

# CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter from the Somerville Public Schools – February 7, 2020

## News & Notes

### Kennedy 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Graders Combine Physics, Engineering, Power Tools, and Fun

Kennedy 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in Mr. Sharp's class are delving into their hands-on engineering projects for the Unplugged Arcade. Each student team designs and builds a mechanical arcade game in the Kennedy Makerspace under the guidance of Mr. Sharp. Once finished, the students will bring their projects to the gym and host an arcade for lower grades. The annual STEAM project alternates between the Arcade and a Catapult project. Learn about last year's student-designed and built catapults in this blog post: <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/blog/catapults-kennedy>



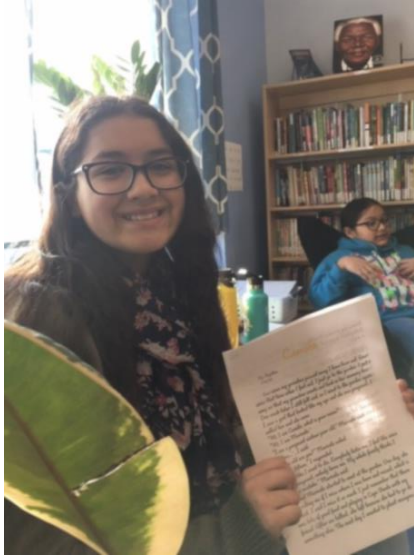
### Somerville Mathematics Fund Announces Grant Recipients

The Somerville Mathematics Fund's president, Erica Voolich, recently announced this year's mathematics educator grant recipients. The grants of up to \$500 each are designed to allow any K-12 Somerville teacher to purchase materials that encourage and support mathematics achievement in classrooms and after-school programs.

Some examples of what educators plan to do with their grant funds are to purchase math manipulatives such as class ten frame sets, Montessori materials, and unifix cubes. Other math teachers plan to create a math morning family event, purchase membership to interactive math practice sites such as TouchMath and iknowit for classroom use, and buy calculators and materials for professional development. Healey School first grade teacher Lauren Woldermariam, one of the grant recipients, explains, "My plan is to use these materials to differentiate my instruction during math time and to create X-Block groups around targeted problem-solving strategies."

The fund also awards scholarships to Somerville residents who plan to attend college and study a math related field. Applications for this will be open in early April. More information about the Somerville Mathematics Fund can be found

at [www.Somervillemathematicsfund.org](http://www.Somervillemathematicsfund.org). More information about this year's teacher grant winners can be found at <http://somervillemathematics.blogspot.com/>.



## Young Adult Novel *Seedfolks* Used as Inspiration for ESCS's Sixth Grade Creative Writing Unit

Julie Allen's sixth grade students at the East Somerville Community School recently read Paul Fleischman's *Seedfolks* in class. *Seedfolks* is a chapter book told in thirteen different voices, young and old, about a fictional neighborhood in Cleveland, Ohio. The story starts with a nine year-old girl named Kim who plants bean seeds in a vacant lot. Others follow her lead and the lot is transformed into a lush garden, where folks who were once strangers become a community.

When her students finished reading the book, Ms. Allen used the novel as a starting point for a creative writing assignment. Students needed to invent their own character and write a chapter of their own to add to *Seedfolks*. There were a few guidelines. The students' chapter needed to have a conflict, and the reader needed to learn the narrator's age, ethnicity, background, and contribution to the garden. The character also had to interact in some way with one of the characters in

*Seedfolks*, and the writer had to make sure that the reader understood how the garden helped their character and how the character felt to be part of the garden community.

Students revised drafts of their chapter several times after incorporating comments and suggestions they received from peer readers' feedback. Ms. Allen explained that, as an educator, this peer review process was one of her favorite interactions to witness. Students gave feedback in a kind and constructive way. Ms. Allen summarized the challenging and fun unit by saying, "I think students formed beautifully crafted short stories, some of which were funny, some of which were deeply sad, and some of which would have fit perfectly into the book itself. I was really happy with how the whole assignment turned out." Families came together to celebrate their sixth graders' creative writing accomplishments at a publishing party and class breakfast last Friday, January 30.



