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The Five Big Questions

1. What's **working well** for children and teens living in Somerville?
2. What's **hard** for children and teens in Somerville?
3. Learning takes place around the community and throughout the year - but schools play a central role. What is **one thing you would change about schools** in Somerville?
4. Are there any **barriers** preventing children and teens from accessing learning activities, opportunities, or services available in Somerville?
5. Given limited resources, what are your **top 3 priorities** for the next 5-10 years when it comes to giving children and teens in Somerville great learning experiences?



Who Gave Feedback

Community Surveys

661 participants

Focus Groups

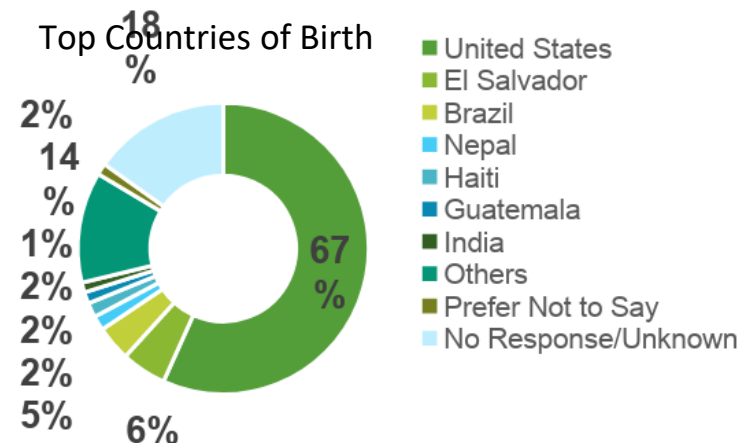
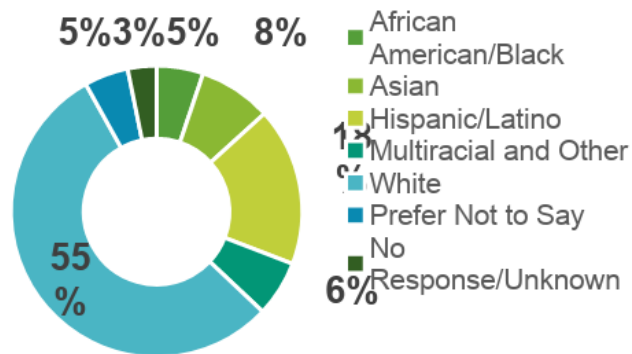
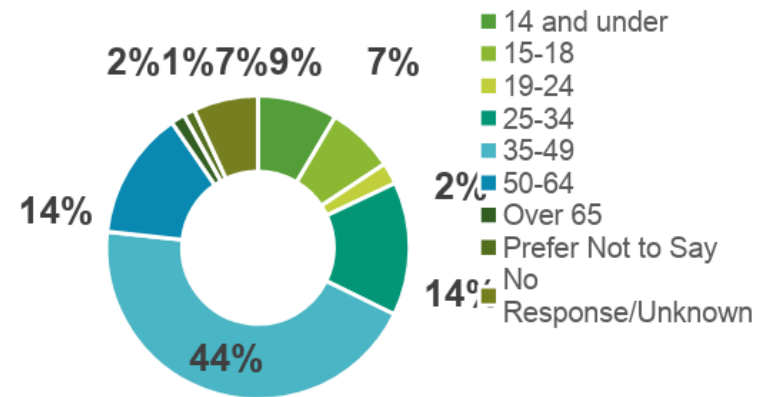
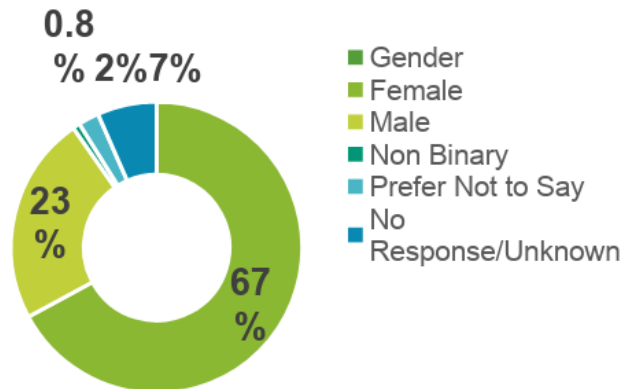
277 participants



