with a Board of Trustees which will supervise Powderhouse Studios. The Board will include representatives from the, District, PHS families, PHS youth, and other community stakeholders. Further details about the board's responsibilities and appointments can be found in the Governance section of the Innovation Plan.

**Other**

**What will the Somerville School Committee be asked to vote on, "autonomies" or the entire Innovation School Plan?**

Section "m" gives to the SC the authority to "undertake a final vote" on the school and if approval is withheld, the Innovation Planning Committee may revise the plan and "submit the revised plan to the school committee for a subsequent vote". In counsel's view, the School Committee votes on the entirety of the Innovation School Plan (ISP), thereby accepting or rejecting the school. Further, the annual review by the Superintendent is centered on whether the school is meeting the goals of the Plan, not whether the "autonomies" retain validity. See section "n". Finally, the regulations speak of ISP's approves by the committee, not merely the

"autonomies". 603 CMR 48.03(3).

### **How do we resolve conflicts between the ISP and the MOU negotiated with the STA ?**

The provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) "shall be considered to be in operation" in the Innovation School per sec. K unless modified under sections (l) or (m). Powderhouse Studios negotiated modifications to the CBA with the STA which state the CBA will remain in effect except as expressly modified.

The CBA and modifications prevail over language in the Innovation School Plan affecting personnel. Also, since PHS is a district school, all general laws relative to the Superintendent's authority and scope of responsibility would also override conflicting ISP language.

### **Who approves substantive changes to the Innovation School Plan?**

School Committee approves/disapproves all Innovation School Plan proposals/revisions. Counsel notes the regulations grant to the Commissioner authority to appoint a mediator and an arbitrator where the School Committee fails "to provide the autonomies and flexibilities approved in the school's innovation plan" 603 CMR 48.04(7). This power applies by its specific language only to an already approved Innovation School Plan. It does not apply to resolution of disputes at the stage of consideration for initial approval.

### **Can the School Committee delegate to the Superintendent authority to resolve questions of additional changes or issues as they arise at PHS?**

Yes. As noted, the Superintendent retains all statutory authority over PHS that she has over any other district school. There are innumerable day to day management issues subject to that authority. Also, the Superintendent has broad authority via the annual review process over IS matters and is required to advise the School Committee thereon. See sec.(m). While plan changes would have to go back to the School Committee, the law is clear that the SC should only act after receipt of a recommendation from the Superintendent. A working group seems to be a good vehicle for handling the inevitable operational questions, or assessments that the ISP needs to be amended.

### **Is there a process for advising the School Committee of options or responding to questions?**

Matters relating to collective bargaining should be handled in executive session or in inquiries through Jeff, Almi, or Mary. Committee members should be reminded that the OML prevents/prohibits serial email communication or other communication outside a corporeal meeting. Individuals could transmit issues through Jeff or Mary and the Powderhouse team can talk further about options.

### **Did PHS and city and/or district sign a MOU regarding intellectual property rights?**

No.

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New answers below

**What elements of the PHS innovations are already being implemented/or are in the planning stages in other programs in SPS Middle School/High School? // What distinguishes Powderhouse from other district programs, innovations, initiatives already happening in the district? // What students does the school target and why is it different from other SPS programs, innovation, initiatives of SPS?**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

At the individual level, Powderhouse will serve youth who would benefit from a smaller, more intimate learning environment and spending more of their time at school doing hands-on projects of their own design. At the level of its student body, Powderhouse will serve a population that reflects the demographics of Somerville youth.

Somerville already offers many types of programming for its youth and families, and Powderhouse aims to be a complement to these. The CTE program offers *hands-on*, vocational programming to students at Somerville

High. NW/FC offers a *small*, therapeutic, school environment for youth who need it. The Kennedy has its own makerspace. FabVille has offered in and out of school, *maker-style programming* for students at Somerville High as well as community members and has worked to create *professional development opportunities* for SHS staff. The ed plan for the new high school describes exciting ideas around *advisory structures, capstone projects*, and other innovations and programming for students at the new high school.

Powderhouse is not looking to reinvent the wheel—many of these elements are a part of our model—but it is looking to do something different. The Powderhouse team believes that the project-based model proposed will allow staff and students to take a more hands-on, vocational approach to traditional academic subjects, creating opportunities for young people who struggle in traditional classroom environments to engage with content in different, while rigorous, ways. And, Powderhouse Studios see the overlap of these design elements with other initiatives as a strength for the District. Starting one school that looks nothing like the programming of other school's would be harder to manage and grow and impossible to integrate into the culture of the existing system.

**One of the things mentioned was that there are going to be advisories — which will similarly be built in with the new high school curriculum — and the “1,000 hour project,” which I’m going to call a Capstone Project. My understanding is that something similar is also going to be built in to the new high school curriculum. I would like to understand more about that to help inform our decision.**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

A brief overview of this may be found [here](#); the Powderhouse Studios team has requested additional information about this work from [the Center for Collaborative Education](#) (the organization facilitating Somerville High School's “Envisioning the Future” initiative) and will update this document with details as soon as they are received.

**Could Powderhouse Studios develop a fact sheet which has two columns - Column 1 Full Wave/Next Circle and Column 2 Powderhouse Studios? // Could we also have a snapshot of three different "student days" for Powderhouse Studios and Full Circle/Next Wave?**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

Powderhouse Studios is more than happy to provide this detail pending clarification about what elements would be in each of the columns. Exemplary youth schedules for Powderhouse may be found in its Innovation Plan and its Scheduling presentation to the School Committee.

**How will the school impact the time of current Somerville Public Schools staff?**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

Powderhouse Studios should not affect the time of any teaching staff throughout SPS. There will be significant work for Central Office staff to do operationally to support Powderhouse's integration with SPS. Current estimates by the Superintendent suggest that integration support will require 0.1–0.2 FTE across support and department supervisors (e.g. legal counsel, translation, nursing, etc.) in Powderhouse's first year, decreasing to 0 additional FTE over 2–3 years. Powderhouse's outside fundraising will enable the District to offset these costs and bring on additional capacity as needed.

**How would adopting PHS benefit the district as a whole? // How will SPS and PHS systematically share and integrate the experience and learning from PHS to all schools (staff and students.)? // What is the capacity and design of PHS to share innovation outward with the district?**

Powderhouse wants to build a system where the sharing of innovation and best practices to serve Somerville

youth will flow in both directions between Powderhouse and the District. The reality of such sharing, especially from small schools and programs, is always a challenge. Powderhouse Studios will be establishing a **District Integration Working Group**, made up of District and Powderhouse representatives, whose initial responsibilities will be making sure Powderhouse is set up to interface and work with Central Office during its initial years.

While specific methods of sharing out will need to be designed in collaboration with this integration team, Powderhouse is excited for small opportunities to share amongst schools (e.g. staff being in shared, District-wide professional development, participating in District-wide student initiatives and exhibitions, etc.) as well as more immersive and logistically intensive opportunities to share (e.g. taking advantage of Powderhouse's year-round schedule to create opportunities for youth from other Somerville schools to participate in Out of School Time (OST) experiences run at Powderhouse and sharing curriculum and professional development experiences around Digital Literacy and Computer Science).

### **How will Powderhouse Studios be governed? Who would sit on the Board of Trustees? How are these individuals selected?**

Like all Somerville public schools, Powderhouse will be **authorized and overseen by the School Committee and Superintendent**. Additionally, the **Board of Trustees** will interface between Powderhouse and the School Committee, pulling together reports on the school's work from staffing to student outcomes as required and requested by the School Committee, and the **District Integration Working Group** will interface between Powderhouse and Central Office, making sure Powderhouse is properly integrating with District processes and protocols.

The makeup and selection process for members of the Board of Trustees is laid out in the Innovation Plan (relevant section around board makeup and member selection quoted below) along with a description of the body's roles and responsibilities in operating and overseeing Powderhouse Studios.

Note that some details (like the timeline on which the Board will be established) may need to change, depending on if and when Powderhouse is authorized.

*Institutionally, the Board of Trustees will sit at the center of its governance process. The Board of Trustees, upon approval of this Innovation Plan, shall be deemed to be public agents authorized by the Commonwealth to supervise and control Powderhouse Studios. The Board will have at least ten members comprising:*

- *District directors of Special Education, English Language Learner support, and Finance*
- *a current student*
- *an alumni (or student, for those years when no alumni are available or willing to serve)*
- *a current parent (not of the student Board member)*
- *a staff member*
- *a faculty member from a postsecondary institution*
- *an industry representative*
- *and a creative professional whose work embodies PHS's interdisciplinary approach*

*The Powderhouse Studios applicant, in consultation with the Superintendent, will be responsible for determining the initial membership of the Board of Trustees. In establishing Board bylaws and membership, reflecting the PHS and Somerville communities will be prioritized. This Board will be established at least six months before the first day of Powderhouse Studios' opening and adopt full and appropriate bylaws in at least ninety days' advance of Powderhouse Studios' opening.*

*The Directors of Special Education, English Learner Education, and Finance will be voting, ex officio*

*members of the Board of Trustees, charged with providing financial, SPED, and ELL oversight.*

For more information, Powderhouse Studios' governance structure is described loosely on pages 19-20 of [the Design Overview](#) and more in depth on pages 22-23 and 32-36 in the Innovation Plan.

