



# Somerville Public Schools

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## SOMERVILLE AWARDED COMMONWEALTH PRESCHOOL PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE FUNDS TO SUPPORT PUBLIC-PRIVATE PRESCHOOL MODEL

*Somerville among 6 communities to receive funding support from MA Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to enhance preschool access and quality through community partnerships*

Somerville, MA – The [Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care \(EEC\)](#) recently awarded a nearly \$1.5 million multi-year grant to [Somerville Public Schools](#) (SPS) to expand access, and align and improve quality of its local early education system through strategic partnerships between the school district and EEC-licensed early education programs in the Somerville community. The Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) targets children who will be eligible for kindergarten by September 2020 through a public-private model that meets the needs of local families. Somerville was awarded just over \$283,000 during the first period of the grant (through June 30, 2019), and is slated to receive just over \$600,000 for each of the next two years pending project state funding availability. Other CPPI grant awardees were Boston, Springfield, New Bedford, North Adams, and Lowell.

“This crucial funding moves our vision for a comprehensive system of early education and care to the next level” commented Dr. Lisa Kuh, Director of Early Education for the Somerville Public Schools. “It is directly aligned with our work on Universal Kindergarten Readiness outlined in our Ready to Learn, Ready for K report, and builds on our inter-agency Community Cabinet priorities. At the core of our work is to develop and sustain high quality programming all across the city so ALL families understand the importance of early education experiences and know where to find them in Somerville.”

“We are thrilled to be one of 6 communities selected to receive this funding,” stated Mary Skipper, Superintendent of Schools. “This award speaks not only to the tireless work that our early childhood community has done in the last several years to build strong partnerships and ensure that every Somerville child has access to rich early learning experiences. It also demonstrates a commitment from the state to strengthening early education systems across the Commonwealth by ensuring that **every** child has access to high-quality preschool programs that will give them a good start and the greatest opportunity for future success.”

To support this initiative as well as the ongoing work of the Somerville early childhood community, the newly formed Somerville Partnership for Young Children (SPYC) will lead efforts set forth in the [Ready to Learn, Ready for K](#) report that has informed the community’s progress to date. The SPYC is an outgrowth of the Early Education Steering Committee, a coalition of representatives from across the city that has guided the city’s continuous progress toward its vision of Universal Kindergarten Readiness in a mixed-delivery system. While four specific Somerville community partners were named in the initial grant award – The Elizabeth Peabody House, YMCA Preschool, Dandelion Montessori, and CAAS Head Start – the impact of the work that this funding will support will be much broader, with Open Center for Children and Bigelow Cooperative Preschool joining the partnership in Year 2.



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CPPI funding will support Somerville’s continuing work toward its Universal Kindergarten Readiness vision with a particular focus on four primary needs and recommendations identified in the Ready to Learn, Ready for K report:

- Establish a mixed-delivery system and leadership structure to unify partners and expand quality;
- Develop a single point of entry system to provide access to programming;
- Comprehensive services team to provide wrap-around supports; and
- Develop enhanced data systems to support learning and development.

The CPPI will allow the Somerville Public Schools and local early childhood providers to formalize their partnership, and to work collaboratively toward a more equitable and accessible early childhood system across the city. Funding will initially support key positions that will help address some of the primary needs identified in the Ready to Learn, Ready for K report. Those positions include a Mixed-Delivery Coordinator, an Early Childhood Instructional Coach, and an Itinerant Special Education Service Provider. In addition, CPPI funds will also support coaching for center directors, professional development and degree attainment, early screening and annual program assessments, mental health and behavioral consultation, development of an equitable salary scale, curriculum alignment, development of a single point of entry, and family engagement and outreach efforts.

“Our progress so far is really built on the strong relationships we have with our community partners who work hard every day to provide early education and care for children and families,” added Dr. Kuh. “These collaborations afford us the opportunity to work side by side with teachers and directors to build quality together. The CPPI funding will allow us to continue this important journey with renewed energy, confidence, and financial support as we lay the foundation for a lifetime of success for generations of children in our community.”

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