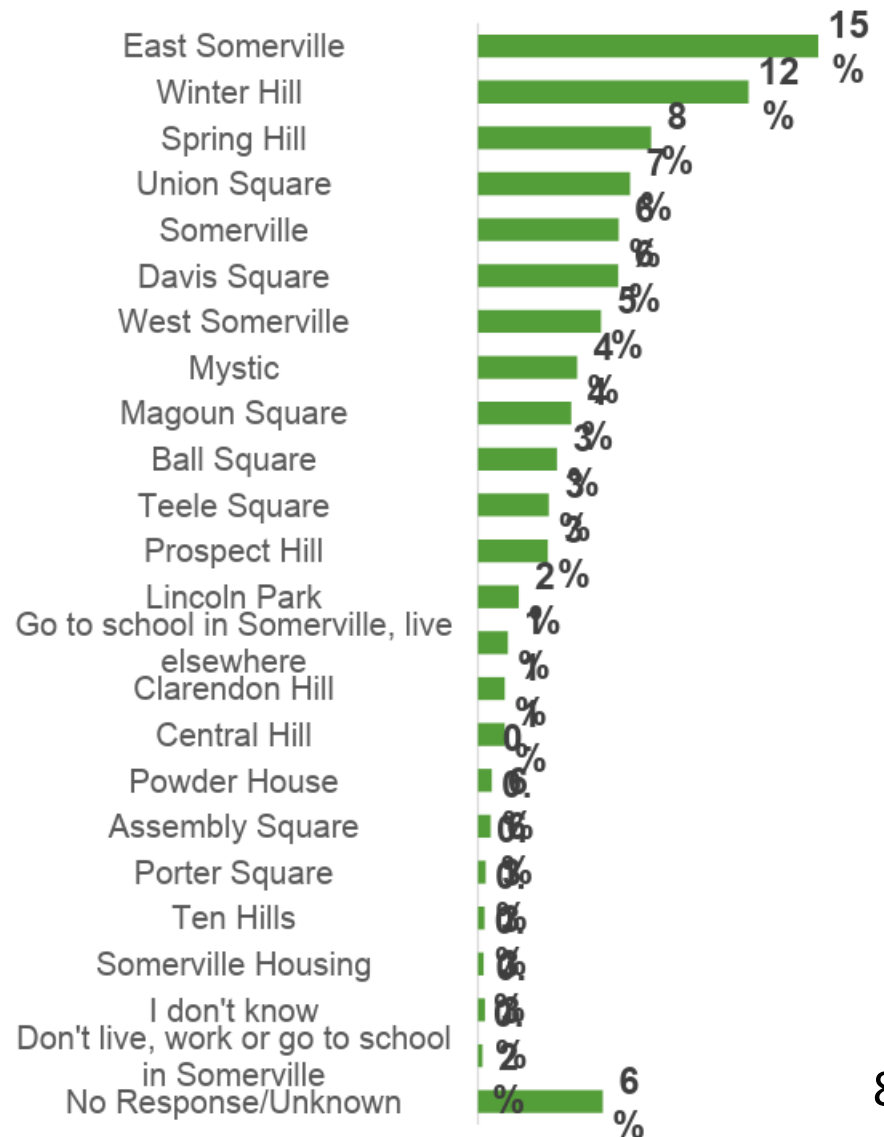
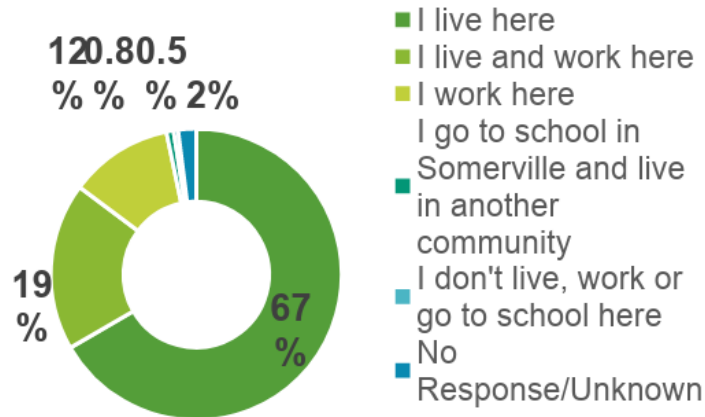
Survey Response and City Demographics

	Somerville Residents	SPS Students	All Responses
Female	50%	47%	67%
Male	50%	53%	23%
African American/Black	6%	10%	5%
Asian	10%	7%	8%
Hispanic/Latino	9%	42%	18%
Multiracial	3%	4%	4%
White	70%	37%	55%
Foreign Born	25%		17%
Type of School (district, charter, private, etc.)	14% of city residents are youth under 18 years old.	79% of city students attend SPS (MA DESE 2016-2017)	70% of respondents were students or parents. 56% attend or at least one PK-12 child in SPS.

