



## CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

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SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL BUILDING AUTHORITY INVITES SOMERVILLE INTO ELIGIBILITY PERIOD, ADVANCING THE CITY'S PROPOSAL FOR A NEW K-8 SCHOOL

*With a favorable vote from the MSBA, Somerville will continue its pursuit to rebuild or fully renovate the Winter Hill Community Innovation School.*

*The independent SOI for the Brown School was not advanced, but the city's proposed project could also incorporate Brown School and districtwide needs.*

*The Winter Hill Community Innovation School was closed earlier this year and will not be reoccupied.*

**Somerville, MA** – Somerville is one step closer to a new school building, thanks to a vote by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) on Wednesday to invite the Somerville Public Schools into MSBA's Eligibility Period. The Eligibility Period is the first step in the MSBA process to proceed to the Capital Pipeline for funding. Somerville now has 270 days to complete requirements of the eligibility period, including funding a feasibility study, defining local needs, and forming a building committee. Invitation into the Eligibility Period is not an invitation to Feasibility Study, but is a critical next step in the process.

Somerville is one of 19 communities to advance to the Eligibility Period. The MSBA received 63 Statements of Interest in 2023.

In April, the Somerville Public Schools (SPS) and the City of Somerville submitted two Statements of Interest to the MSBA: [one for the Winter Hill Community Innovation School](#), and [one for the Brown School](#). In September, the MSBA conducted site visits at both schools. On Wednesday, the MSBA voted to approve one school building project in Somerville, however their vote provides a unique opportunity for SPS: the MSBA indicated it would consider a project on one site, but that during the feasibility study

phase, Somerville would have the “potential to examine the consolidation of the Winter Hill Community School with the Brown Elementary School to serve grades Pre-K through grade 8.” As part of the City’s ongoing K-8 Capacity Study, potential siting options have already been identified. Potential options will be discussed at an [upcoming community meeting on December 19th](#).

“I am extremely thankful to the MSBA, its Board of Directors and its staff, for diving into our Statements of Interest and really working to understand the complexities of addressing the needs of our two oldest school facilities. Understanding that the MSBA does not traditionally advance multiple schools in the same district, their team has presented Somerville with a unique opportunity to potentially address the needs of both schools through one project, which we as a community will need to carefully consider in the coming months. Our goal, whichever path we choose, is to ensure that all of our students have equitable access to high quality learning opportunities, services, and resources, and my commitment is to work with all stakeholders to make sure that happens,” said Dr. Rubén Carmona, Superintendent of the Somerville Public Schools.

“With the MSBA advancing our request for the Winter Hill project while leaving the door open to expanding it to fold in Brown School and other districtwide needs, we have vital new options for advancing our efforts to ensure our students have the quality school buildings they need to learn and thrive,” said Mayor Katjana Ballantyne. “I want to express my deepest gratitude to the MSBA for recognizing the pressing needs of the district, and I look forward to advancing discussions with our families, teachers, and staff to chart the best path forward. We are committed and ready to go, with the feasibility study already underway as we drive toward achieving the best outcome for our current and future students.”

The Winter Hill Community Innovation School (WHCIS) and the Brown School are the two oldest school buildings in the Somerville Public Schools. Students and staff from the WHCIS were displaced from the Sycamore Street building in June 2023 following the collapse of a non-structural ceiling tile from the north stairwell. As of September 2023, the WHCIS community has been temporarily relocated to the Edgerly Building at 8 Bonair Street (grades 1-8) and the Capuano Early Childhood Education Center at 50 Glen Street (PK and K). Beginning in September 2024, all PK and K classes will move to Bonair Street to join other Winter Hill grades where they are expected to remain through completion of a new or renovated school.

The Brown School, the district’s only K-5 school, is the oldest school building in the district, having been originally built in 1900. It is the only school in the district that does not have a cafeteria or gymnasium.

Somerville’s Eligibility Period begins on March 4, 2024. During this time, the City must complete preliminary requirements from the MSBA. Successful completion of all activities in the Eligibility Period will allow the City to be eligible for an MSBA invitation to Feasibility Study. Moving forward in the MSBA’s process requires collaboration with the MSBA, and an invitation to Feasibility Study will require a further vote of the MSBA Board of Directors.

### **About the [MSBA](#)**

The MSBA strives to work with local communities to create affordable, sustainable, and energy efficient schools across Massachusetts. Since its 2004 inception, the Authority has made over 1,750 site visits to

more than 250 school districts as part of its due diligence process and has made over \$16.7 billion in reimbursements for school construction projects.

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