



**Somerville Department of Early Education and Care**  
**School Committee Presentation**  
**December 4, 2023**

# Meet the Team



Kathleen Bailer,  
Director



Gina DiNunzio,  
Administrative Grant  
Coordinator



Jess Ferris,  
Instructional Coach



Abby Morales,  
Instructional Coach



Valerie Giltinan,  
Instructional Coach



Katie Gately Gehant,  
Itinerant Early Childhood  
Access Specialist & Coach



Nyrilee Chhotu,  
Board Certified Behavior  
Analyst



Liz Dean,  
Speech Language  
Pathologist



Kate Kane,  
Director Mentor/ SPYC PD  
Development Coordinator



Bruce Johnson, SEE  
Lending Library  
Consultant



Michelle Anzalone,  
Itinerant Lending  
Library Coordinator

# Somerville's Mixed Delivery System

ONE  
Somerville  
EVERY child

An integrated, mixed-delivery approach to aligning quality learning opportunities and wraparound services for **all** 3 and 4 year olds in Somerville.



## Early Childhood in Somerville: A History of Collaboration & Community Roots

1970-1980

1988

1996-2009

2000-2016

2019-2023

**PK &  
Kindergarten**  
(half-day)funded.

**ECIP** begins as a multi-sensory preschool program that serves both children with and without Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

**Somerville Community Partnerships for Children (SCPC)** founded, providing: Child Care Subsidies, Coaching, PD, Transition Supports, Mental Health & Itinerant Speech and Language services.

Full day K begins.

**Department of Early Ed Established.** Curriculum enhancement, parenting workshops, K transition events, Kindergarten Entry Skills Inventory (KESI).

Head Start partnership

**Somerville Partnership For Young Children (SPYC)** began. Coaching, mentoring, PD, community screening, quality enhancement and alignment, transition support, itinerant and wrap around services, degree attainment, tuition assistance.

# Somerville Partnership for Young Children (SPYC)



City of **Somerville**



SomerPromise City of Somerville



Children's Cabinet



HEAD START

**Somerville Child Care Center**



# Somerville Partnership for Young Children (SPYC)

**503**

Children served through SPYC  
Somerville Public Schools & Community Partner Centers



**313**

are in Somerville Public School  
PK, ECIP, AIM classrooms

**190**

are in Community Partners Centers  
through CPPI Grant Funding

**63**

Educators  
Supported

**38**

Classrooms

**30**

Home languages

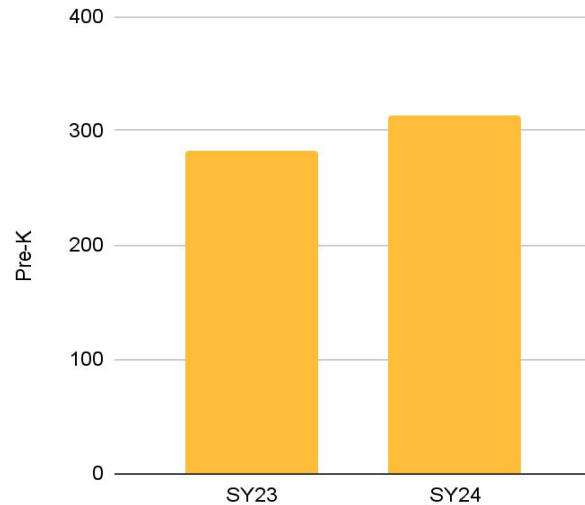


# 313

are in Somerville Public School  
PK, ECIP, AIM classrooms  
(SPS SY24 PK Enrollment)

- currently **80% full capacity**
- 242 PK & 147 specialized programming seats - placement through special education department
- 2 additional AIM classrooms added this year
- steady increase over SY23

PK Enrollment by School Year



School	Enrollment/Capacity
Capuano (PK)	95/116
Capuano (ECIP)	70/84
Capuano (AIM)	30/63
ESCS	18/18
KDY	18/18
HEA	17/18
HEA Sonrisa	12/18
WSNS	18/18
AFAS	17/18
WHCS	18/18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>313/389</b>