**How will partnerships be identified and administered, under the oversight of SPS? The plan specifically requests "autonomy". For example, in the past SPS and Powerhouse applied for the same grant, and SPS was not informed. Coordination, under the oversight of SPS is expected.**

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

See above answer:

- [What policies need to be in place to ensure that PHS's fundraising efforts are part of a comprehensive district plan?](#)

**What is the proposed budget for Powderhouse Studios in years 1, 2, and 5? // Provide a detailed budget for the first five years of operation, including both district and grant funded expenses, salaries, equipment, etc. // How is the \$10 million grant going to be spent?**

**// The number one question from constituents is financial: they are assuming that the \$10 million in grant funds will be put into the school and that it will not have a financial impact. When we know what the financials will look like is that absolute key.**

On the District side of things, Powderhouse's operating budget would be based on its per capita, ~\$16,000. In year 1, Powderhouse would be planning to enroll 30–40 youth, meaning the District operating budget would be ~\$560,000. In year 2, Powderhouse would plan to enroll 60–80 youth, meaning the District operating budget would be ~\$1.1M. By year 5, Powderhouse would hope to have enrolled 120–160 youth, entailing a budget of ~\$2M.

The District is in active negotiations with XQ regarding grant funded expenses, and there is not yet a detailed budget to share. In 2015, Powderhouse presented [this, high level budget to the Education & Programs Subcommittee](#), and Powderhouse developed [this model](#) with Pat Durette and Mary Skipper in 2015. Note that the scope of enrollment has been reduced since then, and only four cohorts (~120–160 youth) are currently proposed.

Outside fundraising (including funds from XQ) will be used to offset additional District costs incurred as part of opening a new school, for example funding overstaffing the school in its first years and supplementing District staff time. Central Office and XQ are still finalizing decisions about how much XQ money will be put toward which of these purposes.

**What specifies the obligation to provide per pupil funding in the context of grant funding? // What specifies the per pupil funding in the grant funding? Is that a state obligation, is it a federal obligation? If a school could be completely funded by a grant, as a public entity, do we have that obligation to put in per pupil funding?**

This comes from the Innovation Schools Legislation. [Chapter 71, §92 of the Massachusetts General Law](#) specifies, "An Innovation School shall receive each school year from the school committee the same per pupil allocation as any other district school receives. [...] A district shall not reduce its funding to an Innovation School as a result of the school's fundraising activities."



**How do we implement something that could be \$\$ per student higher than our K-8 or SHS due to the grant. How will this work under the umbrella of the equity policy?**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

**Are there standards that every cohort will cover — even lightly? // The expectation that the only MA Common Core standards that you're going to cover are math and ELA? What about science, history, etc? I hope there are other things — say from the history standard — that would be required. Let's say there's 100 standards. There are 25 of them that I would look to a school like this to say, you know what, these 25 of the 100 we're definitely going to cover, because this is what makes a fantastic citizen or whatever. Is that the plan?**

Yes. All students at Powderhouse will cover the Common Core Math and ELA standards, aligned to MA Curriculum Frameworks. In order to allow for the level of individualization of work Powderhouse is looking to support, it is necessary free up time and space to allow students to go deep in other subject areas they are drawn to, under the guidance and supervision of Powderhouse staff. These subjects might be traditional academic subjects (e.g. history or the sciences) but might also include other fields not traditionally centered in a high school curriculum (e.g. computer science, art history, media studies). Powderhouse is currently targeting the Science, Technology, and Engineering MCAS, and will target the Physics MCAS in the event the STE MCAS is retired, and such Powderhouse youth will also be covering the associated standards informing those assessments. The recent [Civics Education Reform Bill](#) also entails state requirements which will be incorporated into Individualized Learning Plans.

**You mentioned a couple places that there are primary learning goals that everyone should have. How will it be decided? // You said during our last meeting that there were certain standards that wouldn't be touched if you're going into depth over breadth, and so my question becomes: who and how will the decision be made? My colleague asked a specific question about the Civil Rights Act, and you said that was something everyone should learn. Who decides what those things are? And furthermore, going back to the timeline of the school being started in the fall, when will this list be made publically available to people? // I want to see a checklist of what a student is going to learn. A parent asked me this weekend, "If I don't understand what it is, how can I possibly entrust my kid to them? And it still sounds interesting."**

At Powderhouse, progress toward graduation is defined by:

1. Project timescale, finishing an ~1000 hour project
2. Common Core/MA Curriculum Framework-aligned coverage
3. Satisfying state standardized test requirements for graduation
4. Securing admission to a postsecondary institution or job.

(1) is important to us because of the academic depth projects can offer when done right as well as the social-emotional and meta-cognitive skills they develop. (2) is a commitment to cover certain standards, as well as other requirements of school including those laid out in the Civics Education Reform Bill. (3) suggests a series of curricular commitments around math and ELA, largely aligned with the standards from (2) as well as additional commitments from the Science, Technology, and Society MCAS, or Physics MCAS if the STE test is retired.

Taken together, this means Powderhouse Studios is committing to covering the following standards and skills:

- [Common Core ELA](#)
- [Common Core Math](#)

- Satisfying state standardized testing requirements, currently including the Math, ELA, and Technology/Engineering MCAS, the last to be replaced with the Introductory Physics test when Technology/Engineering is retired
- [SEL Student Performance Framework](#) being developed in collaboration with CREDO and XQ
- [Civics Education Reform Bill](#) curricular commitments which include topics like:
  - (i) history of the United States of America; (ii) the Constitution of the United States, including the Bill of Rights; (iii) the Declaration of Independence; (iv) the constitution of the commonwealth; (v) local history and government; (vi) the function and composition of the branches of local, state and federal government; (vii) the roles and responsibilities of a citizen in a democracy; (viii) the development of skills to access, analyze and evaluate written and digital media as it relates to history and civics; (ix) community diversity and historical trends in voter registration and civic participation relative to disenfranchised voter populations; (x) opportunities to identify and debate issues relative to power, economic status and the common good in democracy; and etc.*

### **Current state standards aren't competency based, so how will PHS map standards over?**

This is a general challenge with cutting-edge, competency-based approaches. Just as Somerville High School's Envisioning the Future efforts require the development of subcommittees focused on creating performance based assessments and similar to contribute to a competency based model, so too will Powderhouse (in coordination with Central Office) develop its alignment practices. For those interested in what this process looks like in a highly individualized setting, you may consider [Boston Day & Evening Academy's overview](#) of their process of aligning their competencies to Common Core State Standards.

### **What type of oversight will there be at the school that students are accessing the MA standards?**

Powderhouse youth will be taking lightweight diagnostic tests aligned with the MA Curriculum Frameworks and SAT Suite which will offer a formative picture of students' access of standards. This data, along with the finely grained documentation of work and ILP goals coverage (including standards coverage) will form the foundation for coordination and oversight with a Curriculum Working Group to be established in concert with Central Office. This working group will also be responsible for reporting out to the District Working Group and Central Office regarding curricula at Powderhouse. Members of the Curriculum Working Group would likely include key department heads like Almi Abeyta, Uri Harel, Karen Woods, Kenya Avant-Ransome, or their designees.

### **Where is PHS's curriculum decided? Who makes the decision on what is taught?**

Beyond those commitments made in the Innovation Plan, Powderhouse's administration and staff will be responsible for designing, developing, and overseeing individualized and cohort-wide curricular choices. These designs will be reported out to the Curriculum and District Integration Working Groups, and those decisions will be overseen by the Board of Trustees and the District as part of Powderhouse's ongoing school improvement process.

**I believe that there was instruction done at the Healey school [by the Powderhouse team] — I'd like to know what were the lessons learned, and what kind of evaluation was done there? Can you share that back with us? Provide any documentation of the outcomes of the Healey pilot, including mapping of projects back to standards, that would demonstrate the model proposed by this application.**

Public documentation of the Healey programs and student work live [here](#). — This site was shared with youth, families, the Healey community, and District throughout the duration of the programs from 2016-2018 as a place to see class materials each day and student work when programs ended.

Reflection and reporting about the programs live [here](#). — This portion of the site was put together and shared with the District at the end of the 2016-2017 school year.



The Healey programs offered us an excellent opportunity to test out some of the aspects of Powderhouse’s design with Somerville youth. The program themes and arcs, team teaching model, and facilitation of divergent project work with diverse classes of Somerville students were the pieces most true to our model. Other aspects of the programs—for example the 3 week, 80 minute block structure—posed significant constraints on the scope and depth of projects youth could pursue, often leaving us with just enough time to work with a group to have a project idea and get to a first prototype, never mind having the time to dig deeper into the ideas and content underlying those projects.

Specifically when it comes to curriculum mapping, the 7th and 8th grade team successfully advocated the District for flexibility around standards coverage during the start-up phase of this new, project-based programming so they could focus on some of the other challenging aspects of designing and facilitating STEAM-focused, project-based learning experiences. Given this, we have done some brief, narrative write-ups after the fact for projects from two of the Healey programs to capture what curriculum mapping might have looked like in the [Sustainability Fair](#) and [Signs of Life](#) programs.