Who Responded to the Survey

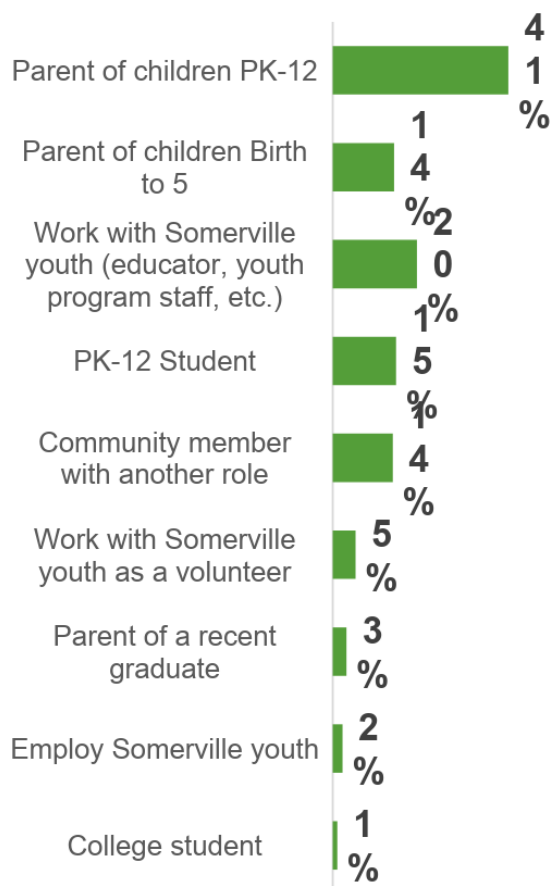


Who Responded to the Survey

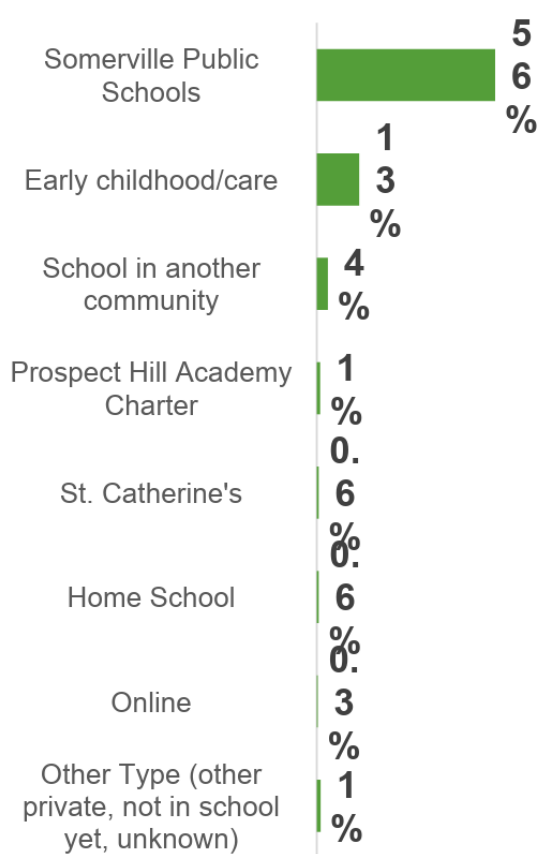


Who Responded to the Survey

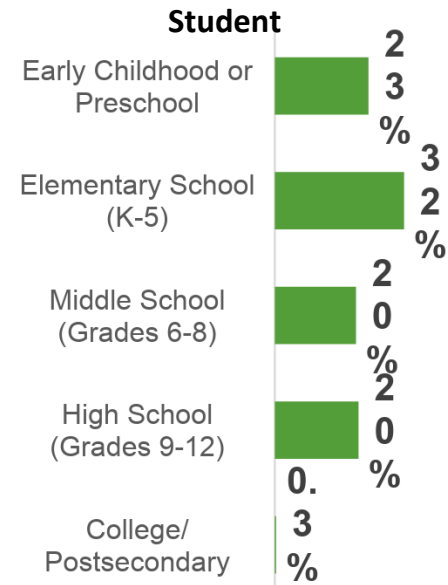
Role/s with Youth



Type of School/s Attend or Work In



Grade Level/s of Your Children, Youth You Work With, or Your Grade if Student



Respondents could select more than one option. For example, a respondent might be the parent of a children in different types of schools or grade levels, a teacher and a parent, a parent who also employs youth, etc.

The Feedback: What We Value

Where We Heard Consensus

We value a vibrant culturally rich and activity rich community life.

Participants really like Somerville's "small town" feel and diversity. They love street festivals and other community events that bring families together, and see a breadth of activities and opportunities available for youth through school and in the community.



88% of survey participants are **satisfied or very satisfied** with their life in Somerville.

86% think Somerville is **good, very good, or excellent place** to grow up/raise kids.

We value affordability and the ability to stay in our chosen community.

Gentrification was a big topic for participants. Many highlighted the specific impact rising housing costs and socioeconomic pressures are having on youth and learning:

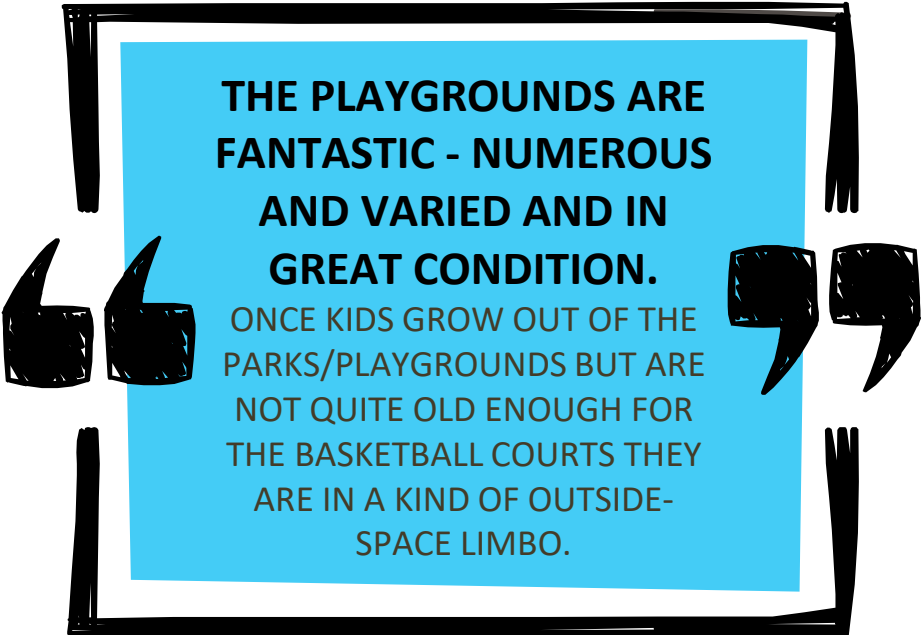
- Loss of friends through family displacement
- More parents working means fewer parents at home, less ability to support participation in youth activities
- Less diverse community, less intercultural mingling
- Unintentional segregation of students in schools and youth programs
- Educators and youth program staff can't afford to live where they work
- Youth can't afford to live in the city they grew up in



We value youth-friendly spaces, including places for unstructured play and safe places for older youth.