# SPS Kindergarten

379 children



**45 %**

from SPS preschool  
classrooms

**31%**

from Somerville  
childcare centers

**9%**

with no prior  
preschool experience



## Our Why

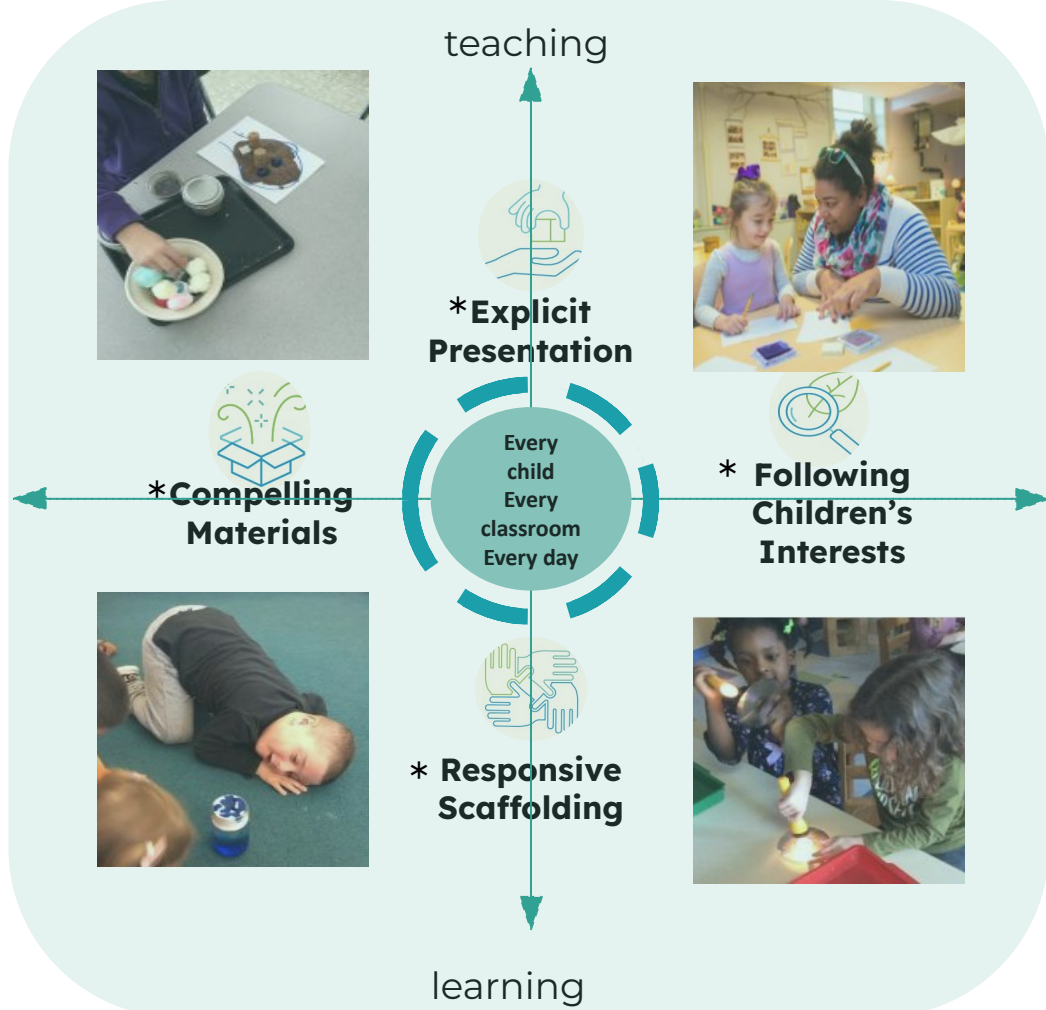
*We believe children are competent, capable, and curious and have the right to a warm, welcoming, inclusive high-quality learning environment. Together, our goal is to support educators in planning and implementing aligned intentional instruction to foster children's curiosity, language, literacy, and love for learning.*



# SEE Every Child Teaching & Learning Framework



- Centered on the Whole Child
- Anti-bias Focused
- Learning Through Play
- Considers the Classroom Environment
- Grounded in the Four Intentions
- Thematic/Interdisciplinary
- Responsive/Co-constructed
- Flexible/Adjustable
- Multiple Entry Points



teaching



**\*Explicit Presentation**



**\* Following Children's Interests**



**\* Responsive Scaffolding**



**\*Compelling Materials**



learning



**\*The Four Intentions**  
*(Kuh & Ponte, 2022)*

# Big Ideas

- Thematic units throughout the year.
- Centered around student interests, knowledge, and questions.
- Incorporates Math and Literacy within a Big Idea unit.
- Integrated with Project Approach.

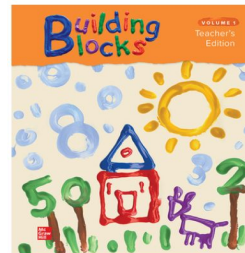


SEPTEMBER MONTH AT A GLANCE

Big Idea Guide: *Me and My Friends Project: Self-Portraits*

Guiding Questions:

*Who am I? How do I make friends? I am part of a group. I have feelings and my friends do too.*




