

Resolution to Partner with City to Pursue Policies Preventing Evictions

WHEREAS, the Somerville Public Schools is committed to ensuring that the conditions for learning are such that all students are able to fully access the curriculum and thrive academically and social-emotionally; and

WHEREAS, the Somerville Public Schools is also dedicated to removing or mitigating barriers that may impact a students' ability to feel safe, supported, and ready to learn; and

WHEREAS, research has found that stable housing is foundational to children's wellbeing and is also critical to a child's development; and

WHEREAS, studies have found that an estimated 1 in 7 children living in cities within the United States are evicted by the time they turn 15; and

WHEREAS, housing displacement is known to have a significant negative impact on students' educational outcomes, their health, and their future earnings; and

WHEREAS, studies have also found an association between housing instability and increased criminal justice involvement of adults of families facing eviction; and

WHEREAS, housing is the single largest expenditure for most families, and the greatest determinant of a family's financial stability; and

WHEREAS, rising housing costs in Somerville and the region have led to displacement of families unable to make ends meet; and

WHEREAS, the financial impact of COVID-19 and the subsequent economic downturn has led to an increase in the number of families unable to make their rent or mortgage payments, leading to further displacement of families; and

WHEREAS, the City of Somerville has set a goal of achieving 20% of "affordable forever" housing stock as part of its SomerVision 2040 plan; and

WHEREAS, the City of Somerville demonstrated exceptional leadership in establishing and extending an eviction moratorium during the COVID-19 pandemic, and introducing new municipal housing assistance programs to help keep families in their homes; and

WHEREAS, the Somerville Office of Housing Stability's mission is "to prevent the involuntary displacement of Somerville residents who are in the process of eviction or at other risk of losing their housing; to rehouse the homeless and those needing to relocate; and to enact policies to combat displacement and enhance tenants' rights"; and

WHEREAS, the Somerville Public Schools, as part of its mission, is dedicated to maintaining a safe environment that nurtures the curiosity, dignity and self-worth of each individual;

THEREFORE; be it

RESOLVED, that the Somerville School Committee commits to work in partnership with the City of Somerville and appropriate city departments and community agencies to support Somerville Public Schools families with school-age children facing possible eviction, and pursue policies to prevent such evictions.

Voted: Unanimously

Date: December 19, 2022

By: Somerville School Committee