**I would very much like to see some very detailed examples of a seminar might look like and where that syllabus would be coming from and who’s developing that?**

Since the Healey pilot, and based on learnings from that experience, The Powderhouse team has had the opportunity to work with our design team to begin developing curricular materials for projects and programs and map them prospectively and retrospectively onto standards. You can see prototypes of two smaller-scale, mapped projects called [Ghost Gardens](#) and [Prompts, Poetry, and Pathways](#) and a longer-scale, mapped program in which the team [Collaboratively Built a Drawing Robot](#).

**PHS is seeking autonomy “in designing, developing and managing the Individualized Learning Plan System”, would this be under the oversight of the district technology leadership? Although home-grown systems can be helpful in the short term, over time they can be burdensome to administer and maintain and would require the district to staff with those with the knowledge or contract out. In addition a home grown system could create challenges with integrating with district data systems, limiting connectivity and sharing across the district with this work.**

After surveying dozens of existing Learning Management Systems (LMSes), Powderhouse found that three, structural issues meant developing an Individualized Learning Plan was necessary:

1. Powderhouse’s projects are deeply interdisciplinary, and not organized by subject or standard.
2. The goals in the Individualized Learning Plan combine a variety of personal, professional, and academic goals, mixing standards with individualized growth goals.
3. The goals engaged by a given project or experience will involve a mix of prospective and retrospective mapping.

To be able to generate the finely grained mapping required to ensure staff the ability to retroactively examine and assign grades to work product, generate traditional transcripts, and so on, Powderhouse determined a custom solution was required.

Powderhouse is committed to taking responsibility for the integration of its Individualized Learning Plan with all necessary district systems, and that integration would happen under the oversight of District IT and Curriculum staff, as deemed fit by the District Integration Working Group.

**How will the district handle parents of students who do not get into Powderhouse Studios?**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

A waitlist will be established for those families which will be used for the purposes of backfilling enrollment.

The details of the lottery are still being finalized, including whether that waitlist would offer preference in the future (within the boundaries of the lottery's equity commitments).

**How will we handle students who want to transfer out of Powderhouse Studios? // How is it that we will map in a transparent way that students and parents can know in advance what it is that we do for students who, for whatever reason, do not complete their experience at Powderhouse Studios, and choose or are forced to return to a more traditional schooling system?**

If someone is transferring to another school (likely with a more traditional credit and grade level system), staff will work closely with youth and their family to both

- translate their portfolio of work into a traditional transcript, complete with grades, if needed
- and provide any targeted academic preparation which would be useful in smoothing that transition, if time permits

As people work through projects, programs, and occasional classes, staff support youth mapping work onto a mixture of personal, professional, and academic goals (including traditional academic standards). This mapping will allow Powderhouse to generate detailed, traditional transcripts for those seeking to transfer or to attend postsecondary institutions. Powderhouse's system for generating these transcripts will be based on models drawn from [the Mastery Transcript Consortium](#).

This mapping (and the overall transferability of Powderhouse experiences) will be an element of District oversight at Powderhouse.

**What if the school fails as a pilot?**

If the governance structure for Powderhouse is working well, failure won't happen overnight. The Board of Trustees will be regularly sharing reports of concern with the Superintendent and the School Committee and iteration and course correction will be possible, including by limiting certain autonomies granted the school if there is a case to be made that limiting those autonomies will improve school performance. If, even in the face of that iteration and course correction, the school is deemed a failure, the School Committee may refuse to reauthorize the school's innovation plan, thereby closing the school and absorbing its students back into other District schools.

**What if parents/guardians think PHS is a good option, but the district or school staff disagree?**

Like in any public school, students at Powderhouse have a right to quality education. Powderhouse will work with Central Office to make sure youth, families, and District personnel know what Powderhouse is about so youth and families can make informed, school choice decisions. From there, it is our responsibility to serve every student and family who are admitted by the lottery and opt to enroll in the school.

**How exactly does the enrollment algorithm deliver on the promise of demographic representation and student fit?**

The enrollment lottery does not ensure student fit. Although Powderhouse has a student profile for whom Powderhouse expects to be best matched, as a public school it will serve every student who attends.

**How will PHS handle students with significant behavioral challenges?**

Where appropriate, and in coordination with Central Office, Powderhouse Studios will establish special education and clinical services that to support challenging students. Powderhouse is committed to developing a restorative, trauma-sensitive design and approach to behavioral challenges. This approach will be implemented within applicable district policies. As in any school, Powderhouse will develop its student handbook and associated policies, and will train (and hire) staff at Powderhouse so as to be able to implement its restorative and trauma-sensitive approach. The details of this training, staffing, and oversight will be

among the considerations of the District Integration Working Group, and depend in part on the specific needs of youth enrolling at Powderhouse.

**What does this look like if it succeeds? What does it look like if it doesn't succeed? What is the biggest risk here? What is the most likely thing that would tell us this isn't working?**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

If Powderhouse succeeds, at least two things should be happening over time:

1. A broad and diverse group of youth are flourishing in ways they might not have in a traditional environment.
2. The creation and district-wide (or broader) dissemination of professional and curriculum development work, alongside research and design.

The biggest risk is that Powderhouse fails to offer something effective or compelling for a broad and diverse range of youth, and that the District ends up having invested significant time and energy without ending up with an effective program or learning much from it.

The most important thing which would highlight that Powderhouse wasn't working was if, after a few years to get on its feet, Powderhouse struggled to (a) generate broad and diverse enrollment interest amongst families, and (b) maintain family satisfaction. Ultimately, you know a good school when you walk into one, and families' choices will tell you.

**Provide a list of all the current and in progress agreements/commitments, verbal, in writing or contractual, with partners and vendors, including a brief description of scope and commitment. Include rental agreements (sq footage & cost), major equipment purchases or leases, partnerships and grant applications.**

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

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

#### *Contracts and vendors*

1. Design, development of software supporting Powderhouse's Individualized Learning Plan
2. Design, development of Powderhouse's operations manual and district integration plan
3. Architectural consulting, project management, and design services, including the development of workshops and educational programming for youth and staff.
4. Legal counsel for support and advice on issues including but not limited to real estate, municipal finance, civil rights, and so on.
5. Accounting and auditing services, including support designing a full transparency and auditing system.
6. Technical consulting on the design and development of auditing, certification, and transparency systems for enrollment.
7. Translation services and support
8. Various software services (e.g. Google Suite, Dropbox, etc.)

#### *Verbal agreements, partnerships, exploratory work*

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

1. FabFoundation, regarding the design and development of Powderhouse’s workshop space, as well as training and support for Powderhouse youth and staff.
2. Somerville Media Center, regarding media training and equipment at Powderhouse’s campus.
3. Davis Square Martial Arts, regarding sharing space and programming opportunities.
4. Supernormal, regarding the development of data-driven workshops to inform the design and redesign of Powderhouse’s campus.
5. Massachusetts School Building Authority, regarding the design and development of workshops for youth and staff engaging the design and redesign of space to support learning and creative work.
6. Lesley University, regarding the development of Powderhouse’s fellowship for staff, including around Professional Standards of Teaching, Social Work, English Language Learning, and Subject Matter Knowledge requirements for Digital Literacy and Computer Science.
7. Woodrow Wilson Academy of Teaching and Learning, regarding the design and development of Powderhouse’s fellowship for staff, targeting Digital Literacy and Computer Science skills.
8. MIT Teaching and Learning Lab, regarding the development of organizational management and design training for Powderhouse staff and research collaborations.
9. Harvard Graduate School of Education, regarding the design and development of Powderhouse’s fellowship for staff and research collaborations.
10. Northeastern University NExT Network, regarding the design and development of Powderhouse’s fellowship for staff and research collaborations.
11. Collaborative Living Project, regarding the development of intergenerational programming and mentorship at Powderhouse’s campus.
12. Nervous System, regarding the design and development of a collaborative, generative sculpture and associated workshops for youth and staff.
13. CAST, regarding research collaborations around Universal Design for Learning.

#### *Rental agreements, etc.*

1. The lease for 1060 Broadway is on file with Central Office.

#### *Grant applications*

1. None in progress, past applications and partners have included MA DESE, the Center for Collaborative Education, NGLC, Barr Foundation, and XQ.

#### **How will intellectual property work at Powderhouse? The expectation that the individual benefit over public benefit for an institution that is publicly funded is questionable.**

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

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

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

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

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

#### *Exemplary policies*

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

#### *Research and related materials*

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

#### **Please provide the plans for the space at the Powderhouse complex.**

The public plans and materials for the Powderhouse complex can be found on Marka's site [here](#), and floorplans, which may be a bit out of date, for the complex are [here](#).

#### **Please provide details on the experience of the currently identified Powderhouse staff, specifically in the role of teacher or administrator of a public school.**

Powderhouse's design team has been providing support in the development of curricular and other school design materials. This team includes a clinical social worker with experience in therapeutic and special education environments and a background in industrial design, a licensed teacher who has taught in public and private schools as well as interdisciplinary, project-based OST environments, and a performing artist and poet who has extensive experience coaching writing and performance and teaching in OST environments.

