



Somerville Public Schools

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Somerville School Committee Approves Equity-Focused Long-Term Goals *Three-year goals designed to lead to bold and sustainable systemic practices that result in elimination of persistent achievement gaps, better outcomes for students*

Somerville, MA – On Monday, November 18, the Somerville School Committee unanimously approved four long-range goals focused on ensuring that the district is making clear and bold progress toward providing equitable access, opportunities, and support for all students in the district. The three-year goals are designed to address the root causes of systemic inequities that have contributed to persistent achievement gaps, particularly for black and LatinX students. School Committee members worked with Superintendent Mary Skipper and her district leadership team over the course of several months to develop specific goals related to the district’s human capital strategy, enrollment and access to programming, resources, and learning milestones that will support the district’s commitment to achieving its vision of equity and excellence.

“These goals represent our collective commitment to taking the steps we need to take to make sure that every student in our district is able to define and achieve his or her potential,” stated School Committee Chair, Carrie Normand. “Despite our efforts to provide equitable access and opportunities for our entire community of students, past goals and initiatives have not given rise to persistent deep progress for all students, specifically our black and brown students. These goals are designed to help us make the necessary changes in systemic practices that will result in the elimination of barriers and the persistent achievement gaps that we have continued to see in our student outcomes.”

“I am incredibly proud of the work that our School Committee and the district leadership team did to develop a set of goals that are bold, innovative, and critical to helping us achieve our vision of equity and excellence,” added Superintendent of Schools, Mary Skipper. “Our focus from the beginning of this process was on developing aggressive but realistic goals that were informed by a variety of data, the needs of our students and families, and our firm commitment to supporting the whole child. I believe these goals will allow us to clearly understand current systemic inequities in our district, and help us to firmly move forward in shifting our practices to ensure equitable access to the opportunities, resources, and supports that each of our students needs to succeed.”

School Committee Goals 2019-2022

Human Capital

Because research shows that all children benefit from a highly skilled and diverse educator workforce that reflects SPS students and families, we will, by 2022, increase the percentage of support staff of color by 6 percentage points, teachers and counselors of color by 5 percentage points, and administrators of color by 4 percentage points through evaluating and strengthening all elements of our human capital system: recruitment, processes, training, retention, development, and advancement. We will engage staff and community as authentic partners in this work.

Enrollment and Access to Programming

Our 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.

Because we believe that no group of students should be disproportionately impacted by district enrollment policies and that all students should have access to support they need, by 2022, we will 1) conduct a district enrollment study to understand the prospective future population of the district and 2) craft a vision for school assignment and programming aligned with the district's equity policy. We will engage students and families in this process to design a school assignment policy grounded in equity and in the values of our community.

Resources

Because we know that every student has unique needs and interests and should have access to rich learning opportunities that help them thrive, we will design, evaluate, and partially or fully implement student-based budgeting by 2022. We will do this through a transparent process that welcomes and embraces the engagement of stakeholders at all levels to develop a system where students are funded equitably, regardless of which SPS school or program they attend.

Milestones of Learning

While we believe that every child can thrive, we recognize a gap in achievement and opportunity in our current system. We will, by 2022, design a robust system of aligned developmental academic and social-emotional benchmarks working with district administration, school communities, students, and educators. These benchmarks will be used to inform practices, policies, and resource allocation to ensure that every student has access to rigorous and responsive core instruction that integrates the whole-child approach.

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