



# Entry Plan Findings

Dr. Rubén Carmona, Superintendent

# Process Overview

## Focus Groups and Listening Sessions

We held focus groups and listening sessions with students, school-based and district-based staff, families, and community members from December through January.

## Surveying Stakeholders

We launched surveys for four stakeholder groups: students, families, staff, and community members. The surveys were available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Arabic, and Nepali.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data team analyzed the data collected from the focus groups and surveys and identified major themes.

# Questions Asked

What do you like about Somerville Public Schools?

What would you like to see improve in Somerville Public Schools?

What do you think we should prioritize for the future of Somerville Public Schools?

# 42

Focus Groups

22 Student | 16 Staff | 4 Family

# 2,607

Survey Responses

Responses from all  
**11 schools**

Taken in

# 6 languages

English, Spanish, Portuguese,  
Haitian Creole, Arabic, Nepali

Out of 2,607 survey respondents:

**66% from students**

**26% from families**

**8% from staff\***

**<1% from community  
partners**

Students in

Grades **4-**

# 12

# 33%

Multilingual Family  
respondents

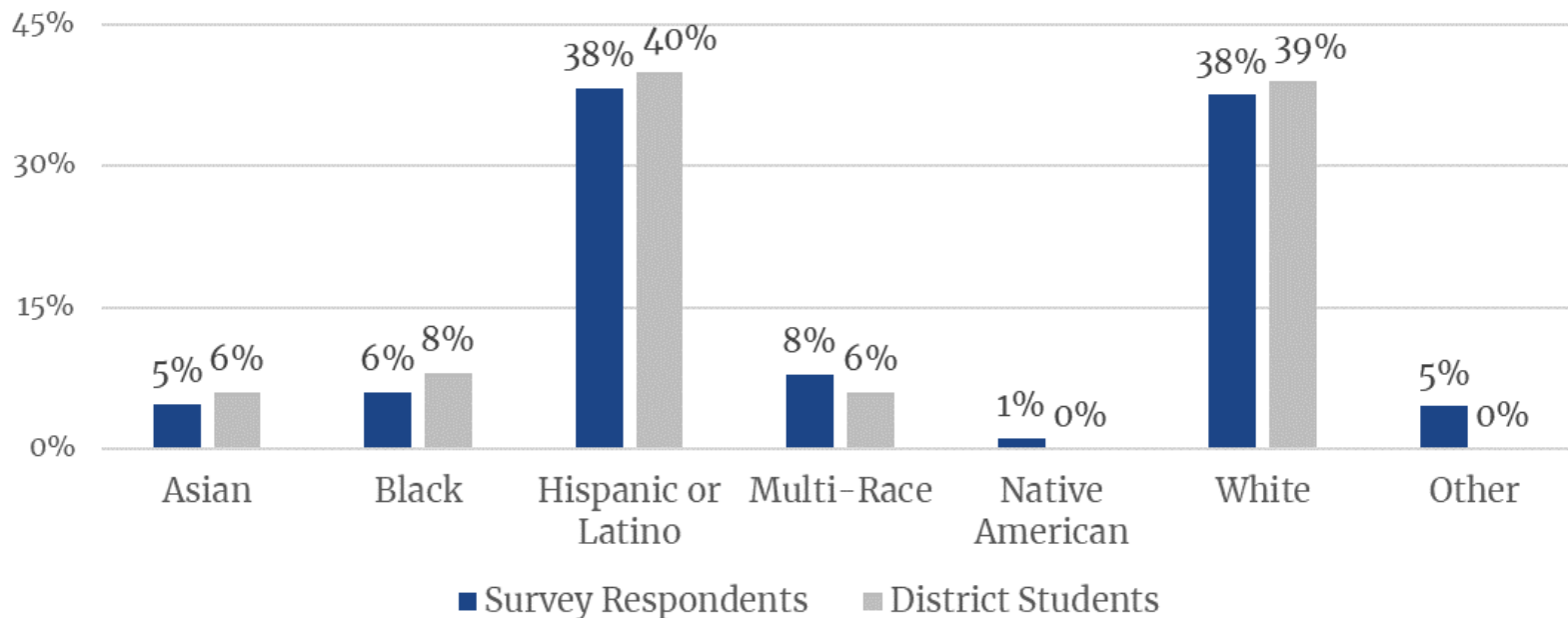
Staff responses from:  
**educators, administrators,  
Specialists, Coaches,  
Paraprofessionals,  
Counselors, Social Workers,  
Secretaries, and more**