## New District E-Cigarette Awareness Web Page Offers Important Information and Resources

Did you know that 27.5% of American teenagers used electronic cigarettes in 2019 according to the Center for Disease Control? ([https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/youth\\_data/tobacco\\_use/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/index.htm)) Teen and adult electronic cigarette use and addiction is a growing national public health concern. We worked with a group of undergraduate students from Tufts University, staff and young people through the City of Somerville Health and Human Services Department, and Student Services Department Interim Director Elizabeth Doncaster to develop content for a web page aimed at our own school community. Find a basic introduction to the lingo, pertinent health information, and supports to help you quit. This information is for students, staff, parents / guardians, and community members. Students in any of our K-8 schools, Somerville High School, and Next Wave / Full Circle Schools may also talk with their school counseling staff or school nurses for support and information. Please visit the website to learn more: <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/vapingeducation>

# What's Happening

## SEPAC Workshop on Meeting the Needs of Children with Autism – February 24

The Somerville Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) welcomes Leslie Hughes from Massachusetts Advocates for Children for a workshop on “Meeting the Needs of Children with Autism: What Professionals Need to Know about Special Education Law and Writing Evaluation Reports.” This workshop for staff and interested parents provides an overview of legal standards, evaluation rights and procedures and special education service options for children with autism spectrum disorder. The work is Monday, February 24, 6:00-8:00pm at the West Somerville Neighborhood School Cafeteria (177 Powder House Blvd.)

## Somerville Partnership for Young Children (SPYC) Offers Tuition Assistance

The Somerville Partnership for Young Children (SPYC) is accepting applications for 2020-2021 Preschool Tuition Assistance for 3 and 4 year olds through January 31, 2020. Income-eligible Somerville residents with a child who will be 3 years old by August 31, 2020 can apply for tuition assistance for preschool programs at partner centers. The goal of SPYC, a collaboration between Somerville Public Schools, Head Start, and participating child care and preschool partners, is to expand access to high quality early education for Somerville children and families. To find out if you're eligible for tuition assistance for one of the partner centers and to apply, visit <https://somervillechildren.org/tuition-assistance/>. Explore [www.somervillechildren.org](http://www.somervillechildren.org) to learn more about SPYC. Developed with the support of the Early Education and Care's CPPI grant, SPYC is part of Somerville's commitment to developing a coordinated early education system through a mixed delivery model that expands access to high quality programs for all children.

## Healey School Accepting Donations for Book Fair – through February 14, 2020

**Book Fair News from the Healey!** We decided to do something a little off the beaten path this year for our annual book fair. This year, we will accept gently used books from bookshelves all over Somerville to sell for our book fair.

**Why?** Our mission is to make sure every child in our school has access to age-appropriate books and can go home with a book, expanding their home library. This also helps parents clean out books their kids may have outgrown, which makes room for new books while lessening our carbon footprint. We also thought this was a great way to invite the larger Somerville Community to participate in the process. All the money raised will go back to Healey Families to help fund offsite learning opportunities and activities throughout the year.

**Goal?** Our goal is to collect a diverse selection of new or gently used books from the community (and publishers if anyone has connections!) and sell the books for \$1.00-\$5.00 a book. The goal is to make sure every child goes home with at least one book, regardless of their ability to pay. The hope is to collect 1,000 age-appropriate books for the Healey School's 438 students by February 14, 2020.

**What we need:** New or gently used children's books from all over Somerville; books for children in Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade; bilingual or dual language books; diverse characters in books, volunteers to help sort books and prepare the space for the book fair in late February.

**What happens to the leftover books after the book sale?** We have plans to keep books accessible for the kids all year round while also making sure books in good condition are not thrown away. We plan on constructing a little library (take a book/leave a book) for the first floor where we have books available to take for visitors and students year-round. Your old books can have a positive impact on kids and our community, so please consider donating your books at the Healey School's front desk, or see if your school has a donation box for Healey volunteers to pick up on February 14<sup>th</sup>. (Only new or gently used Pre-K-8 children's books can be accepted.)