Participants like the improvements and commitment to maintenance in playgrounds and parks they've seen – even rave about them! However, space for safe, unstructured activity is limited. Things people would love to see:

- A community center, youth center, or rec center
- A teen center, places for teens to hang, events for tweens and teens (movie nights, pizza nights)
- Big kid-designated spaces, safe kid play elements in areas being developed (Assembly, inner Belt)
- Pre-teen equipment at playgrounds/parks (Lincoln and Hoyt-Sullivan as examples)
- A good playground at every school
- More green space
- Bathroom facilities near playgrounds
- More light / lights on earlier (winter)
- Library facility updates (a place youth rely on)



**THE PLAYGROUNDS ARE
FANTASTIC - NUMEROUS
AND VARIED AND IN
GREAT CONDITION.**

ONCE KIDS GROW OUT OF THE
PARKS/PLAYGROUNDS BUT ARE
NOT QUITE OLD ENOUGH FOR
THE BASKETBALL COURTS THEY
ARE IN A KIND OF OUTSIDE-
SPACE LIMBO.

We value systematic attention to social emotional health and accessible mental health services.

Participants mentioned the lack of mental health services and a number of mental health concerns they feel require a more concerted approach:

- Rapid change and the increasingly fast pace of life, lack of “breathing room” or “down time” for youth
- Need for more mental health services in schools and across the community (not enough providers in Somerville, wait lists, high counselor to student loads, etc.)
- Challenges balancing school, life and family responsibilities
- Impact of social media, small situations quickly going big and public
- Frequent classroom disruptions and lack of support strategies
- Anxiety or fear as a barrier to participation in youth activities
- Need for social emotional skill development in early grades



**WE ARE OVERWHELMED
WITH EVERYTHING
GOING ON IN OUR LIVES.**

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS REPORT
TO ME A MAJOR NEED FOR
ADDITIONAL SUPPORT + MENTAL
HEALTH SERVICES PROVIDED BY
STAFF WHO LOOK LIKE THEM.

We value a city that is safe and easy for youth to get around in.

Participants like that many Somerville neighborhoods are walkable and there are many places kids could go. However, there is a high level of concern about young pedestrian and cyclist safety and a desire for public transportation services that would allow youth to take better advantage of learning opportunities around the community.

Improvements people would love to see include:

- Traffic “calming” measures, improved crosswalk safety, and more protected bike paths
- More cross-town busses (north/south) and more frequent services on the 85 and 90 bus lines to Kendall or Assembly Square
- More light on streets, adjusted for winter hours
- Improved safety for underpasses around 93
- Transportation so youth can access afterschool activities offered at another school or location
- More youth programming offered within a safe walking distance of the school

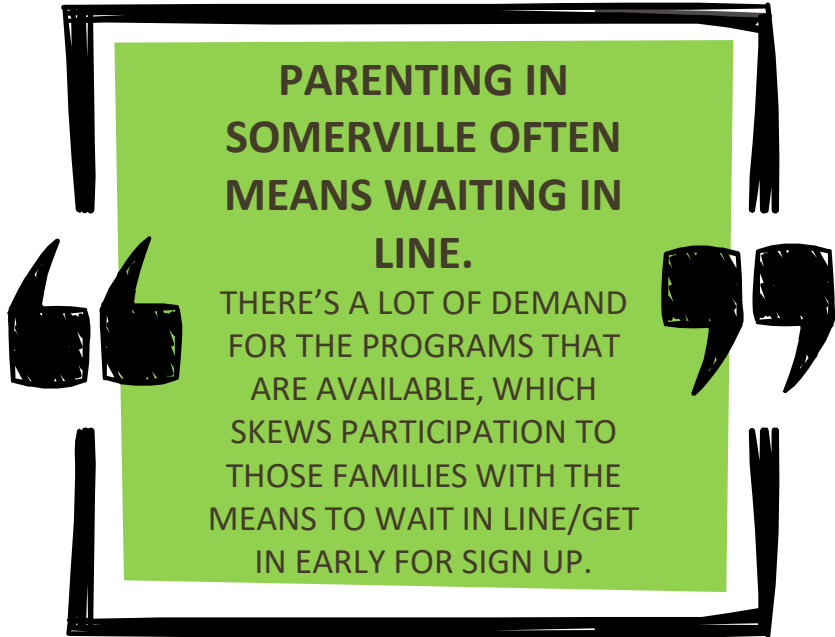


We value affordable, afterschool and summer learning opportunities for youth of all ages.

Several participants noted improvements in afterschool programming. Many are concerned about cost, capacity, and equitable access. Middle school seems to be a particular gap and area of opportunity.

More free or affordable extended care and afterschool activities; more slots

- Appealing options aimed at middle school youth who are too big for traditional afterschool programs, more variety for older kids beyond competitive sports, more winter or summer activities
- The right blend of structure and active play
- Flexibility in schedules for working families and attention to gaps at the beginning and end of the school year
- Afterschool internships, jobs, and work-based learning experiences for older youth
- An out-of-school network that is “well-coordinated and visionary”



PARENTING IN SOMERVILLE OFTEN MEANS WAITING IN LINE.