# 40%

Of families access district services  
such as: carrot cards, free food  
market, support from School &  
Community Liaisons, and/or MBTA  
cards

# Race/Ethnicity of Respondents Representative of District

## Comparison: Student Survey Respondents vs. District Race/Ethnicity



# Emergent Themes

## Academics

- ❑ Curriculum & Instruction
- ❑ Tiered Support

## Wellness

- ❑ Social Emotional Learning and Curriculum
- ❑ Behavioral/Mental Health

## Access

- ❑ Facilities
- ❑ Special Programs

## People

- ❑ Talent Development
- ❑ Staff & Student Diversity
- ❑ Family & Community Engagement

# Academics

- ❑ Curriculum and Instruction
- ❑ Tiered Support

# Curriculum & Instruction

	Summary	Relevant Quotes
Areas of Strength	<p>Students expressed a <b>joy in learning</b> and feeling that their teachers adapt to meet their needs.</p> <p>Families celebrated the <b>expertise and quality of educators</b> teaching their children.</p>	<p><i>“I like learning new things and understanding how things work in every class! I like doing creative projects, and creative writing assignments.” (Student)</i></p>
Areas for Improvement	<p>Staff identified many areas of need around <b>evidence-based curriculum</b> including: reading, math, science, world languages, etc. Also identified <b>inequities</b> around curriculum for Newcomers, Multilingual learners, Special education. Need for support around differentiated instruction.</p>	<p><i>“Currently there is a lack of focus on high quality [teaching] and learning. There is a focus on equity without the focus on instruction and this is an equity issue. We need strong curriculum and strong teacher capacity to do this.” (Staff)</i></p>



# Tiered Supports

	Summary	Relevant Quotes
Areas for Improvement	<p>Staff also expressed a lack of cohesion and identified interventions to adequately support students across <b>General Education, Special Education, and Sheltered English Immersion</b>. There's a need for <b>support around Tier 2 and 3 interventions</b> and questions around the MTSS process as a means for getting this support for students.</p>	<p><i>“Somerville would benefit from dedicating time, effort and resources to <b>building up general education programming</b> and implementing a <b>uniformed robust MTSS system</b>. There needs to be <b>diverse interventions</b> that can be implemented at Tier I and Tier II so that Special Education is not the only game in town to support students.”</i> <b>(Staff)</b></p>

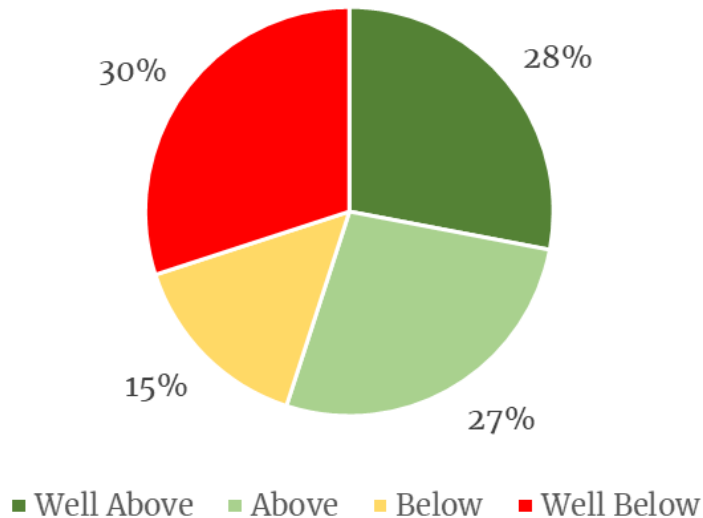
# Consistent with Key Findings, MCAS Data Reflects Need for Curriculum/Instruction Review