**Questions?** Please email Melissa McCue-McGrath ([m.mccue@gmail.com](mailto:m.mccue@gmail.com)), and thank you for your donation!

## Upcoming School & District Events:

Visit [www.somerville.k12.ma.us](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us) and click on the “calendar” link at the top of the page for a list of upcoming activities in our schools and in our District this month.

- **Monday, February 10, 8:30am: Winter Hill Student of the Quarter Awards and Breakfast** (115 Sycamore St.)
- **Monday, February 10, 1:15pm: CTE Presentation for 8<sup>th</sup> Graders** at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School Cafeteria (115 Sycamore St.)
- **Tuesday, February 11-Thursday, February 13: East Somerville Community School PTA Book Fair** (50 Cross St.)

- **Tuesday, February 11: Middle Grades Quarter 2 Honor Roll Breakfast** at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School (115 Sycamore St.)
- **Tuesday, February 11, 9:15am: Tufts Beats** performs for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders at the Argenziano School (290 Washington St.). Sponsored by the Argenziano PTA Arts Council.
- **Tuesday, February 11, 3:00-5:30pm: Argenziano Parent / Teacher Conferences** (290 Washington St.)
- **Tuesday, February 11, 5:00-6:00pm: WHCIS Principal Coffee Hour** at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School Conference Room (115 Sycamore St.)
- **Tuesday, February 11, 5:30-7:00pm: ESCS School Improvement Council Meeting** at the East Somerville Community School Library (50 Cross St.)
- **Tuesday, February 11, 6:00-7:30pm: WHCIS Governing Board Meeting** (115 Sycamore St.)
- **Wednesday, February 12: Half-Day Wednesday for PK-8** (PK dismissed at 11:30am; K-8 dismissed at noon)
- **Wednesday, February 12: PTA-Sponsored Spirit Day at the West Somerville Neighborhood School (177 Powder House Blvd.)**
- **Wednesday, February 12, 8:30-9:30am: Healey School Grades 7 & 8 Family Breakfast** (5 Meacham St.)
- **Wednesday, February 12, 1:45-3:00pm: SHS Science & Engineering Fair and Exhibition at Somerville High School** (81 Highland Ave.)
- **Wednesday, February 12, 5:00-6:30pm: WSNS School Council Meeting** at the West Somerville Neighborhood School Library (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Thursday, February 13, 3:00-5:30pm: East Somerville Community School Parent / Teacher Conferences** (50 Cross St.)
- **Thursday, February 13, 6:00pm: "Roots of Rap" Show** at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School Cafeteria (115 Sycamore St.)
- **Thursday, February 13, 6:00-8:00pm: Serve and Inspire SPS Volunteer Orientation** at the Cummings School Building (42 Prescott St.)
- **Thursday, February 13, 7:00-8:30pm: SFLC Sharing Our Stories Support Group, Final Session** at the SFLC Center, Cummings School Building (42 Prescott St., Room 14)
- **Friday, February 14, 8:30am: Grade 3 Author's Chair Breakfast** at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School (115 Sycamore St.)
- **Saturday, February 15, 9:30am-1:30pm: Roots & Shoots and Brown School Leadership Team Fundraiser to Benefit Somerville Backpack Program** at Somerville Winter Farmer's Market at the Armory
- **Monday-Friday, February 17-21: February Vacation** – All Schools closed; District offices closed on Monday, February 17<sup>th</sup> only

### Upcoming School Committee Meetings:

Find the complete School Committee schedule, agendas and meeting minutes (as approved) online at [www.somerville.k12.ma.us/school-committee](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/school-committee).

- **Monday, February 10, 7:00-8:30pm: Annual School Committee and PTA Council Meeting** at the Central Office Main Conference Room (8 Bonair St., 2<sup>nd</sup> floor)
- **Monday, February 24, 6:00-7:00pm: Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee Meeting** at the Central Office Main Conference Room (8 Bonair St., 2<sup>nd</sup> floor)
- **Monday, February 24, 7:00-9:30pm: Regular School Committee Meeting** at the Central Office Main Conference Room (8 Bonair St., 2<sup>nd</sup> floor)
- **Wednesday, February 26, 6:00-7:00pm: Finance and Facilities Meeting of the Whole** at the Central Office Main Conference Room (8 Bonair St., 2<sup>nd</sup> floor)

### Somerville Family Learning Collaborative Workshops, Events, and Resources:

Find a complete list of SFLC events and workshops at [www.somerville.k12.ma.us/families](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/families).

The Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC) enhances the capacity of families and schools to support children's learning and well-being by collaborating with community partners and promoting welcoming, responsive schools and programs. Take a look at the work and impact of the SFLC "by the numbers" in this [2018-2019 report](#).

- **SFLC Parent/Guardian English Classes.** Parents/guardians of Somerville students can practice and strengthen their English language skills while learning about and becoming more involved with their child's education. The

SFLC works in collaboration with The Welcome Project to provide classes held in the morning and evening. The spring session runs from January 28 to May 14, 2020. Registration is ongoing. Parents/guardians can register by contacting Jennifer Ochoa, the SFLC/East Somerville Community School's Family and Community Liaison at [jochoa@k12.somerville.ma.us](mailto:jochoa@k12.somerville.ma.us) or at (617) 625-6600, ext. 3706.

- **Serve and Inspire Volunteer Orientation.** New to volunteering with the Somerville Public Schools? Attend an orientation to learn about district schools and how SPS volunteers serve, inspire, and support student learning. Please contact SPS Volunteer Coordinator Jen Capuano at [jcapuano@k12.somerville.ma.us](mailto:jcapuano@k12.somerville.ma.us) or call (617) 629-5475 for more information, accommodations needed to attend, and to RSVP. Thursday, February 13, 6:00-8:00pm at the SFLC Cummings School Building (42 Prescott St., Room 12).
- **Sharing Our Stories Support Group – Final Session.** Join SFLC staff and fellow Somerville parents on Thursday, February 13, 7:00-8:30pm for a support group for families with young children who have special needs. Raising a child who does not always fit in can be challenging. This free, open-ended group offers adults the opportunity to share joys, concerns, frustrations, questions and resources about their experiences. Facilitated by Amy Bamforth, LICSW. SFLC Center at the Cummings School Building (42 Prescott St.)
- **SSEPAC Workshop: Meeting the Needs of Children with Autism.** On Monday, February 24, the Somerville Special Education Parent Advisory Council welcomes Leslie Hughes from Massachusetts Advocates for Children for a workshop on “Meeting the Needs of Children with Autism: What Professionals Need to Know About Special Education Law and Writing Evaluation Reports.” This workshop for staff and interested parents provides an overview of legal standards, evaluation rights and procedures and special education service options for children with autism spectrum disorder. 6:30-8:00pm, West Somerville Neighborhood School (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Legal Services Clinic.** Meet representatives from SomerViva for information and resources, and make an appointment for a free legal consultation with representatives from Greater Boston Legal Services and the Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinical Program (HIRC). Call Irma Flores at (617) 625-6600, x2122 or email [iflores@somervillema.gov](mailto:iflores@somervillema.gov) for a legal consultation appointment. Thursday, February 27, 5:00-7:00pm at the SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs (42 Cross St.)
- **In This Together: A Support Group.** Somerville Public Schools and City of Somerville employees who have young children are invited to this free support group. Join other working parents, fellow school and city employees, to share ideas, frustrations, resources, and more. This group is facilitated by Amy Bamforth, LICSW and will meet one Friday a month from 3:00-4:00pm: February 28, March 27, April 17, and May 22 at the SFLC Center in the Cummings School Building (42 Prescott St.)