#### **In general some autonomies are broad, which necessitate clarity on what specifically is being asked for before the SC or administration can agree. Each question or item that is not detailed results in complex and time consuming negotiation.**

Some of these broad autonomies are called out in other places in this Q&A document, and the Powderhouse team is happy to address any additional, specific questions as they arise. To address this comment in a general way, the team is committed to working as closely and efficiently as possible with Central Office to operationalize the different pieces of the school. The District Integration Working Group's role is to utilize the autonomies in the plan not to create autonomy for autonomy's sake, but to create a flexible enough space for problem-solving such that Powderhouse is able to build something new and different in a way that's integrated with the rest of the District. The Superintendent, her cabinet and other appointees will be at the center of these design decisions to ensure that they are made in ways that are good for Powderhouse as well as the District.

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*The questions below were asked live and transcribed from the 28 January 2019 meeting.*

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**When can we have translations of the application? I understand that the applicant was asked for this over a year ago, so I would like to know when that can be completed so we can move forward. // Translation has been a question [from constituents].**

Although Powderhouse did not receive this request directly, it is something which, as an organization committed to equity, the team absolutely should have completed sooner. Translations for the Innovation Plan, Design Overview, and District FAQ are scheduled to be done by Monday, February 4 at the latest.

**I would like a definitive list of the documents needed — and which versions — to have a complete understanding of the Powderhouse plan. // I'd like to confirm the current copy I have of the Innovation Plan — labeled version 3.1.1 — is the right one that I should be looking at.**

Legal documents:

- The Innovation Plan (version 3.1.1) is the document on which the School Committee will be voting on March 4th.
- The STA MOA is the staffing agreement negotiated between the District and the STA and approved by the STA on January 7th. [This](#) is the last version of that agreement available to the Powderhouse Studios team. The interested party is referred to the District for the official MOA.

Design documents:

- The Design Overview is an executive summary-style document created at the request of the School Committee to accompany and narrate the Innovation Plan.
- Slide decks from past and present School Committee meetings and public hearings are meant to function in a similar way to the Design Overview.

**Re: admissions for an older student, who may not be starting as a 13- or 15-year old: how can a school funded with public dollar close their admission? How come it's not automatic that an older student would be admitted to the school?**

Powderhouse is asking to avoid enrolling older students only during its first five years as the school will be growing upward in age with each new cohort during those first years. Once the school is operating at full size, students of any age would be eligible for admission.

Powderhouse's ability to enroll all students is important from the standpoint of equity and access. This five year period is meant to allow for Powderhouse to start small, developing programming and systems in collaboration with the District year-to-year based on students needs and development, rather than needing to have a full high school program running from day one.

From the Innovation Plan:

*For its first, five-year authorization, Powderhouse Studios will only be open to enrollment by students who would be between 13–15 years old at the time of their enrollment. After that, PHS will be open to enrollment by anyone having completed the 7th grade who does not have a high school diploma. Any student who doesn't meet these requirements may only enter the lottery through a District referral process.*

**Who manages finances, specifically around procurement? What happens if the director of PHS and Superintendent disagree on spending programmatically?**

Powderhouse Studios' finances will be managed in a city-owned bank account, and therefore come under the



purview and management of the City and District finance directors.

Handling of programmatic disagreements in spending depend on the specific case. Broadly, if the disagreement could not be resolved through conversation the Board of Trustees or the Innovation Plan approval and re-authorization process offer procedural remedies.

### **How does the curriculum address the achievement gap for Somerville's Latino population?**

Powderhouse's individualized, project-based approach offers a powerful structure for culturally-grounded and culturally-responsive approaches.

Because youth and staff can co-design projects, there is much greater flexibility to design forward from questions of identity and culture. Of course, this benefit is not uniquely relevant to Latinx youth. Questions of culture and identity are powerful starting points for many, but especially for those whose cultures, histories, and interests have been historically and structurally elided, misrepresented, or underrepresented in traditional curricula.

Culturally responsive approaches like these, especially when combined with project based work, have been demonstrated to be effective in reducing achievement gaps and increasing engagement and persistence for underrepresented populations (including Latinx). One mechanism for this benefit worth highlighting in the context of this question is that project-based environments offer academic contexts where traditional challenges of stereotype threat and self-concept can be sidestepped and overcome, providing youth with an opportunity to engage academic content in fresh modes and contexts. Again, this benefit is not unique to Latinx youth. Beyond this, there is significant research demonstrating that these elements of Powderhouse's model are especially well-suited to improving outcomes for English Language Learners.

A few, select examples of the research underlying these results (collated in part through Powderhouse's collaborations with local graduate schools of education) are included below. These materials specifically focus on the role of projects, identity-driven work, and reflection and analysis of projects as especially effective academic vectors. Additional materials are available upon request.

1. Agésilas, M. J. (2002). The Effectiveness of the Writing Workshop Model to Teach an English-as-a-Second-Language College Writing Course in Puerto Rico: a Look at Students' Outcomes.
2. Haneda, M. (2006). Becoming literate in a second language: Connecting home, community, and school literacy practices. *Theory into Practice*, 45(4), 337-345.
3. McCarthey, S. J., López-Velásquez, A. M., García, G. E., Lin, S., & Guo, Y. H. (2004). Understanding writing contexts for English language learners. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 351-394.
4. Guofang Li; Patricia A. Edwards (18 March 2011). *Best Practices in ELL Instruction*. Guilford Press. pp. 1-. ISBN 978-1-60623-664-2.
5. Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (Eds.). (2017). *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world*. Teachers College Press.
6. Brown, S. (1999). *So Much to Say: Adolescents, Bilingualism, and ESL in the Secondary School*. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 43(2), 194.
7. Stewart, M. A. (2010). Writing with power, sharing their immigrant stories: Adult ESOL students find their voices through writing. *TESOL Journal*, 1(2), 269-283.
8. Schall-Leckrone, L., Barron, D., Konuk, J., & Kain, N. (2018). How Could It Happen? Learning From Adolescents as They Engage Critical Literacy Skills of History. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 61(6), 691-695.

9. Bunch, G. (2012). Guidelines for ELA instructional materials development. *Understanding language: Language, literacy, and learning in the content areas*.
10. Hammond, Z. (2014). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Corwin Press.
11. Moje, E. B., & Hinchman, K. (2004). *Culturally responsive practices for youth literacy learning*. *Adolescent literacy research and practice*, 321-350.
12. Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. Teachers College Press.

#### **Where can people find information about Powderhouse's office hours and other information sessions?**

Information about Powderhouse office hours can be found at [powderhouse.org/authorization](http://powderhouse.org/authorization)

#### **[Another of the big three questions I've been getting from constituents is] mapping back to standards.**

Standards mapping will happen in a few different ways at Powderhouse. Sometimes prospectively during workshops and programs, and sometimes retrospectively through projects. This answer tries to describe how standards mapping will happen in each of those experiences and links to some sample standards mapping for workshops, programs, and projects at the end.

Students at Powderhouse will participate in workshops, programs, and projects of their own design. Some of these experiences will be staff-designed experiences, prospectively mapped onto standards laid out in students' Individualized Learning Plan. Others will be student-designed, staff-supported experiences which will be retrospectively mapped onto standards in a student's Individualized Learning Plan.

- **Workshops** will be experiences focused on specific topics or skills development in which youth will learn the same things all together. Some workshops that will be run at Powderhouse will focus on computation, narrative, and design as well as civics, community, and identity. These types of programs will include working on collaborative projects; reading, writing, and discussion; and more.
- **Programs** are experiences in which youth begin working together to explore big questions and powerful ideas with the goal of diverging into independent project work as individuals or teams. In these programs, primary standards will be covered by everyone during shared experiences and prospectively mapped in ILPs. Secondary standards will be retrospectively mapped as staff work with youth to design, do, and reflect on their learning during their independent project work.
- **Projects** are designed and directed by students, with the support and guidance of staff. Sometimes they happen within programs, and sometimes they happen independently. While goal setting is always part of proposing and starting a project at Powderhouse, goals set by youth will not always include specific standards to be covered. Instead, staff will work with youth to retrospectively map their learning onto standards as they design, do, and reflect on the learning they do during their projects.

To make all of this a little more concrete, our design team has worked to put together some examples of projects and programs mapped onto standards to show what this might look like at Powderhouse. You can see prototypes of two smaller-scale, mapped projects called [Ghost Gardens](#) and [Prompts, Poetry, and Pathways](#) and a longer-scale, mapped program in which the Powderhouse team [Collaboratively Built a Drawing Robot](#).

#### **When can we have Powderhouse Studios, LLC's form 990s from both 2017 and 2018?**

Powderhouse Studios, Limited's form 990 from 2017 can be found [here](#). The form 990 for 2018 will be available this year.

#### **What is your plan, keeping in mind current District goals and work in this area, to hire a diverse workforce?**

Because of how closely youth work with staff, and because of how important staff's own backgrounds, interests, and aptitudes are to the development of rich and accessible programs of study (and derivative projects and programs), it's essential that Powderhouse hire a diverse staff. Even in traditional settings (where



teachers' cultural background and ethnicity may appear less directly curricularly), shared ethnic background has been shown to have a significant impact on student performance through mechanisms of engagement, relationship, and culturally responsive practices.

This priority is supported by the licensure flexibility Powderhouse's interdisciplinary model requires, allowing it to hire from a much wider variety of creative, professional, and youth work contexts. This is essential to hiring a diverse workforce because unfortunately—especially in Massachusetts—there are structural, economic and cultural obstacles to developing a diverse teaching workforce under traditional licensure in a state where over 93% of licensed teachers are white.