Grades 3-8				Grade 10			
% Meeting or Exceeding	2019	2022	2023	% Meeting or Exceeding	2019	2022	2023
ELA	48.8%	40.6%	38.7%	ELA	52.6%	55.7%	53.4%
Math	43.9%	32.8%	33.2%	Math	46.4%	40.9%	37.3%
Science	38.1%	39.4%	36.1%	Science	49.8%	41.2%	41.5%

The Spring 2023 MCAS data for students in grades 3-8 show a decline in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the ELA, Math, and Science exams compared to pre-COVID percentages. The grade 10 data also points to a decline in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in Math and Science compared to pre-COVID percentages.

# Consistent with Key Findings, DIBELS Data Reflects Need for Early Literacy Support

DIBELS 2023-2024  
Middle of Year Results



The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment is used to gauge students' early literacy skills. This data shows the results of the middle of year DIBELS assessment for students in grades K-3.

**Only 55% of students are on grade level.**

# Wellness

- ❑ Social Emotional Learning & Curriculum
- ❑ Behavioral/Mental Health Supports

# Social Emotional Learning & Curriculum

	Summary	Relevant Quotes
Areas of Strength	Students and families expressed an appreciation for the general <b>focus on SEL/wellbeing of students.</b>	<i>“The <b>focus on social emotional skills</b> and providing a supportive, kind environment for the kids.” (Family)</i>
Areas for Improvement	Staff expressed a desire for an <b>SEL curriculum and dedicated time and resources</b> to support this work.	<i>“<b>SEL - curriculum guides</b> would be helpful just as they do for academics – would help with tier 1 SEL.” (Staff)</i> <i>“SEL is very important with the population of student that we have. We say we are good at this but <b>we need to carve out time in a day where everyone is doing it.</b>” (Staff)</i>

# Behavioral/Mental Health

	Summary	Relevant Quotes
Areas of Strength	<p>Students and families expressed an <b>appreciation for services like mediation and counselling</b>. Staff expressed an appreciation for <b>commitment to restorative justice</b>.</p>	<p>“I like that I have been <b>able to find support from the school, especially from my counselor</b>. I appreciate that the high school pays some attention to students' mental health.” (Student)</p> <p>“The school also has mediation, which has <b>student mediators that are trained and make it easier to talk about situations</b>.” (Student)</p>
Areas for Improvement	<p>Students and families expressed a desire for <b>less conflict</b> at school.</p> <p>Staff expressed a desire for more <b>transparency around discipline</b> and a mental health screener so we can be <b>proactive in meeting students' mental health needs</b>.</p>	<p>“Don't understand what the rule book is and the consequences and comparatively and there is <b>not a lot of transparency around discipline</b>.” (Staff)</p> <p>“Something that I want to be better is no <b>fighting at lunch</b>.” (Student)</p>

# Consistent with Key Findings, Students are Needing and Accessing Counseling and Mediation Services

# 900+

instances where students accessed embedded counselling, social workers, or mediation services

1:1  
Counseling

Group  
Counseling

Consultation  
Services

Case  
Management

371  
Mediation  
Cases

# Access

- ❑ Facilities
- ❑ Special Programs



# Facilities

	Summary	Relevant Quotes
Areas of Strength	Students, staff, and families expressed an appreciation for the <b>up-to-date facilities</b> including <b>school buildings, playspaces, parks</b> , etc.	<p>“We are very happy with <b>Somerville High</b> and especially the <b>new building</b>.” (Family)</p> <p>“I have friends and i like my teachers and <b>Somerville schools have great parks</b>.” (Student)</p>
Areas for Improvement	Students, staff, and families expressed a <b>need for updated facilities</b> , specifically at the <b>Brown and Winter Hill</b> , and a sense of urgency for improvements.	<p>“<b>Rebuild winter hill school as soon as humanly possible!</b> The crumbling facilities are the major drawback we see to our kids' Somerville education.” (Family)</p> <p>“The Brown school has an incredible school staff and committed community support, but the building is sadly <b>under resourced and falling apart</b>.” (Family)</p>