<p> <b>Social Emotional Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish welcoming and closing routines.</li> <li>Support transition and separation from caregivers.</li> <li>Model and support children greeting classmates by name.</li> <li>Organize a tour of the school.</li> <li>Support self-awareness and confidence through independence and making friends.</li> </ul>	<p> <b>History &amp; Social Sciences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-construct community agreements.</li> <li>Prompt and support children to follow agreed-upon rules, limits, and expectations.</li> <li>Incorporate family photographs in the classroom environment.</li> <li>Model and reinforce appropriate ways of interacting in a group (e.g. taking turns in talking, listening to peers, waiting to speak until another person is finished talking, asking questions and waiting for an answer, and gaining the floor in appropriate ways).</li> </ul>	<p> <b>Mathematical Thinking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce and explore math manipulatives.</li> <li>Begin practice with counting verbally.</li> <li>Introduce Counting Wand to take attendance.</li> </ul>	
<p> <b>Science &amp; Engineering</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss the terms <i>similar</i> and <i>different</i>.</li> <li>Practice asking questions and defining problems.</li> <li>Practice describing physical characteristics.</li> </ul>	<p> <b>Artistic Expression</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourages making connections to Big Ideas through artistic expression in order to allow children to explore artistic media and to communicate their ideas creatively.</li> </ul>	<p> <b>Physical Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedication to educating the whole child means mindful incorporation of physical development. Children spend regular time outdoors, as well as play games and participate in activities that allow for movement.</li> </ul>	
<p> <b>Literacy</b></p>			
<p> <b>Oral Language &amp; Concept Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice taking turns to speak and share play ideas and stories about their lives, using rich <a href="#">Vocabulary</a>.</li> <li>Introduce children to norms and routines, including <a href="#">sharing</a> information.</li> <li>Introduce book baskets, book displays, and <a href="#">Explicit Presentation of Book Handling</a>.</li> </ul>	<p> <b>Fine Motor Drawing &amp; Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore materials that build upper body strength and fine motor control.</li> <li>Practice <a href="#">Mark Making</a> and drawing.</li> <li>Introduce sensory activities: water table, sand table, and easel.</li> <li>Introduce Handwriting Without Tears.</li> </ul>	<p> <b>Expressive &amp; Written Language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate that words can be read and that pictures and words convey meaning using <a href="#">Dialogic Reading</a>, <a href="#">CROWD Strategies</a>.</li> <li>Point to text when reading <a href="#">Visual Schedules</a>, <a href="#">The Morning Message / Guide</a>, and environmental print.</li> <li>Encourage peer-to-peer conversations.</li> </ul>	<p><b>abc Phonological &amp; Phonemic Awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce rhymes with songs and chants.</li> <li>Introduce awareness of the initial sounds with <a href="#">Name Games</a> and <a href="#">Environmental Print</a>.</li> <li>Introduce a posted alphabet with initial sound pictures, and highlight initial letters.</li> </ul>



# Essential Literacy Practices

## Weekly Pacing Aligned to Anchor Texts

	Oral Language & Concept Development			
October	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
<b>Morning Meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite children to respond to a prompt related to read aloud, ex., The day after reading, <i>Everybody in the Red Brick Building</i>, ask children, <i>What sounds did you hear at night?</i></li> <li>Read <i>Bakers Truck</i> (BB).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sing songs related to the Big Idea, ex., <a href="#">Neighborhood song</a> from Sesame Street.</li> <li>Introduce songs in languages that reflect the classroom/school community, ex., Spanish, Portuguese, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce Mat Man (Handwriting without Tears) –build Mat Man’s body and sing Mat Man song, <i>Mat Man has 2 hands so that he can clap!</i> connect to <i>Whose Hands are These?</i></li> <li>Discuss how classroom jobs, ex., gardener, librarian, door holder, etc. are similar to community helper jobs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss results of survey questions, ex., <i>How did you get to school?</i></li> </ul>
<b>Read Alouds</b> Select a high-interest book anchored to the big idea. Use <a href="#">CROWD</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ex., <a href="#">Everybody in The Red Brick Building</a> by Anne Wynter and Oge Mora</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ex., <a href="#">Quinito’s Neighborhood/El Vecindario</a> de Quinito by Ina Cumpiano</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ex., <a href="#">Whose Hands Are These</a> by Miranda Paul</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ex., <a href="#">Last Stop on Market Street</a> by Matt De la Peña</li> </ul>

# Curriculum Lending Library

Anti-bias focused

Kits, materials and books for educators in our public PK and community partner preschool classrooms to check out.



# Kit Building



Bringing teachers from district classrooms together with community center-based teachers, leveraging knowledge of educators across the city.