Building diversity, inclusion, and equity effectively into Powderhouse's hiring commitments will also require working with hiring partners and networks. Powderhouse has assembled a variety of these partners already, and looks forward to expanding these partnerships in coordination with the District if approved.

**How will you ensure that your staff will have themselves the breadth of exposure enough to know what kinds of things to expose students to, if your goal isn't to expose them to everything in the admittedly very broad common standards?**

Diversity and versatility of background (and demonstrated ability to identify and work across disciplinary boundaries) will be a hiring priority for Powderhouse Studios. Managing the breadth and diversity of background across a team will be an important consideration in articulating hiring priorities and fit, and will be a task falling to leadership to manage. Powderhouse's fellowship year and ongoing professional development will complement this emphasis by identifying and expanding staff's disciplinary breadth.

Beyond this, it is important to note that part of the premise of Powderhouse's mentorship and coaching model is that staff's role is not purely instructional, but is also about helping youth to curate and connect to resources (whether traditional educational resources or community resources and partnerships). Identifying and developing these offerings will be a shared responsibility of Powderhouse's leadership and staff, but will be especially important as youth's projects' scale grows and becomes more and more likely to benefit from outside support.

**If this were to be approved on March 4th, what are the things that need to happen from March 5th to the day school opens? // I'm curious about a detailed timeline — given that there is a truncated time between now and the start of the 2019-2020 academic year — of goals by week, definitely by month, in order to get this school off the ground, because it's going to be a heavy lift.**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

The Powderhouse team was in conversation with Central Office departments through much of last year to map out the administrative, operational, and other work necessary to get the school and District ready to enroll students this Spring/Summer and launch in Fall 2019. This [District Report and Information Repository](#) has been put together in conversation with Central Office personnel to articulate and organize the many moving pieces that Powderhouse will need to tackle after approval.

Barring formal approval, we've stopped short of creating a weekly or monthly project plan, as there is a tension in prioritizing the time of Central Office personnel given that Powderhouse does not yet exist. These initial and in depth conversations have set Powderhouse up to move quickly on this plan should it receive approval, however, and Powderhouse will work closely with Central Office to develop a finely grained project plan that ensures meeting all milestones needed to guarantee the success of the District in launching Powderhouse in its first year.

**The teachers will be certified in digital literacy, but given that there have been mentions of Montessori education or, especially that it's going to be very project based, I would like to what else type of additional certifications or credentials these educators are expected to have, because project based learning is a different way of learning than many teachers will be trained in.**

Unfortunately the community of practice around project-based learning hasn't coalesced into a coherent set of credentialed, professional development opportunities, though there are exemplars and best practices to learn from and build upon. That said, in recognition of the challenges and depth of skill required not just for project-based learning in general but for Powderhouse's particular focus on divergent, technical, creative work, we've partnered with Lesley University's Graduate School of Education and the Woodrow Wilson Academy of Teaching and Learning to deepen Powderhouse's staff onboarding experience to ensure staff are skillful, experienced, project-based educators.

**I am specifically looking for the theoretical scholars and foundations that PHS may have based this work on — any actual materials or articles, I would love to see them.**

Some of the most fundamental theoretical contributions to Powderhouse's design are enumerated below, along with suggested introductory resources for those interested in further exploration:

1. Constructionism, especially as articulated by Seymour Papert, in addition to related perspectives of constructivism as articulated by Jean Piaget, Eleanor Duckworth, and Bärbel Inhelder and as practiced by communities like Reggio Emilia.
  - a. Papert, S. (1980). *Mindstorms: Children, computers, and powerful ideas*. Basic Books, Inc..
  - b. Piaget, J. (1973). *To understand is to invent: The future of education*.
  - c. Piaget, J., & Duckworth, E. (1970). *Genetic epistemology*. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 13(3), 459-480.
  - d. Duckworth, E. (1986). Teaching as research. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(4), 481-496.
  - e. Rinaldi, C. (2004). *In dialogue with Reggio Emilia: Listening, researching and learning*. Routledge.
2. Related to Piaget and Papert's work, the sociohistorical and sociocultural approaches of activity theory, including and especially the work of the situated cognition community, including Lave and Wenger, Bakhtin, and Rogoff, and modern-day critics resonant with that tradition like Lisa Delpit.
  - a. Delpit, L. (1988). The silenced dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children. *Harvard Educational Review*, 58(3), 280-299.
  - b. Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge university press.
  - c. Rogoff, B. (2008). Observing sociocultural activity on three planes: Participatory appropriation, guided participation, and apprenticeship. *Pedagogy and practice: Culture and identities*, 58-74.
  - d. Bakhtin, M. M. (1994). *The Bakhtin reader: selected writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, and Voloshinov*.
3. Activity theory, particularly as framed by those in the cultural-historical psychology community like Lev Vygotsky, Sergei Rubinstein, and Alexei Leont'ev.
  - a. Vygotsky, L. S. (1997). *The collected works of LS Vygotsky: Problems of the theory and history of psychology (Vol. 3)*. Springer Science & Business Media.
  - b. Kozulin, A. (1986). The concept of activity in Soviet psychology: Vygotsky, his disciples and critics. *American Psychologist*, 41(3), 264.
  - c. Leont'ev, A. N. (1978). Activity, consciousness, and personality.

4. Social reformers and pragmatists, especially those theorizing symbolic interactionism, hands-on learning, and experiential education, like John Dewey and George Herbert Mead
  - a. Dewey, J. (2007). *Experience and education*. Simon and Schuster.
  - b. Dewey, J. (1958). *Experience and nature* (Vol. 471). Courier Corporation.
  - c. Mead, G. H. (1967). *Mind, self, and society: From the standpoint of a social behaviorist* (Works of George Herbert Mead, Vol. 1).
  
5. Theories of grounded and situated cognition, as typified by the approach of those including Lucy Suchman and John Seely Brown.
  - a. Suchman, L. A. (1988). Representing practice in cognitive science. *Human Studies*, 11(2-3), 305-325.
  - b. Brown, J. S., Collins, A., & Duguid, P. (1989). Situated cognition and the culture of learning. *Educational researcher*, 18(1), 32-42.
  
6. The Frankfurt School of critical theory, as typified by Paulo Freire, Georg Simmel, and Georg Lukács.
  - a. Lukács, G. (1972). *History and class consciousness: Studies in Marxist dialectics*. MIT Press.
  - b. Simmel, G. (1964). *The sociology of Georg Simmel* (Vol. 92892). Simon and Schuster.
  - c. Freire, P. (2018). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
  - d. Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of freedom: Ethics, democracy, and civic courage*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
  
7. Theories of embodied cognition, especially the neuroscientific perspectives of Damasio and Varela and the cognitive science perspectives of Lakoff and Hofstadter.
  - a. Varela, F. J., Thompson, E., & Rosch, E. (1991). *The embodied mind: Cognitive science and human experience*.
  - b. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the flesh: The embodied mind and its challenge to western thought* (Vol. 28). New York: Basic books.
  - c. Johnson, M. (2006). Mind incarnate: from Dewey to Damasio. *Daedalus*, 135(3), 46-54.
  - d. Hofstadter, D. R. (2001). Analogy as the core of cognition. *The analogical mind: Perspectives from cognitive science*, 499-538.

In addition to these, extensive background research regarding a wide variety of Powderhouse's design elements (ranging from its later start time to the connection between project-based work and culturally responsive approaches) was included in [the first version of the Innovation Plan](#). These citations and background research were removed from the current Innovation Plan after feedback regarding its length and clarity. We've pulled them out into a separate document [here](#), but they are best understood as citations in the context of the plan's narrative text.

In addition to these references, Powderhouse has been working with various, local graduate schools of education to further ground its design in research, and has been collating extensive literature reviews as part of its fellowship design and training process. These reviews are available upon request.

**A slide at a public presentation said that the student body would reflect the youth of Somerville and yet the presenter said it would reflect the population of SHS. Which one is it? Why are we so late in the process without having a clear understanding?**

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

**In the proposal there appears to be references to staff using district resources for their own learning. I don't know what that is, and I'd like to have a dollar cost and an estimate of how much time would be used on that.**

These references regard staff's professional development in the context of their domain expertise, program of study, and supporting skills in their role as an educator. Powderhouse has not finalized budgets or schedules for this; however, cohort staff and Powderhouse leadership would be responsible for scheduling these opportunities and work appropriately and ensuring they are selected to benefit the experience and outcomes of Powderhouse students.

**Given that PHS has no time limit on graduation — that a student could graduate from high school in 3 years or up to 6 or 7 years — has the range of years of a student potentially being enrolled been accounted in the different financial calculations?**

There is no time limit on graduation at Powderhouse, just as there isn't at Somerville High. Students graduate when they meet their school's graduation requirements. Inspired by models like [Boston Day and Evening Academy](#), Powderhouse uses a competency-based promotion system, ensuring youth are prepared for whatever post-secondary option they've chosen.

With regards to financial modelling, students bring the same per pupil allotment with them to the District whether they are in their second or sixth year at Powderhouse. If they stay longer than is typical because they haven't yet met their graduation requirements, their PPA still flows to the District and will function in financial models the same way as any other student's.