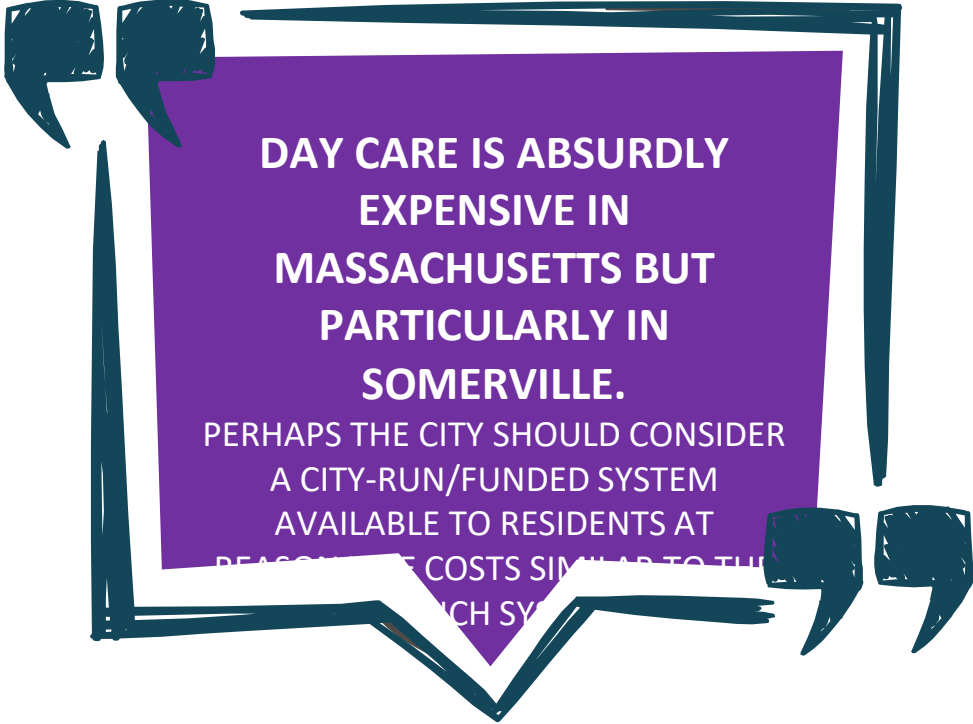
THERE'S A LOT OF DEMAND
FOR THE PROGRAMS THAT
ARE AVAILABLE, WHICH
SKEWS PARTICIPATION TO
THOSE FAMILIES WITH THE
MEANS TO WAIT IN LINE/GET
IN EARLY FOR SIGN UP.

We value widespread access to quality early childhood and afterschool care.

Parents report having a hard time finding affordable day care and afterschool care for their children. Slots are limited, costs high, and programs sometimes a “pain to get to” depending on where you live.

Participants suggested larger scale ideas which lean heavily toward a public response; for example:

- Universal preschool
- A city-wide day care program
- Access to preschool across the city
- A “public preschool with a focus on the outdoors”
- A “cooperative run by parents and high school kids”



**DAY CARE IS ABSURDLY
EXPENSIVE IN
MASSACHUSETTS BUT
PARTICULARLY IN
SOMERVILLE.**

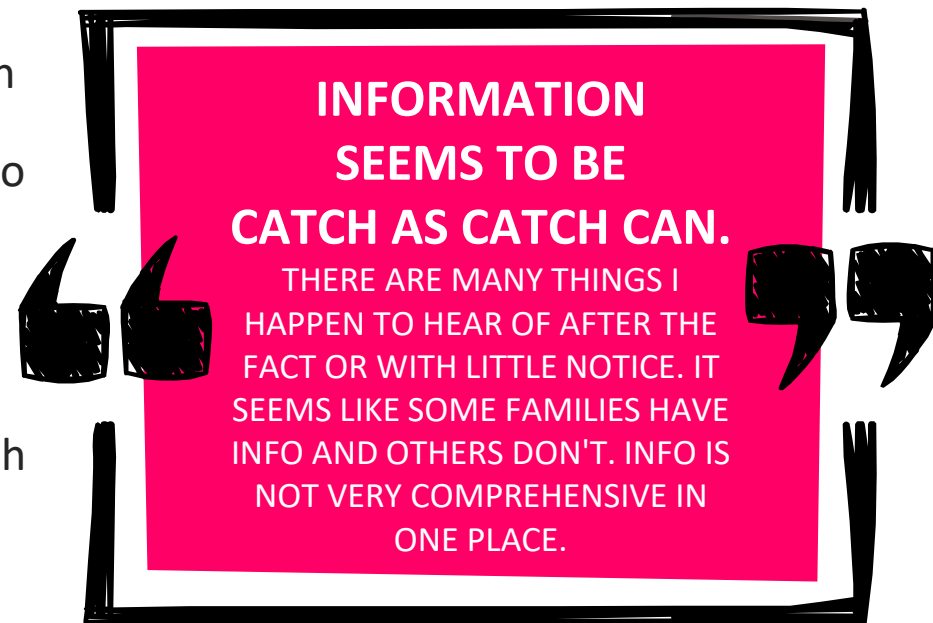
PERHAPS THE CITY SHOULD CONSIDER
A CITY-RUN/FUNDED SYSTEM
AVAILABLE TO RESIDENTS AT
REASONABLE COSTS SIMILAR TO THE
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

We value information about youth opportunities.

While the majority of participants agree there are many opportunities for learning in Somerville, they believe it's hard to know what's out there and it takes a lot of work to find out.

Suggestions included:

- More communication and more timely
- Advertising to youth more directly through school
- Create a central clearinghouse
- Alternative methods of communicating with families who may not be on social media or have a smart phone



50% of survey participants feel Somerville may have enough learning opportunities but that many people can't access them or don't know about them.

We value meaningful opportunities for youth voice and leadership.

Youth value experiences where they feel listened to and have a voice. Some Somerville programs or clubs specialize in this – and youth, in particular, think more could.

Overall, youth (and many adults who support them) would like more opportunities and formal platforms for youth voice in the classroom, in school, in youth programs, and at city leadership tables.



**AS A TEENAGER WE DON'T
GET A LOT OF SAY IN OUR
COMMUNITY.**


WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO ADDRESS
THINGS DIRECTLY - IN THE ACTUAL
SETTING WHERE THE PEOPLE WHO
HAVE THE POWER COULD HEAR IT
DIRECTLY FROM OUR MOUTHS.