# Transformational Coaching Model

- 3 Instructional Coaches
- Informed by Elena Aguilar  
*The Art of Coaching*
  - Grounded in the 3 B's- our behaviors, ways of being, and beliefs
  - Strengths-based model
- Supporting educators implement the **Four Intentions**
  - Responsive Scaffolding
  - Compelling Materials
  - Following Children's Interests
  - Explicit Presentation



# Professional Learning Communities



- SPS Early Childhood PLCs

- AIM Educators - Capuano
- ECIP Educators - Capuano
- Gen Ed PK Educators - Capuano
- Gen Ed PK Educators - District Wide

- Impact of PLCs on Educators & Students

- Community and Collaboration
- Value Educators Input and Expertise
- Shared Practices & Professional Development

- Looking Ahead

- Dedicated time for educator collaboration in the '24 - '25 SY
  - More inclusive membership
  - Opportunities for more intradistrict collaboration





# Preschool Assessment Tools



Classroom Assessment Scoring System®

Teacher-Child Interactions

Emotional Support

Classroom Organization

Instructional Support

## PRESCHOOL (PK) REPORT CARD

- ✓ Language and Literacy
- ✓ Math
- ✓ Physical Development
- ✓ Personal and Social Development
- ✓ Approaches to Learning
- ✓ Scientific Thinking



Preschool Early  
Literacy Indicators

Alphabet Knowledge

Identifying numbers and letters

Vocal- Oral Language

Picture Naming

Tell About

Comprehension

Short story inference questions

Shared "Retell" of the story

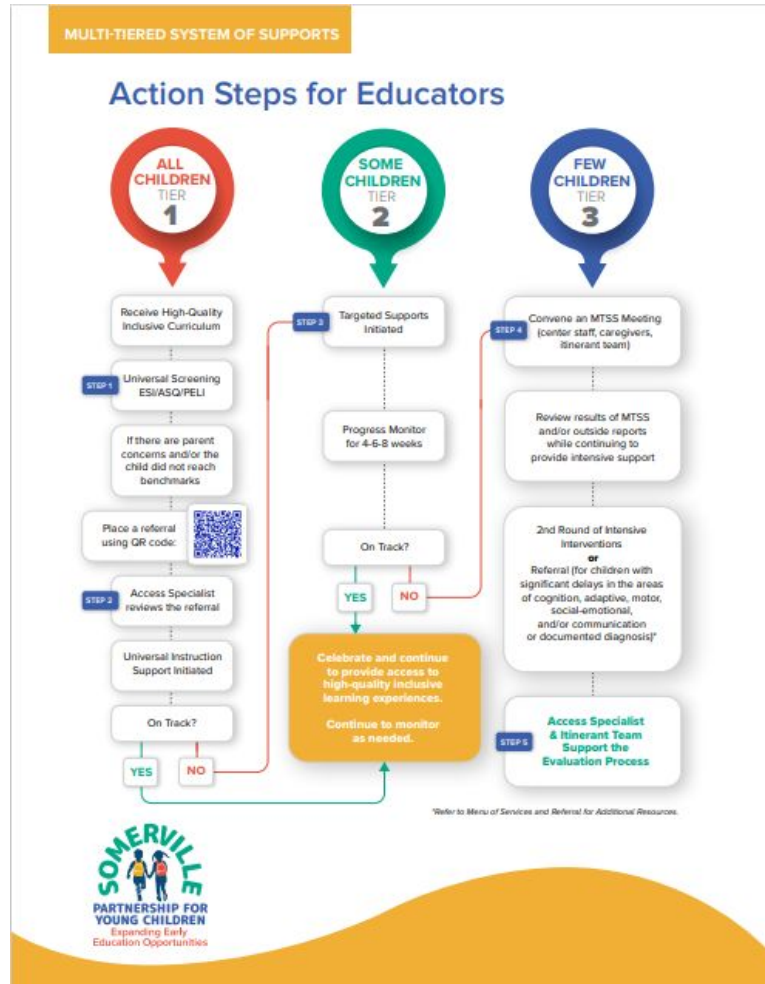
Phonological Awareness

Picture and sound association task

# Multi-Tiered System of Support

The SPYC MTSS Model supports Somerville's continuing work toward Universal Kindergarten Readiness through access, quality, and wraparound initiatives.

To reach Universal Kindergarten Readiness, children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children.



# Providing ON-SITE Support: MTSS Team

- Provide MTSS interventions: Proactive, data-driven support for **all** students
- Service students on IEPs at partner centers
- Support the referral process to the Special Education Department

**Katie Gately Gehant**  
Massachusetts licensed  
School Psychologist and  
Special Education  
Teacher

**Nyralee Chhotu**  
Massachusetts licensed  
Board Certified Behavior  
Analyst

**Liz Dean**  
Massachusetts licensed  
Speech-Language  
Pathologist

# Next Steps

- Use our data to drive instruction through coaching.
- Continue revising pacing guides, Big Idea guides and resources for curriculum kits.
- Coordinate support in our classrooms through the itinerant team.
- Through coaching and professional development supporting all learners.

# Questions?





**For further information on Somerville's Early Childhood Programs, please contact:**

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