**Regarding Special Ed: given the apparent flexibility of the schedule, there's real concern about how will services be delivered on the service grid? How can a parent be assured that those services will be delivered. There are a number of questions about what kind of training and experience will the staff will have in order to be able to address a variety of disabilities?**

None of Powderhouse's autonomies relieve it from its ethical and legal responsibilities to provide a free and appropriate public education for youth. This extends to delivering all services on the service delivery grid and ensuring appropriately qualified staff are provided to support youth's needs.

Powderhouse's scheduling flexibility is a strength, not a weakness, in this regard. Specifically, it means that the time and disposition of service delivery can better reflect:

- capacity and scheduling constraints in the District,
- and ideal service delivery timing and structure for specialists

For additional information related to this, refer to:

- [If PHS expects to serve a higher-than-usual proportion of students with emotional and learning disabilities, how will this work with only one SEd specialist on site?](#)
- [How will IEP services be scheduled?](#)

**On slide 6 [of the curriculum and staffing presentation] there is some language about staffing structure. It's really unclear to me what that text means.**

This slide is highlighting the fact that Powderhouse is planning to start small and grow slowly, overstaffing in its early years with a team-teaching model that will allow staff to strategize and work together to solve problems as they arise. In its first year, Powderhouse will be at the scale of one to two, small, traditional classrooms worth of youth, making sure there are plenty of staff around to support intentional, organizational growth and iteration. With this grounding, the presentation then moved on to the teaching, learning, services, and other operational details staff will need to tackle both within Powderhouse and in collaboration with the District to make the school a success in its first years.

The text from the slide reads:

*This level of individualization requires a different approach to staffing. We'll review the precise staffing structure later in this presentation.*

*But two, important things to know are that (1) this would be beginning small and intentional, the equivalent of one or two classrooms, and (2) staff will be working closely together, as a team, in a case management style. This means they will be reviewing the work each person is doing, what they need, and how things are going individually on a daily and weekly and monthly basis.*

*Day-by-day, staff will be making course corrections in the work they do and the work they support youth in doing to achieve the goals captured in their Individualized Learning Plans.*

*Powderhouse would be using the flexibility of this staffing model (and its autonomies) to both work differently with youth, and prototype solutions to design questions with Central Office and others over time.*

**In a related question about staffing structure: in the first year at the public site, we have some estimated budgets of the low and high. What would that translate to for the first cohort of 30-40 students? How many FTE's are we talking about? I see in a later slide the number of staff — a computational specialist, the ELA specialist, the case manager. For that first year, what does that staff structure look like?**

With the Superintendent, Powderhouse has recently put together [this summary of our staffing and budget model](#) for the first few years of the school. Once we're up and running, we'll be able to adjust and refine the model based on our actual student body, but this is our best guess at how to over-staff the school in its first year to make sure Powderhouse is set up to create excellent learning experiences for our first cohort of students.

**In part of your response earlier, you mentioned that parents will assist with the ILP. It occurred to me that parents who understand these issues and understand history and science, that know how to advocate for their children, will have a marked advantage over families who don't. How will it be that you will ensure that the quality of a child's education at Powderhouse isn't dependent on their family's ability to advocate for them or understand the curriculum?**

Systemically, part of Powderhouse's accountability will involve cohort-wide analyses of Individualized Learning Plans and their progress. Patterns of disparity in Plans' goals could represent an equity issue (much as patterns of disparity in master schedule audits can highlight equity issues), and would be cause for further investigation by leadership, the Board, and Central Office.

With that in mind, two, important principles behind Powderhouse's design are especially relevant to this question:

1. Depth over breadth — Powderhouse's emphasis on critical thinking and self-management is achieved in part through its emphasis on depth of work and angles of engagement in a project. The Powderhouse team believes this depth is essential to the quality of youth's education.
2. The importance of mentorship — In every school, an important function of great teachers is pushing youth to do things they doubted they could. This could be as simple as encouraging someone to sign up for the PSAT or as long-running as a soccer coach pushing someone to their limit on the field. The same is true at Powderhouse. Regardless of a family's advocacy, part of the role of Powderhouse staff

is to act as a trusted expert curating and advocating for youth's educational options. This is a significant piece of what is intended by Powderhouse's incorporation of case management as a basic structure for staff organization and development at Powderhouse.

Family's role in developing the Individualized Learning Plan is to be a part of a holistic conversation between youth, families, and staff about their personal, academic, professional, and developmental needs. Staff would be shirking their duty to youth and families if they did not seek to expose, educate, and encourage families' involvement in setting effective goals for youth.

[School Committee questions \(Unanswered\)](#)

**Can we get a one page visual that shows where this school fits into SPS?**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

**Provide details of the STA vote, how many members participated and what outcome of the vote.**

[ Awaiting additional district information ] Powderhouse

Studios does not have this information.

[Constituent questions \(Answered\)](#)

**What is our local spending per student net state aid?**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

As of 2017, [\\$18,749.08](#) per student per year.

**How much will PHS tuition be?**

As a public school, Powderhouse Studios will not cost anything to those attending, there will be no tuition.

Like districts like Boston, there will be a site-based budget calculated per the Innovation School legislation and Innovation Plan. As of 2016, that budget would be ~\$16,100 per student. This figure does not reflect additional state aid or outside fundraising which would augment Powderhouse's budget.

**How many students are currently in out-of-district placement? What are their needs and current school tuitions? Which are PHS likely to recruit back?**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

Currently, there are ~125 Somerville students enrolled in Separate Schools, Residential Facilities, or Homebound/Hospital placements. That figure does not include parentally-placed private school students with disabilities.

In 2015, the average outplacement tuition was ~4.8x the average in-district expenditure pupil, or \$79,804 per outplaced student per year. The majority of students age-eligible for Powderhouse at the time had indications for Intellectual, Emotional, Communication disabilities.

Powderhouse is especially likely to recruit youth who would benefit from a smaller, more intimate environment and/or working on more hands-on projects of their own design. This can include but is not limited to diagnoses including anxiety, spectrum disorders, language-based learning disabilities, emotional regulation issues, *et al.*

For those interested in the research behind this, some introductory references are included below (and further details from Powderhouse's work with local graduate schools of education on this thread are available upon request):

1. Filippatou, D., & Kaldi, S. (2010). The Effectiveness of Project-Based Learning on Pupils with Learning



Difficulties Regarding Academic Performance, Group Work and Motivation. *International journal of special education*, 25(1), 17-26.

2. Doppelt, Y. (2003). Implementation and assessment of project-based learning in a flexible environment. *International Journal of Technology and Design Education*, 13(3), 255-272.
3. Carr, T., & Jitendra, A. K. (2000). Using hypermedia and multimedia to promote project-based learning of at-risk high school students. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 36(1), 40-44.
4. Bateman, D. F., & Cline, J. L. (2016). *A Teacher's Guide to Special Education*. ASCD.
5. Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). How to differentiate instruction in mixed-ability classrooms. ASCD.
6. Tomlinson, C. A., & McTighe, J. (2006). *Integrating differentiated instruction & understanding by design: Connecting content and kids*. ASCD.
7. Butler, C. J. (2014). Standards-based intervention: using a standards-based self-directed project to reduce problem behaviors of students with emotional and behavior disorders.
8. Nurenberg, D. (2016). Honoring all learners: The case for embedded honors in heterogeneous English language arts classrooms. *English Education*, 49(1), 63.

### **What are current teachers' salaries (which informs how many sections would need to close to cover the anticipated cost)?**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

As of 2017, the distribution of step and lane positions within Somerville Public Schools may be found [here](#), including the 2017 Unit A pay matrix [here](#).

### **What is a Sheltered English Immersion endorsement?**

From [the DESE website](#):

*English Language Learners (ELLs) are an important focus of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's (BESE) Proficiency Gap Task Force. Closing the proficiency gap depends on teachers having the skills and knowledge necessary to instruct ELLs. Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) is an approach to teaching academic content in English to ELLs. Generally, but not always, ELLs are in the same classrooms as native English-speaking students. To better serve these students, all core academic teachers and those administrators who supervise and evaluate core academic teachers are required to obtain an SEI teacher or SEI administrator endorsement.*

### **With little outreach and English-only materials how can Powderhouse Studios reasonably enlist a proportional number of Hispanic students? The current PHS materials are English-only, how have they managed to pre-enroll a representative population of students from non-English speaking families? How will the targeting efforts be organized to have a representative pool of candidates?**

If approved, Powderhouse Studios would work closely with the Parent Information Center, Central Office, and Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (in addition to SomerViva and community organizations like The Welcome Project) to establish an effective enrollment outreach program. In the future, this may include in- and afterschool offerings throughout middle schools in Somerville, in addition to free vacation programming.

### **What happens if there are very few applicants from certain group? How you ensure fair representation?**

The details of the lottery are still being finalized with the District; however, the lottery's current design corrects for under- and overrepresentation of certain groups among families who register. The lottery is designed to enroll a smaller, representative cohort over a larger, unrepresentative cohort. It is true, however, that if Powderhouse fails to attract *any* families from certain subgroups, then it would simply be prohibited from enrolling youth in that year, under the current proposal.

### **Isn't the PHS mission similar to the Next Wave School as well? Could PHS fold into Next Wave instead of being a separate entity? Why couldn't Powderhouse Studios be folded into NW/FC?**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

Next Wave/Full Circle is a therapeutic environment, with a significant emphasis on counseling support. This corresponds to a number of design elements unique to Next Wave/Full Circle.