We value relevant and interesting academic learning experiences.

Participants gave many shout-outs to their schools, teachers and counselors, classes and school-based programs they love. However, many still worry about test-driven school culture, homework type/loads, and instructional methods. Youth were particularly concerned about the pace (quick not deep) and relevancy of learning.

- More focus on student interests, student choice, self-directed learning
- Hands-on learning through play and projects
- Learning through internships, field experiences, etc.; ability to earn credit for learning experiences outside of the traditional class
- Emphasis on critical life and “real world” skills; for example, project management, time management, personal finance
- Physical/wellness activity built into the day
- Balanced approach to content – more time to go deep and develop skills vs. flying through curriculum
- Stronger support for teachers on differentiating instruction

When asked what “one change” they would like to make in their school, **30%** of survey respondents pointed to an instructional/pedagogical improvement, making it the top school improvement priority by far.



**EDUCATION SHOULD
BE “JUST RIGHT” FOR
EACH PERSON – MORE
PERSONALIZED.**

THERE IS LITTLE
DIFFERENTIATION IN
CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION,
LEAVING SOME KIDS
OVERWHELMED AND OTHERS
BORED. SCHOOLS NEED TO
FIGURE THIS OUT.

We value flexible school schedules and time for deeper (active, reflective, and creative) learning.

Participants expressed a range of ideas related to the school schedule and use of time. In this case, many adults echo youth: the day is packed, rushed, and structured too traditionally.

Things participants would like see:

- Later school start time, later teen start time
- More time for movement/physical activity/play/outdoor gym
- Enough time for lunch
- Open campus approach at the high school
- Fewer classes during the school day
- Longer school day or year
- More down time, breaks, study periods, reflection time during the school day
- Art and music during the school day
- Early drop off and extended after school care for all families who need it



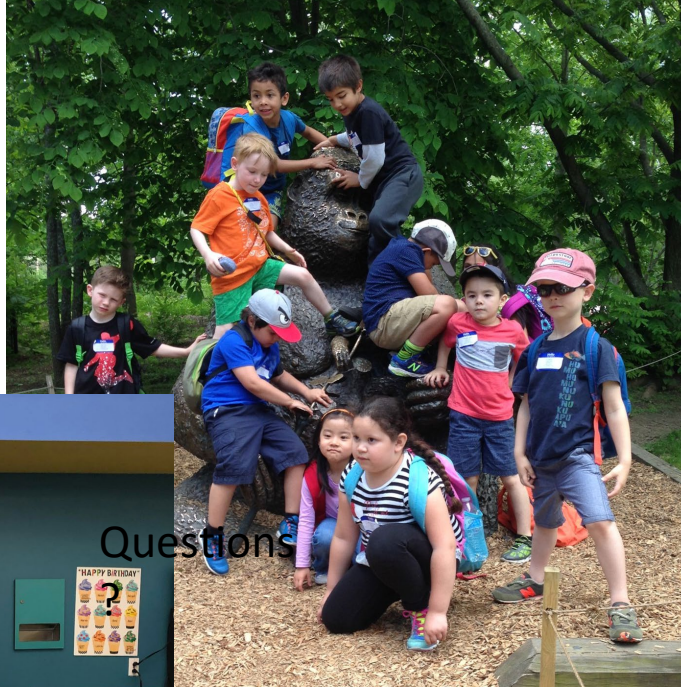
We value approaches that reflect and support our cultural diversity.

Participants see the city's diversity and "everyone is welcome here" vibe as a vital to Somerville's character. They want children from different backgrounds going to school and participating in youth activities together. Feedback also suggests organizations may need to be more intentional about fostering greater integration and cultural competence (among staff, youth, families) in the years ahead.

- More diversity among staff and positions of authority
- Unidos model expansion to all schools, in more languages
- Access to foreign language enrichment, opportunities to learn Spanish earlier (elementary grades)
- Language outreach workers at each school
- Curriculum that is culturally relevant; training for staff on racial equity, unconscious bias
- More adult ELL literacy opportunities
- Equitable distribution of resources across city schools
- Strong multicultural policies; for example, about holidays (ways to expose youth to different cultures and traditions)



Thank You



Questions

Questions?

Cross-walking Different Voices – Survey Results

Living/Working in Somerville (Long Survey Respondents Only)

	Overall, how satisfied are you with your life living and/or working in Somerville?						Do you think Somerville is a good place for children and teens to grow up? How would you rate it?				
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied		Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Bad
All Respondents	40%	48%	9%	2%	1%		16%	42%	27%	10%	1%
Parents	44%	47%	7%	2%	1%		17%	44%	28%	8%	0.7%
Youth	34%	45%	17%	4%	0%		21%	34%	17%	23%	2%
People Who Work with Youth	29%	56%	9%	1%	4%		14%	45%	28%	7%	1%
Male	46%	43%	6%	3%	2%		20%	38%	28%	8%	0.9%
Female	39%	49%	9%	2%	1%		15%	45%	27%	9%	1%
African American	27%	53%	13%	7%	0%		27%	33%	7%	13%	7%
Asian	39%	49%	5%	5%	0%		15%	41%	28%	10%	0%
Hispanic/Latino	39%	47%	12%	0%	2%		20%	29%	35%	16%	0%
Multiracial	46%	27%	18%	5%	5%		14%	46%	9%	32%	0%
White	42%	48%	6%	2%	2%		15%	45%	28%	7%	1%

76% of respondents completed the long version of the survey. The short version did not include this question.