# Special Programs: OST, Clubs, Athletics, CTE

	Summary	Relevant Quotes
Areas of Strength	<p>Students and families expressed an <b>appreciation for OST (clubs, athletics, after school care) and CTE.</b></p>	<p><b>“Lots of sports, options for girls and boys. (Basketball, Volleyball, Football, Soccer, Softball, Baseball).” (Student)</b></p> <p><b>“The high school having the CTE program and providing access to it to both college-bound and vocational-bound students.” (Family)</b></p>
Areas for Improvement	<p>Students and families expressed a desire for <b>more OST programming and youth spaces, especially for the middle grades.</b> Staff expressed concerns around <b>access to CTE for Multilingual students</b> due to language barriers.</p>	<p><b>“Provide more extracurricular opportunities for middle schoolers...” (Family)</b></p> <p><b>“High school CTE program needs to have more access for multilingual students. It’s been very difficult to access the content because it’s all in English and the ML students are more likely to not go to college. There should be more staff available.” (Staff)</b></p>

# People

- ❑ Talent Development
- ❑ Staff & Student Diversity
- ❑ Family & Community Engagement

# Talent Development

	Summary	Relevant Quotes
Areas of Strength	<p>Staff expressed an appreciation for the structure/offerings of <b>professional development, access to coaching, and leadership opportunities.</b></p>	<p>“I like the PD and <b>having the choice around topics, lengths and in-district vs out-of district.</b>” (Staff)</p> <p>“Very committed staff; Lot's of <b>opportunity to participate in leadership, to learn, to try new ideas; Coaching support</b> (but should be expanded to all grades and include SEL and special ed/differentiation coaching).” (Staff)</p>
Areas for Improvement	<p>Staff expressed a desire for <b>more training around district initiatives.</b> Staff also expressed a desire for <b>more spaces to voice their thoughts</b> and feel appreciated/valued.</p>	<p>“In order for rigor to be accessible there needs to be <b>training and inclusive practices...</b>” (Staff)</p> <p>“Staff district wide <b>do not have enough voice</b> and we <b>need more opportunities to share</b> and there is untapped potential with educators... (Staff)</p>

# Family & Community Engagement

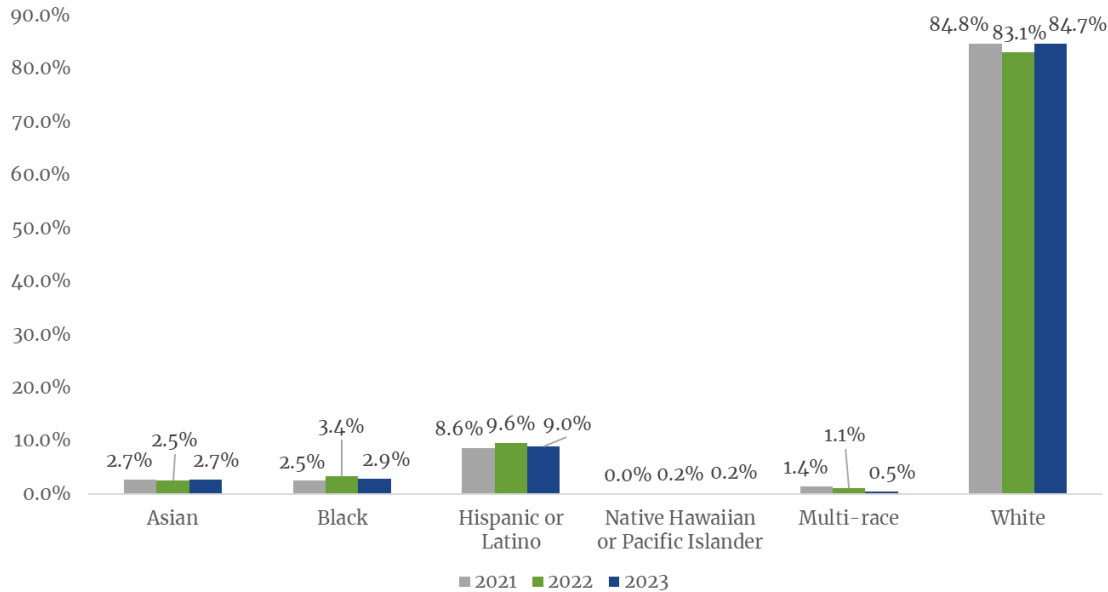
	Summary	Relevant Quotes
Areas of Strength	Families shared that their schools find ways to <b>engage families in their child's education and school community</b> . Staff expressed appreciation for <b>translation services</b> to aid in communication with families.	<i>"translation services have been invested in and new systems so that families and students can get the <b>support they need in their own language so that families can know what is going on</b> and they can have a contact person – especially the last 2 years" (Staff)</i>
Areas for Improvement	Staff expressed a desire to <b>increase engagement and amplify the voice of Multilingual, diverse, and/or underrepresented families</b> . Some families shared a <b>feeling of invisibility</b> in their school community. And families expressed a need for <b>improved communication from the district</b> .	<i>"There is a <b>general invisibility that we feel that we have as a group</b> and to the extent that we are visible it is at our own initiative and it is not coming from Central office which is not fair." (Family)</i>  <i>"<b>Communicate better on all levels</b>. From classrooms all the way up to the top of the administration." (Family)</i>