For further detail on the challenges of folding Powderhouse into an existing context, refer to:

- [Could PHS \(in full or in part\) exist within SHS, or become an extended program like El Sistema? Why couldn't the innovations of Powderhouse Studios part of Somerville High School? There are many appealing elements to Powderhouse. However, why does this school have to be independent?](#)

**Could PHS (in full or in part) exist within SHS, or become an extended program like El Sistema? Why couldn't the innovations of Powderhouse Studios part of Somerville High School? There are many appealing elements to Powderhouse. However, why does this school have to be independent?**

Powderhouse Studios certainly hopes that the design, professional, and curriculum development work it has and will do can have much broader relevance throughout the district, including at Somerville High School.

Powderhouse believes that it is important to establish an independent sandbox to effectively prototype these materials and services.

Beyond this, a small, intimate environment is essential to Powderhouse's design. This is hard to reconcile with a full, comprehensive high school like Somerville High School. Of course that same scale and comprehensiveness enables Somerville High School to offer a wide variety of experiences Powderhouse would be unable to.

Through a thorough review of a wide variety of programs and school-within-a-school models and associated research (including interviews with program and school leaders), it has become clear that the challenges of a school-within-a-school model are sizable, and require a significant, compelling educational reason to incur.

For further detail, refer to:

- [Could Powderhouse Studios develop a fact sheet which has two columns - Column 1 Full Wave/Next Circle and Column 2 Powderhouse Studios? // Could we also have a snapshot of three different "student days" for Powderhouse Studios and Full Circle/Next Wave?](#)

**Given the new design of the high school, and the apparent consolidation of offices on Central Hill, why are we expanding?**

Powderhouse Studios' role as a sandbox benefits from an independent site, and its design was not incorporated into the Somerville High School Building Project. For further details on this and some of the challenges associated with a school-within-a-school approach, refer to:

- ["Could PHS \(in full or in part\) exist within SHS, or become an extended program like El Sistema? Why couldn't the innovations of Powderhouse Studios part of Somerville High School? There are many appealing elements to Powderhouse. However, why does this school have to be independent?"](#)

**Can you share the financial plan for PHS? // Where can I find the the financial analysis/model showing the school saves the district in the long term? // What is the school's projected budget for first 3 years? How much of that is from district, how much is from the XQ grant? // What will happen when the startup fundraising runs out?**

See above answers:

- [What is the proposed budget for Powderhouse Studios in years 1, 2, and 5? // Provide a detailed budget for the first five years of operation, including both district and grant funded expenses, salaries, equipment, etc.](#)
- [Once the XQ grant runs out, how will PHS be sustained financially?](#)



**Will my taxes increase? Homeowners are receiving increases for the new high school and the green line already.**

No. No tax increases are proposed as part of the Powderhouse Studios proposal.

**How would the existing district budget be re-distributed if PHS is authorized? Will existing district programs could be closed?**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

Powderhouse Studios is budgeted on a lower average per capita than the District at large. Through a mix of offsetting charter, independent/homeschooling enrollment, and special education outplacement, along with bringing additional funds into the district through its outside fundraising, in addition to state programs like the Expanded Learning Time and Innovation Career Pathways Initiative, the District is confident that Powderhouse's effective per capita will be within the current spread for Somerville Public Schools and will not result in the closure of any existing district programs.

**Should the resources to innovate go to a new school serving a small group of students, or to the existing schools serving many?**

Two of the challenges of innovation in education are that:

1. It often requires sandboxing. Even an innovation which will eventually serve many youth can rarely be effectively designed or prototyped at scale from day one. You cannot innovate without risking difficulty and failure, and it would be irresponsible to do this at scale. Also, being able to prototype, understand, and course-correct requires a small, agile sandbox.
2. No one school can serve every student equally well. One of public education's challenges is figuring out how to provide a wide variety of programmatic options and supports with limited resources and contexts to do so.

The Powderhouse team believes that the need, scale, and opportunity Powderhouse Studios represents makes a compelling case for trying Powderhouse by beginning small and intentionally. If the District sees value in what Powderhouse prototypes, the District, School Committee, and community at large will be well-equipped with an operating example to understand how these innovations might be spread more broadly in the District.

**How has the XQ award been spent to date? And how will it be spent in the future?**

Thus far, the XQ award has been spent primarily on staffing the design team for Powderhouse Studios, in addition to expenses associated with insurance, legal counsel, architecture services, and similar professional services and supports.

In the future, the XQ award will be primarily spent on supporting:

- Central Office efforts and costs involved in supporting the development of the Powderhouse model
- startup costs of Powderhouse itself (including overstaffing in its opening years)
- the development of district-wide programming for youth and staff grounded in Powderhouse's professional and curriculum development offerings
- establishing the research and design programs and partnerships to support the ongoing development of tools, materials, programs, and evaluations core to Powderhouse's program

**Would supporting Powderhouse Studios potentially cut from other district programs? Would it require cutting budget from other schools?**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

Currently, between additional state aid, Powderhouse's outside fundraising, and its lower per capita budget, there is no expectation that any existing district programs or school budgets will be cut. In the longer run, the

District expects Powderhouse's effect through increasing enrollment to be a net positive for the District, especially given the District's size and the current spread of resources across different schools.

**Can you explain in lay terms the weighted lottery algorithm? How would PHS's weighted lottery work, especially with regard to considering gender? How is Powderhouse Studios going to have a weighted lottery and ensure fit?**

The details of the lottery's implementation are currently being finalized with the District. However in lay terms, the lottery's design guarantees that the youth who end up enrolling in Powderhouse Studios would match the socioeconomic, demographic, and academic profile of youth in the district.

With regards to gender, the current proposal for the lottery includes gender among the weights. Because reliable data on non-binary/genderqueer identifying youth in Somerville is not available, we are proposing that those selecting a non-binary/genderqueer gender identity (or declining to select one) will be included in the lottery as though they've selected both genders, with their weights adjusted to prevent double-counting.

While this is not an ideal solution, gender diversity and balance are essential for the healthy culture of a school (especially a school with an emphasis on technical skills, which are associated with issues of stereotype threat and other cultural issues affecting youth's experience).

**Is the schools for Somerville residents only?**

Out of District enrollment in Somerville schools is technically possible at any of Somerville's schools, but financial and other agreements must be made by both the sending and receiving Districts, and it is quite rare. Total out of District enrollment at Powderhouse is capped at 20% in the Innovation Plan.

**Would there be sibling preference?**

The Innovation Plan leaves the possibility of sibling preference open, but a final determination would be made by the District Integration Working Group. We think this is important for family convenience, but there are also important equity elements to consider.

**Can Powderhouse Studios share the pre-enrollment demographic data?**

The families who have pre-registered optionally indicated additional demographic information (including SPED, ELL status). Evaluations of breadth and diversity of interest have been made by sampling pre-enrollment data. Powderhouse is happy to compile comprehensive aggregate, anonymized demographic data by sending out additional surveys to those pre-registered or working with the District to cross-reference registrations.

**Has the curriculum/design of PHS been reviewed by Special Education department?**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

Powderhouse Studios has been meeting with Christine Trevisone, Director of Special Education, since July 2018, to review and revise Powderhouse's design, and account for necessary operational differences in implementing Powderhouse's model. A Special Education staff member would also be part of the District Integration Working Group.

**If PHS expects to serve a higher-than-usual proportion of students with emotional and learning disabilities, how will this work with only one SEd specialist on site?**

Powderhouse will begin with one SPED and clinical specialist in its first year with 40 total students—a ratio close to that of Somerville High—but will expand the SPED-certified positions—both in total number and by hiring dual-certified staff—in response to the needs of the student body enrolled.

That said, it's important to note that Powderhouse is committed to serving a student body that is representative of their corresponding cohorts in the Somerville Public Schools and supportive, inclusive, and

successful for SPED students, but is not creating a therapeutic environment aimed specifically at serving SPED students.

**Will a special ed student be able to have his special ed services met? How? Speech, OT, Physical Social Skills.**

Yes, Powderhouse will be responsible for providing appropriately qualified staff and all the same services as any other district school. The specifics of how these services will be provided depends on the nature and distribution of students' needs.

For additional, related information, refer to:

- [How will IEP services be scheduled?](#)
- [If PHS expects to serve a higher-than-usual proportion of students with emotional and learning disabilities, how will this work with only one SEd specialist on site?](#)

**It's stated that this is a district public school. How can this be if only 160 students can benefit? And how is the lottery fair? How can you be certain special ed students will win a lottery?**

The size of a school doesn't make it more or less public. Powderhouse's program is not exclusive, it's simply a kind of program which can't be large. The District could, if it chose to, decide to start many programs "like" Powderhouse.

The lottery is weighted to ensure that the group who enrolls at Powderhouse matches youth in Somerville socioeconomically, demographically, and academically (including proportion of youth with special education needs). This means that even if special education needs are underrepresented in the lottery pool, the lottery adjusts for this automatically, ensuring those youth receive a chance in proportion to the incidence of special education needs district-wide.

**Is the school meeting some urgent unmet need or it is just an alternative?**

The Powderhouse team—and many families with whom we've worked or talked over the years—believe that there are youth for whom Powderhouse represents an important and essential enough need so as to be described as urgent.