Accessing Learning Opportunities (Long Survey Respondents Only)

	We want to know if you think Somerville has enough learning opportunities, activities, and services for children and teens, both in and out of school and throughout the year. Which of these is <u>most true</u> for you?				Are there opportunities, experiences, or services for children and teens you have <u>not</u> been able to find (in school, after school, in the community, summer, etc.)?			
	Somerville is Full of Opportunities	Enough but can't access or don't know about them	Not Enough	Not Sure		Able to Find Everything I Need	Not Able to Find What I Need	Question Doesn't Apply to Me
All Respondents	21%	49%	18%	11%		28%	41%	26%
Parents	23%	44%	24%	9%		33%	50%	15%
Youth	30%	64%	2%	4%		36%	21%	36%
People Who Work with Youth	16%	64%	9%	10%		17%	38%	40%
Male	26%	39%	17%	17%		31%	30%	36%
Female	19%	52%	19%	10%		28%	43%	25%
African American	27%	47%	20%	7%		33%	27%	33%
Asian	31%	41%	15%	10%		44%	28%	26%
Hispanic/Latino	16%	67%	12%	6%		28%	37%	26%
Multiracial	14%	36%	36%	14%		9%	54%	36%
White	19%	49%	19%	13%		28%	41%	27%

76% of respondents completed the long version of the survey. The short version did not include this question.

Barriers to Opportunity

	Do you think any barriers prevent youth and teens from participating in learning opportunities, activities, and services available in Somerville?		
	Yes	No	Not Sure
All Respondents	45%	14%	32%
Parents	44%	11%	39%
Youth	38%	36%	18%
People Who Work with Youth	65%	7%	24%
Male	37%	25%	30%
Female	48%	11%	36%
African American	41%	29%	18%
Asian	30%	30%	38%
Hispanic/Latino	39%	25%	25%
Multiracial	51%	27%	14%
White	50%	6%	38%

Barriers to Opportunity

continued

	If yes [you think there are barriers], please describe. Top 3 Barrier Types By Subgroup		
	#1	#2	#3
All Respondents	Cost/financial (18%)	Transportation/location (11%)	Lack of information/communication (8%)
Parents	Cost/finances(18%)	Transportation/location (12%)	Lack of information/communication (9%)
Youth	Other responsibilities/time (15%)	Emotional barrier (10%)	Cost/financial (9%)
People Who Work with Youth	Cost/finances (31%)	Transportation/location (18%)	Tie: Other responsibilities/time (16%); Language/culture (16%)
Male	Cost/financial (14%)	Lack of information/communication (9%)	Transportation/location (8%)
Female	Cost/financial (21%)	Transportation (13%)	Language/cultural (9%)
African American	Cost/financial (18%)	Transportation/location (15%)	Tie: Lack of information (9%); Language/cultural (9%); Family work schedule (9%)
Asian	Cost/financial (9%)	Transportation/location (8%)	Other responsibilities/time (6%)
Hispanic/Latino	Cost/financial (10%)	Program-related barrier (8%)	Other responsibilities/time (6%)
Multiracial	Cost/financial (22%)	Lack of information/ communication (11%)	Language/cultural (8%)
White	Cost/financial (24%)	Transportation/location (14%)	Language/cultural (11%)

What's Working for Youth

	What's working well for Somerville children and teens (we should keep doing it!)? Top 3 Categories by Subgroup		
	#1	#2	#3
All Respondents	Activities and programs (40%)	School (specific aspect or overall) (23%)	Parks, playgrounds and open spaces (12%)
Parents	Activities and programs (39%)	School (specific aspect or overall) (23%)	Parks, playgrounds and open spaces (12%)
Youth	Activities and programs (44%)	School (specific aspect or overall) (31%)	Tie: Community diversity (6%); Easy to get around/places to go (6%), Youth employment, work-based learning, and career education (6%)
People Who Work with Youth	Activities and programs (39%)	School (specific aspect or overall) (22%)	Early childhood (9%)
Male	Activities and programs (33%)	School (specific aspect or overall) (28%)	Parks, playgrounds and open spaces (8%)
Female	Activities and programs (42%)	School (specific aspect or overall) (20%)	Parks, playgrounds and open spaces (15%)
African American	Activities and programs (44%)	School (specific aspect or overall) (15%)	Youth employment, work-based learning, and career education (12%)
Asian	Activities and programs (32%)	Tie: Early childhood (15%); School (specific aspect or overall) (15%)	
Hispanic/Latino	Activities and programs (36%)	School (specific aspect or overall) (23%)	Youth employment, work-based learning, and career education (6%)
Multiracial	Tie: Activities and programs (38%); School (specific aspect or overall) (38%)		Parks, playgrounds and open spaces (14%)
White	Activities and programs (43%)	School (specific aspect or overall) (21%)	Parks, playgrounds and open spaces (17%)

Open-ended responses were tagged manually by category. Percentages indicate the percent of respondents who referenced something related to the category. Responses often covered more than one category. For example, a respondent who said “We love our school! There are so many great playgrounds!” was tagged as “School” and “Parks, playgrounds and open spaces.”