# Student & Staff Diversity

	Summary	Relevant Quotes
Areas of Strength	Students, staff, and families expressed an <b>appreciation for the diversity</b> of students and in some cases staff in SPS.	<p>“We like the <b>diversity, values of acceptance and inclusion.</b>” (Family)</p> <p>“Full of people from <b>different backgrounds.</b>” (Student)</p>
Areas for Improvement	Students and families expressed a desire for a <b>more diverse, representative staff.</b>	<p>“More <b>diverse teachers</b> (allows students to feel more <b>heard and accepted</b> with people they can relate to).” (Student)</p> <p>“<b>Diversity in staffing</b> and being more proactive and targeted in finding more <b>diverse candidates.</b>” (Family)</p>

# Consistent with Key Findings, Staff Racial/Ethnic Background is Not Representative of Student

SPS Educator Diversity



Student Demographics (SY22-23)

- Asian - 5.6%
- Black - 8.3%
- Hispanic or Latino - 41.2%
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander - 0.2%
- Multi-race - 5.5%
- White - 39.1%

The majority of educators in Somerville Public Schools identify as White or Caucasian (~84%).

# Summary

## Areas of Strength



- ❑ Joy in learning and high quality educators
- ❑ Strong mental and behavioral supports - continue to invest in this
- ❑ OST programming, athletics, and CTE
- ❑ Professional development, coaching, and leadership opportunities
- ❑ Robust translation services

## Areas for Improvement



- ❑ Review of curriculum, instructional practices, and tiered supports
- ❑ Facility updates needed for the Winter Hill and Brown schools
- ❑ Staff diversification
- ❑ More middle school OST programming
- ❑ Access to CTE for MLE students
- ❑ Better communication between district and families



# Next Steps

## Root Cause Analysis

We will convene conversations with stakeholders (staff, students, and families) to further investigate areas identified for improvement.

## Action Planning

We will work to develop an action plan to address the root causes of issues identified by stakeholders.

## Strategic Plan

We will create and share a strategic plan that documents the priorities identified by stakeholders, results of the root cause analysis, strategies to address priorities, and the metrics of success.

# THANK YOU!

*Thank you to all of the students, families, and SPS staff that participated in a focus group and/or responded to the survey. We appreciate you making your voice heard as we engage in this strategic planning process and we look forward to continued partnership and collaboration.*

## Acknowledgements

- Samantha Eligene ~ Director of Data, Assessment, and Accountability
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- Jackie Piques ~ Director of Communications and Grants
- Karen Woods ~ Chief Personnel Officer
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- Tina Lu ~ Coordinator of Resources, Data, and Communication (SFLC)