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SOMERVILLE SCHOOL COMMITTEE, SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH SCREENING & INTERVIEW ANNOUNCE FIVE FINALISTS IN SEARCH FOR NEW SPS SUPERINTENDENT

Finalists Will Participate in Public Interviews Between March 27th and April 4th

Somerville, MA – At a special meeting on Wednesday, March 22nd, the Somerville School Committee’s Superintendent Search Screening and Interview Team announced that it has narrowed the pool of 27 applicants down to five finalists for the next Superintendent of the Somerville Public Schools:

- **Dr. Ruben Carmona**, Executive Director of Family, Community and Employee Engagement, Salem Public Schools
- **Dr. Jill Geiser**, Assistant Superintendent, Billerica Public Schools
- **Dr. Michelle Madera**, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education, Cambridge Public Schools
- **Dr. Marisa Mendonsa**, Deputy Superintendent, Pittsfield Public Schools
- **Toby Romer**, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education, Newton Public Schools

Additional information about each candidate can be found below and at www.somerville.k12.ma.us/superintendent-search.

Each candidate will visit SPS between March 27th and April 4th to tour school facilities and meet with educators, families, and community members before participating in final interviews with the full School Committee. School Committee interviews will be held in person in the Somerville High School Auditorium, 81 Highland Ave., and will be live streamed on the City’s GovTV page. To watch live, [visit this link and choose “GovTV, Stream Live.”](#) The meeting link will also be available on the Superintendent Search webpage. As part of the site visits, members of the SPS community will have the opportunity to meet each candidate. One candidate will visit the district each day, followed by School Committee interviews each evening, as follows:

- **Monday, March 27:** Dr. Mendonsa
- **Tuesday, March 28:** Dr. Madera
- **Wednesday, March 29:** Dr. Carmona
- **Thursday, March 30:** Mr. Romer
- **Tuesday, April 4:** Dr. Geiser



For updates please visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us/superintendent-search where information will be shared as available.

“I am always proud to be a part of the Somerville Public Schools community, and being able to work together with educators, administrators, and families from SPS over these last few months to attract and hire a new Superintendent for SPS has only furthered my pride in our district. Together, we are committed to finding the best possible candidate for our diverse and thriving schools, and thanks to the incredible hard work and dedication of our Screening and Interview Team we have five great finalists to present to the community at large. I look forward to this next step in the process and to ultimately selecting our new Superintendent,” said Andre Green, Chair of the Somerville School Committee and Chair of the Screening and Interview Team.

“It has been a pleasure and an honor to work alongside the members of the Screening and Interview Team, and to meet so many amazing candidates for our next Superintendent of Schools. We had some great, in-depth interviews and discussions that led us to these five finalists, and we are excited to introduce each of them to the Somerville Public Schools community over the next two weeks,” said Ilana Krepchin, Ward 2 School Committee Representative and Screening and Interview Team Vice Chair. “Thank you to all who applied, to all the SPS community members and staff who volunteered their time for this process, and to the community at large who helped us develop a Candidate Profile that was essential in our deliberations over the last week.”

About the Finalists:

Dr. Ruben Carmona

Ruben Carmona currently serves as Executive Director of Family, Community and Employee Engagement in the Salem Public Schools. Previously he was the Regional Recovery Academic Director in Boston, and a Principal in Salem and Lowell. Carmona has 15 years of teaching experience working in Bilingual Education and dual language programs. He obtained his undergraduate training in Modern Languages/Linguistics at the Universidad del Valle-Cali in Colombia before obtaining Master’s Degrees in Business Administration and Educational Leadership at Salem State College. In 2012 he obtained his Ed.D. in Educational Leadership at Boston College.

Dr. Jill Geiser

Now in her sixth year as Assistant Superintendent of the Billerica Public Schools, Dr. Geiser was previously the Principal of the Healey School in Somerville for five years. She began her career as an administrator in Boston as a Principal’s Assistant before moving to Lawrence as an Assistant High School Principal for three years and Middle School Principal for three more. Geiser had extensive teaching experience as a Peace Corps volunteer in Nepal, and as a teacher in Thailand, Arizona, Virginia, and New York City. After earning her undergraduate degree at the University of Delaware, she obtained a Master’s Degree in English as a Second Language/Bilingual Education at the University of Massachusetts, Master’s Degree in Educational Leadership from Teachers College at Columbia, and an Ed.D. from Boston College.



Dr. Michelle Madera

Michelle Madera is currently Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education in the Cambridge Public Schools. Madera has 11 years of teaching experience in Boston where she was promoted to the post of Assistant Headmaster at Boston English and the Principalship of the Curley School. In 2002 she joined the faculty of the Cambridge Public Schools as Director of the English Language Learner Program and was the Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment before taking her current position. She holds undergraduate credentials from Boston University, an M.Ed. From Cambridge College, and an Ed.D. in Administration and Leadership of Urban Schools from the University of Massachusetts.

Dr. Marisa Mendonsa

Dr. Mendonsa is the Deputy Superintendent of the Pittsfield Public Schools. Previously, she was the Principal of Mohawk Trail Regional High for six years, Assistant Principal of the Amherst Regional Middle School for two years and from 2011-2014 the Assistant Principal and Principal of the Duggan Middle School in Springfield. Following two years in the Teach for America Program, she was a teacher in Amherst, Northborough, and Springfield, spending 14 years in the classroom. She obtained a B.S. from Springfield College, an M.Ed. and C.A.G.S. from the University of Massachusetts, and an Ed.D. in Educational Policy and Leadership from American University.

Toby Romer

Toby Romer is the Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education in the Newton Public Schools, now in his eighth year. Prior to joining the Newton Public Schools, Romer worked in Boston as a Director of Professional Development and Data Inquiry, Leadership Coach, Head of School at Brighton High School, and Assistant Head of School at Boston English. He began his teaching career as an English Teacher in Ecuador and joined the Boston Public Schools as a teacher of Spanish and French. Romer completed undergraduate and graduate work at Harvard where he obtained a Master's Degree in Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

The search for a new Superintendent of Schools in SPS was launched in summer 2022, following former Superintendent Mary Skipper's selection as the Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools. The Somerville School Committee hired the Massachusetts Association of School Committees to help manage the search process. In January 2023, following a thorough search process, the School Committee declined to offer the position to any candidates. The School Committee voted to reopen the search process on January 30th.

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