What's Not Working for Youth

	What is hard for children and teens living in Somerville? What is not working well for them? Top 3 Categories by Subgroup		
	#1	#2	#3
All Respondents	Gentrification/financial stress (13%)	Program or activity gap (12%)	Transportation and walkability (11%)
Parents	Program or activity gap (17%)	Transportation and walkability (14%)	Gentrification/financial stress (10%)
Youth	Curriculum and instruction (22%)	Gentrification/financial stress (19%)	Tie: Transportation and walkability (9%); Balancing school/life/family responsibilities (9%)
People Who Work with Youth	Gentrification/financial stress (20%)	Mental health/social emotional supports (12%)	Inequity/discrimination (11%)
Male	Curriculum and instruction (13%)	Gentrification (11%)	Tie: Program or activity gap (10%); Transportation and walkability (10%)
Female	Gentrification/financial stress (14.5%)	Program or activity gap (14%)	Transportation and walkability (12%)
African American	Curriculum and instruction (26%)	Transportation and walkability (18%)	Gentrification/financial stress (9%)
Asian	Gentrification/financial stress (13%)	Transportation and walkability (11%)	Program/activity gap (8%)
Hispanic/Latino	Gentrification/financial stress (19%)	Curriculum and instruction (10%)	School safety (9%)
Multiracial	Gentrification/financial stress (16%)	Program or activity gap (14%)	Tie: Transportation and walkability (8%); Curriculum and instruction (8%); Mental health/social emotional (8%)
White	Program or activity gap (16%)	Transportation and walkability (13%)	Gentrification/financial stress (12%)

Open-ended responses were tagged manually by category. Percentages indicate the percent of respondents who referenced something related to the category. Responses often covered more than one category.

School Change Priorities

	School is an important part of a child/teen's experience growing up. Going forward, what is <u>one thing</u> you would like to change or improve about schools in Somerville? What is getting in the way of learning? Top 3 Categories by Subgroup		
	#1	#2	#3
All Respondents	Curriculum and instruction (30%)	Mental health/social emotional support (8%)	Afterschool/out-of-school time gap (7%)
Parents	Curriculum and instruction (32%)	Afterschool/out-of-school time gap (8%);	Mental health/social emotional support (6%)
Youth	Curriculum and instruction (39%)	Tie: Mental health/social emotional support (10%); Address afterschool/OST gap (10%)	
People Who Work with Youth	Curriculum and instruction (23%)	Improved/equitable resources (13%)	Tie: Mental health/social emotional support (11%); Other school change (11%)
Male	Curriculum and instruction (28%)	Afterschool/out-of-school time gap (9%)	Other school change (7%)
Female	Curriculum and instruction (32%)	Mental health/social emotional support (9%)	Improved/equitable resources (8%)
African American	Curriculum and instruction (26%)	Improved/equitable resources (15%)	Cultural competence and staff diversity (12%)
Asian	Curriculum and instruction (34%)	School schedule (15%)	Tie: Afterschool or out-of-school time gap (9%); Improved birth-5/PK (9%)
Hispanic/Latino	Curriculum and instruction (21%)	School safety 13%)	Afterschool or out-of-school time gap (12%)
Multiracial	Curriculum and instruction (30%)	Other school change (11%)	Cultural competence and staff diversity (8%)
White	Curriculum and instruction (31%)	Mental health/social emotional support (9%)	Improved/equitable resources (7%)

Open-ended responses were tagged manually by category. Percentages indicate the percent of respondents who referenced something related to the category. Responses often covered more than one category.

Top Priorities Going Forward (Long Survey Respondents Only)

Sometimes we need to make difficult choices about how best to use precious resources; for example, funding, people's time, and city services. If we could only focus on three priorities related to children and teens in Somerville over the next 5-10 years, what would they be? Pick your top 3 priorities.

Top 3 Categories by Subgroup

	#1	#2	#3
All Respondents	School (51%)	Health/mental health (38%)	Afterschool (37%)
Parents	School (60%)	Early childhood (41%)	Afterschool (40%)
Youth	Health/mental health (28%)	School (27%)	Safety (21%)
People Who Work with Youth	Health/mental health (64%)	School (49%)	Early childhood (41%)
Male	School (51%)	Early childhood (36%)	Afterschool (34%)
Female	School (56%)	Health/mental health (43%)	Early childhood (40%)
African American	School (26%)	Tie: Health/mental health (24%); Early childhood (24%); Afterschool/summer (24%)	
Asian	School (51%)	Early childhood (32%)	Tie: Health/mental health (30%); Afterschool/summer (30%)
Hispanic/Latino	School (22%)	Early childhood (21%)	Tie: Health/mental health (20%); Safety (20%)
Multiracial	Tie: School (32%); Health/mental health (32%)		Afterschool/summer learning (27%)
White	School (66%)	Tie: Health/mental health (47%); Early childhood (47%)	

76% of respondents completed the long version of the survey. The short version did not include this question.

Supporting Learning (Long Survey Respondents Only)

	Many people can play a role helping Somerville children and teens learn. Is it clear how you can support learning - as a parent, older student, community member, coach, volunteer, etc.?		
	Yes	No	Not Sure
All Respondents	58%	17%	21%
Parents	57%	20%	22%
Youth	47%	19%	34%
People Who Work with Youth	71%	9%	14%
Male	55%	20%	22%
Female	60%	17%	21%
African American	67%	20%	13%
Asian	54%	28%	15%
Hispanic/Latino	53%	20%	26%
Multiracial	55%	23%	23%
White	62%	16%	20%

76% of respondents completed the long version of the survey. The short version did not include this question.

Somerville Learning 2030 is a community visioning conversation about the kinds of learning experiences and opportunities we want for children and teens in our city. What's working well? What should we change or improve? What we should prioritize over the next 10-15 years? This visioning process is being facilitated collaboratively by the City, Somerville Public Schools and many local organizations, youth leaders, and residents from July 2018 to January 2019.

For more information visit bit.ly/somervillelearning2030

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