## Looking Ahead:

- **Monday-Friday, February 17-21: February Vacation** – All Schools closed; District offices closed on Monday, February 17<sup>th</sup> only
- **Monday, February 24, 6:00-8:00pm: Somerville SEPAC Workshop on Meeting the Needs of Children with Autism,** at the West Somerville Neighborhood School Cafeteria (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Tuesday, February 25, 10:30am: ESCS Grade 6 Second Quarter Awards** at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium (50 Cross St.)
- **Tuesday, February 25, 11:00am: ESCS Grade 5 Second Quarter Awards** at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium (50 Cross St.)
- **Tuesday, February 25, 1:30pm: ESCS Grades 7 & 8 Second Quarter Awards** at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium (50 Cross St.)
- **Wednesday, February 26, 9:30am: ESCS Grade 1 Second Quarter Awards** at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium (50 Cross St.)
- **Wednesday, February 26, 10:00am: ESCS Grade 2 Second Quarter Awards** at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium (50 Cross St.)
- **Wednesday, February 26, 1:30pm: ESCS Grade 3 Second Quarter Awards** at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium (50 Cross St.)
- **Wednesday, February 26, 2:00pm: ESCS Grade 4 Second Quarter Awards** at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium (50 Cross St.)
- **Wednesday, February 26: Winter Hill AIM Grades 3-5 Field Trip** – Waypoint Adventures Rock Climbing

- **Wednesday, February 26, 4:00-6:00pm: SHS School Improvement Council Meeting** at Somerville High School, Room 230 (81 Highland Ave.)
- **Wednesday, February 26, 4:00-6:30pm: West Somerville Neighborhood School Parent / Teacher Conferences** (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Wednesday, February 26, 5:30-7:00pm: WSNS PTA-Sponsored Books for Bingo and Business Meeting**, at the West Somerville Neighborhood School (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Thursday, February 27, 2:40-3:10pm: WHCIS PreK-1 Beautiful Stuff Family Maker Project** in the Winter Hill Community Innovation School Library (115 Sycamore St.)
- **Thursday, February 27, 3:00-4:30pm: Capuano Parent / Teacher Conferences** (150 Glen St.)
- **Thursday, February 27, 5:00-7:00pm: Capuano Parent / Teacher Conferences** (150 Glen St.)
- **Thursday, February 27, 7:00-8:00pm: Healey Families Community Meeting** at the Healey School Library (5 Meacham St.)
- **Friday, February 28, 8:30-9:30am: WHCIS Principal Coffee Hour** at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School Conference Room (115 Sycamore St.)
- **Friday, February 28, 3:00-4:00pm: SFLC "In This Together" Parent Support Group for SPS and City of Somerville Employees**, at the SFLC Center, Cummings School Building (42 Prescott St.)

## Community News & Events

**Debate Spaces.** Somerville middle schoolers (grades 6-8) are invited again this year to participate in workshops to help them become powerful public speakers and debaters. Hosted by Debate Spaces, an award-winning, Harvard-affiliated non-profit, workshops will take place on **February 29th, March 14th, and April 11th, 10-2:30 p.m. at Suffolk University**. Past workshops have included students from the Argenziano and East Somerville Community School. Students will participate in skill-building games, a debate round, and community activism projects. Most students attend all three sessions though it is possible to attend only one or two. Scholarships available. No prior public speaking or debate experience is necessary. For more information, visit [www.debatespaces.org](http://www.debatespaces.org), or email [info@debatespaces.org](mailto:info@debatespaces.org).

**Community Growing Center.** The Somerville Community Growing Center is polling its supporters and friends regarding what the Center's theme for 2020 should be. Every year, the Growing Center selects a theme around which to develop and orient programming, and is seeking input from Somerville families about this year's theme.

Visit [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdKsb8mkKT8\\_ueTJNeLLEp5cd14Z6ELtwCO8eZdWg\\_dhfhJ3g/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdKsb8mkKT8_ueTJNeLLEp5cd14Z6ELtwCO8eZdWg_dhfhJ3g/viewform) to vote.