**Can Somerville secure the resources for PHS without sacrificing other programs?**

Yes. For further detail, see ["Would supporting Powderhouse Studios potentially cut from other district programs? Would it require cutting budget from other schools?"](#)

**Shouldn't SPS own Intellectual Property rights since PHS is part of the school district?**

The current proposal ensures that SPS retains license-free rights to all intellectual property generated within Powderhouse in perpetuity. The proposed intellectual property policy simply ensures that youth, staff, and partners do not lose access to their intellectual property. Additional research and precedent for public institutions' (including secondary schools') approaches to intellectual property are available [here](#).

**What are the other district priorities or initiatives that may be delayed or sidelined due to investment (time/resources) in PHS?**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

None have been identified nor are expected. Powderhouse's outside fundraising will be able to offset and enhance Central Office capacity required to support its launch.

**How is Winter Hill a fair comparison to what Powderhouse Studios wants to do? What autonomies does Winter Hill has?**

We believe the Innovation School legislation offers a unique mechanism for staff and building leaders to sandbox, prototype, and adapt their schools' designs and policies to the specific needs and capacities of their youth and staff. Like Powderhouse, the Winter Hill Community Innovation School used the Innovation School

legislation to develop an Innovation Plan securing autonomy in the design and disposition of some of its professional development programming. Those interested in further detail are referred to Winter Hill's Innovation Plan.

**How will the PHS governing board will be selected/vetted?**

The Innovation Plan specifies a certain makeup to the board (*e.g.* including parents, university partners, staff and youth representatives, *etc.*), however the by-laws which would specify the precise procedures for selection and vetting have not yet been drafted, and would be part of the responsibility of the District Integration Working Group to establish.

**Will students be prepared to take the MCAS? How will MCAS be integrated in Powderhouse Studios?**

Yes, the state's standardized testing requirements are unchanged for Powderhouse Studios. Ongoing, lightweight formative assessments aligned with the MCAS and SAT Suite will be used by staff to inform project work and small group academic support for youth.

**Will the state curriculum be followed and will teachers be required to be licensed?**

Powderhouse is seeking curricular autonomy to cover the state's civics requirements alongside Common Core Math and ELA requirements, subject to the same state standardized testing requirements (currently MCAS) as any other public school.

**Will Powderhouse Studios seek a Parent-Liaison position that is bilingual?**

Yes, absolutely.

**There is a shortage of counselors, specialists, liaisons, and other support staff. How the PHS staffing needs affect the rest of the district?**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

Powderhouse will be retaining its own support staff; as of this time the District does not expect Powderhouse's staffing needs to affect the rest of the District.

**How will the Powderhouse Studios schedule allow students to access extracurriculars?**

Powderhouse's flexible scheduling means that youth will be able to participate in extracurriculars available at Somerville High School or elsewhere. Powderhouse will be responsible for all logistics and transportation involved in this.

Coordinating with families and youth, Powderhouse staff will treat youth's extracurriculars as external projects, analogous to an internship. In particular, this means Powderhouse staff will also seek to connect youth's extracurricular work back to project work and similar within Powderhouse.

This structure is enabled by two, important elements of Powderhouse's design:

1. A competency-based approach means that when youth aren't present at Powderhouse, they are not missing direct instruction, they are simply not continuing on project work.
2. The fact that Powderhouse's day and year are longer mean that even if someone were to, *e.g.*, participate in four seasons of sports, they would still be well over the state's learning time requirements.

**Constituent questions (Unanswered)**

**What will be the administrative rules to ensure accountability and fairness?**

[ Awaiting additional district information ]

Unclear what this is asking.

## HOMEWORK POLICY REVISED 1-17-19

### ***Definition and Purpose***

The Somerville School Committee recognizes that homework can be an integral component of the learning process when it is developmentally appropriate. The Somerville School Committee defines homework as any task “assigned to students by school teachers that are meant to be carried out during the non-school hours.” The Somerville School Committee views the purpose of homework as a way to improve the learning process, to aid in the mastery of skills, and to create and stimulate interest on the part of the student.

### ***Background***

Current academic research suggests that the association between achievement and homework grows progressively stronger for older groups of students. The Somerville School Committee therefore believes that homework should have a different purpose at different grade levels:

- For students in the earliest grades, homework should always be offered as optional, and when assigned, should foster a positive home to school connection and a love for learning.
- For students in the upper elementary grades, homework should play a gradual and supportive role in building academic skills, time management, organization and persistence.
- In grades 6 through grade 12, homework should play an important role in building academic skills, time management, organization, and persistence.

### ***Guidelines for Homework***

The School Committee recognizes the importance for educators, families and students to promote a healthy lifestyle by balancing academic and non-academic activities, including, but not limited to clubs, extracurriculars, and private family time. In our commitment to developing all learners’ capacities to approach learning with persistence, resiliency, reflection, and adaptability, homework assignments shall be crafted in accordance with the following principles:

- ***Assign Purposeful Homework:*** Legitimate purposes for homework include practicing a skill or process that students can do independently but not fluently, elaborating on information that has been addressed in class, and provide opportunities for student to explore their own interests.
- ***Design Homework to Maximize the Chances that Students Will Complete It:*** Students should be able to complete homework assignments independently with relatively high success rates, but still find it challenging.
- ***Involve Parents or Guardians in Appropriate Ways:*** Parents or guardians should be involved in homework in ways that do not require them to act as teachers or to monitor students’ homework completion.
- ***Carefully Monitor the Amount of Homework assigned:*** Homework that is assigned should be appropriate to students’ age levels and should not take up too much time away from the other home activities.

### ***Specific Time Parameters for Homework***

- ***Grades K-2:*** Homework is always optional for teachers to assign and for students to complete. If

assigned, it should not exceed 20 minutes each day, for no more than 2 days per week. In grades K-2, homework shall not be a factor that is tied to a final grade and is generally not recommended.

- **Grades 3-5:** 30 minutes maximum (2-3 nights per week)
- **Grades 6-8:** 60 minutes maximum (2-3 nights per week)

These specific time parameters for homework are not minimum requirements but rather maximum ceilings for the length of time a given student should be spending on homework. Additionally, for students in grades K-8, no homework shall be assigned over weekends, holidays or school vacation weeks. However, homework may be assigned over a longer timeframe that may include the weekend but excluding all holidays and vacations.

- **Grades 9-12:** the amount of homework will vary by subject.

When students receive homework assignments from more than one teacher, all staff should be mindful of the cumulative amount of homework assigned to stay within the specific time parameters outlined here above.

When assigning homework, all district staff are asked to not make the assumption about resources available in the home, including access to technology. Furthermore, homework shall not to be used as a form of punishment or reward under any circumstances in the Somerville Public Schools.

## **DRAFT revised 1.14.19**

### Somerville Public Schools Workforce Diversity Policy

The goal of this policy is to diversify District staff, to better reflect the District's diverse student population. The Somerville Public Schools is committed to equal opportunity in employment practices without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, ancestry, disability, gender identity/expression, marital status, family status, genetics or active military status. The District prioritizes an inclusive working environment and values the diverse backgrounds and characteristics of all people. As such, the District embraces the differing perspectives, experiences and skill sets flowing from a diversity rich environment reflective of the community it serves.

All candidates for employment will have an opportunity at the initial stage of the application process to voluntarily self-disclose any identification as an underrepresented racial or ethnic minority candidate. This demographic data will be segregated from the District's review of the candidate's qualifications. For the purposes of this policy, "underrepresented racial or ethnic minority candidate" shall mean any candidate whose racial or ethnic makeup is underrepresented relative to the District's student population, typically including but not limited to:

- African American / Black;
- Asian, including Southeast Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander;
- Hispanic / Latinx;
- Native American / Alaskan Native;
- Two or more races or ethnicities, when one or more are from the preceding categories.

Because staffing is fluid and demographics shift over time, the District shall periodically review staff demographics data for the purpose of updating the racial or ethnic minority groups that are underrepresented relative to the District's student population. Such reviews shall occur, at a minimum, once every three years, and shall be presented to School Committee.

All district hiring involves, at a minimum, the following stages:

1. recruitment of all applicants
2. the identification of a qualified applicant pool, and
3. the selection of interview candidates.

With the goal of diversifying the District's staff to better reflect the District's diverse student population, the District shall make best efforts to include in the applicant pool for each position at least two candidates meeting the minimum qualifications for a posted position who identify as an underrepresented racial or ethnic minority, as defined herein. Before a Hiring Administrator forwards a recommendation of hire to the Human Resources Office or Superintendent, the Hiring Administrator shall make best efforts to interview qualified candidates in the applicant pool identifying as an underrepresented racial or ethnic minority. If a recommendation of hire is forwarded to the Human Resources Office or Superintendent without demonstrated best efforts having been made relative to the applicant pool or interview selections as set forth in this policy, the Human Resources Office shall consider returning the recommendation to the Hiring Administrator for further review of the qualified applicant pool to identify additional interviewees or to re-open and re-post the position. In cases of compelling operational need, the Human Resources Office may forward the Hiring Administrator's initial hiring recommendation to the Superintendent, who may determine that such need compels maintaining the Hiring Administrator's initial hiring recommendation without further search activities. Administration shall create metrics to report to the School Committee its efforts towards achieving the goals of this policy as part of the annual Human Resources review.