

# Working TOGETHER to Support our Students

Social-Emotional and Mental Health Supports

April 6, 2022

# Together.

A campaign to support the mental health and social-emotional wellness of Somerville's young people.



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# Campaign Purpose

Promote the social-emotional and mental health of SPS students by connecting young people to supports and services in schools and in the community.

Offer a one-stop information resource so people know where to get help.

[www.somerville.k12.ma.us/together](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/together)

While the primary focus of the campaign is on young people, many adults are also struggling with recovery from the pandemic and can also benefit from the resources publicized through the campaign.



# Campaign Goals

1. Highlight the growing social-emotional and mental health needs of our students resulting from trauma and disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic;
2. Destigmatize the mental health and social-emotional challenges facing children and adolescents, in order to foster conversation and intervention;
3. Reinforce healthy behaviors among all students and adults to ensure safe, supportive learning environments, such as encouraging kindness, empathy, civility, and respect;
4. Build capacity among families, SPS staff, and community members to recognize social-emotional and mental health difficulties among students and equip them with resources and strategies to provide help;
5. Connect students with caring adults and with programs, supports, resources, and services in and out of schools; and
6. Create awareness of the disproportionate impact of Covid-19. The needs are particularly significant among families of color, immigrant families, and families whose home language is not English, many of whom are experiencing additional fear and anxiety caused by the growing national divide on issues of race and racism.

# What the data tell us

## [Somerville Health Survey 2021](#)

Among the findings of this study, administered to SPS students in grades 6-12:

- While the majority of students did not experience any adverse financial or health-related effects of Covid-19, **about one in five middle or high school students in Somerville reported having a family member or close friend who died from the disease.**
- Over half of high school students and almost one-quarter of middle school students in Somerville reported that they struggled with their mental health “most of the time” or “always” during the coronavirus pandemic.
- Genderqueer students were significantly more likely to report struggling with their mental health (88% at the high school level), and rates also were higher among multiracial students (52% at the high school level).
- Among high school students, 47% of females reported struggling with their mental health, compared to 15% of males.

A link to the Summary Report from this study can be found at: [www.somerville.k12.ma.us/together](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/together) and on the Somerville Health and Human Services Office of Prevention website:

<https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/health-and-human-services/somerville-prevention-services>.

## What we are seeing or hearing about

- Increased anxiety and depression in students (6th-8th grade girls)
- Increased expression of suicidal ideations
- Increased reports of fighting
- Increased reports of inappropriate use of social media
- Increase in Assessments for safety
- Increase in 51A being filed
- Higher absentee/tardy rate
- Higher drop-out rate
- Higher rates of class and work avoidance
- Increase in reports of bullying
- Increased visits to school nurses office

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# SEL & Mental Health Resources and Programs

## Resources

- Counseling & Student Support Staff PK-8
- SHS Community System and Supports
- District-wide Social Worker(s)
- Full time intervention and Prevention counselor
- Embedded Counseling & Community Partnerships
  - Home for Little Wanderers
  - Riverside Community Care
  - Somerville Health & Human Services
  - Neighborhood Counseling & Community Services
  - Boston Children's Hospital
  - The Children's Room
  - Eliot Clinicians
- Second Step
- Responsive Classroom
- Student Support Teams
- During and after school counseling groups

## Programs

- Becoming a Man
- Mediation
- Restorative Circles
- Girls Groups
- Cambridge Health Alliance Teen Connection at SHS
- Professional Development for Staff
- SEL groups at SHS (Boys group, Portuguese speakers support group, Mama's group)
- Sandy Hook Promise Project Assemblies

# New Resources and Supports

- **Additional staff:**
  - 5 Deans of Students
  - 2 District-wide Social Workers
  - 1 District-wide Adjustment Counselor
  - 1 District-wide Prevention and Intervention Specialist
  - 1 Adjustment Counselor at SHS
  - 1 New Counselors at SHS
  - 1 Bilingual Adjustment Counselors (SHS, WH)
  - 1 MLE Adjustment Counselor (SHS)
  - Director for Basic Needs & Housing Support Services
  - Social Worker for Basic Needs & Housing Support Services
- **New direct service contracts**
  - Neighborhood Counseling and Community Services
  - The Children's Room
  - Eliot House Clinicians
- **Expanded direct service contracts**
  - Riverside Community Care
  - Home for Little Wanderers
  - Contracted Behaviorists: Dan Spritzen, Laura Davis
- **Girls Groups at Argenziano, West, Kennedy and Healey**
- **Becoming a Man - SHS, Full Circle, Healey; expanding to Winter Hill next year**
- **Working on Womanhood (WOW) - SHS and Full Circle next year**

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# Student Support Data

A few data points on supports to students in 2021-22:

- In addition to in-school counseling and District-wide supports, our embedded counseling contracts have served 225 students with individual counseling and 100 in group settings.
- Supervisors of Attendance have made more than 300 home visits this year for attendance, engagement, basic needs delivery, and safety.
- Mediation Department has conducted more than 300 mediation sessions, equalling approximately 600-800 students directly served through mediation.
- District-wide Student Services staff have supported more than 65 students and families with wraparound supports and have facilitated various support groups involving over 100 students.
- More than 100 staff trained this year in De-escalation.

## Together.

For many months, the pandemic kept students physically apart from their friends, classmates, and teachers. Now, we are together again. As many of our students continue to struggle with the lingering impacts of depression, anxiety, and stress, we must rely on one another for resources and support. The Together campaign emphasizes that “Together, we will get through it.” Everyone has a role to play in supporting our students through this difficult time. We are incredibly grateful for the many partners committed to supporting our students, the resources we have to ensure that we meet the increased needs of our students, and are committed to continuing to do all we can to address the challenges that our young people are facing.

# Questions?

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