**Somerville Media Center.** Bored? Out of school early? Want to make cool media projects with your friends? Sign up for SMC's Media Exploration Adventures! Media Exploration Adventures are a brand new workshop series for youth in Somerville on Half Day Wednesdays. Each session includes targeted, hands-on, collaborative media production activities where youth develop their media skills in a fun, safe, supportive environment. The class also includes snack and a brief parent showcase with a light dinner from 5:30-6:00pm. Sign up for one or all of them! Program held at the Somerville Media Center (90 Union Square). Fees vary; scholarships available. Youth eligible for free or reduced lunch can attend for free. Visit [www.somervillemedia.org/youth-media-2/media-exploration-workshops/?mc\\_cid=324a737c00&mc\\_eid=eb2a28602b](http://www.somervillemedia.org/youth-media-2/media-exploration-workshops/?mc_cid=324a737c00&mc_eid=eb2a28602b) for dates and to register. To learn more about Somerville Media Center and other great SMC programs, visit [www.somervillemedia.org/](http://www.somervillemedia.org/).

**Silent No More.** The Adi and Jerry Greenberg Foundation and CICA presents a No Limits Production of Silent No More on Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm at the Regent Theater (7 Medford St. in Arlington, MA). The production features a collection of inspiring life stories by individuals with hearing loss. Tickets are \$25. For seat reservation for ASL Interpreters and Captioning, please email [rsvp@nolimitsfordeafchildren.org](mailto:rsvp@nolimitsfordeafchildren.org). For more information, visit [http://regenttheatre.com/details/no\\_limits\\_presents...\\_silent\\_no\\_more](http://regenttheatre.com/details/no_limits_presents..._silent_no_more).

**The Duhamel Star.** Is there someone in the Somerville Public Schools that you would like to celebrate? The Duhamel Education Initiative (DEI) invites you to recognize them with a Duhamel Star – a certificate of appreciation given as a donation to DEI in the honoree's name. You can express your gratitude with a personal message and grow student engagement in SPS through your donation to DEI's grant fund. Duhamel Stars can be purchased at any time. For more information and to order a Duhamel Star, visit [www.duhamelsomerville.org/duhamel-star.html#](http://www.duhamelsomerville.org/duhamel-star.html#/).

**Somerville Parks & Recreation.** Check out the Somerville Parks and Recreation Department website ([www.somervillerec.com](http://www.somervillerec.com)) for information about their February Vacation Floor Hockey program, and other programs

and events available this winter. A full list of classes, clinics, events, youth and adult league sports, and activities, as well as cost for each is available at <http://www.somervillerec.com/info/activities/default.aspx?type=activities>.

**Middle Grades Writer's Den.** Writer's Den is a free weekly evening creative writing workshop open to all Somerville students in grades 4-8. Creative weekly activities and fun writing prompts, storytelling, script writing and more keep students eager to write and share their writing. Publishing opportunities and snacks. Co-Directors Alan Ball, Cara Feinberg, and Allyson Sherlock invite all students in grades 4-8 to join the fun. Parent/guardian permission required. Writer's Den takes place Wednesdays and some Mondays (except vacation weeks or if schools close due to inclement weather). Visit the district website ([www.somerville.k12.ma.us/events/calendar](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/events/calendar)) for Writer's Den meeting dates for the rest of the school year. The workshops take place at the Healey School Library, 5 Meacham St.

## City & District Employment Opportunities

Consider joining a winning team! Current city and district opportunities include:

- [Crossing Guard](#), Police Department, City of Somerville
- [Public Space Planner](#), OSPCD – Public Space and Urban Forestry, City of Somerville
- [Program Coordinator](#), Parks & Recreation Dept., City of Somerville
- [School Nurse Floater](#), Health and Human Services Dept., City of Somerville

Visit <https://www.somervillema.gov/jobs> for a complete listing of current open positions in the City of Somerville.

- [Senior Clerk – Full Year](#), Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences (SCALE), Somerville Public Schools
- [Middle School Cross Country Coach](#), Athletics Department, Somerville Public Schools
- [Temporary Long-Term Substitute Teacher - Reading](#), West Somerville Neighborhood School, Somerville Public Schools
- [PT Assistant Teacher – Somerville Community School Afterschool Program](#), John F. Kennedy School, Somerville Public Schools

Visit <https://www.schoolspring.com/jobs/?employer=16902> for a complete listing of current open positions in the Somerville Public Schools.

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### Our Commitment to the Whole Child

VISION: "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."