



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Mass Cultural Council Grants Support Arts Enrichment Opportunities in Somerville Public Schools**

**Somerville, MA** – Thanks to the work and advocacy of several Somerville Public Schools educators, the district recently received grants totaling almost \$30,000 from Mass Cultural Council (MCC) through its [STARS Residency Program](#). In this round of the STARS program, classes at the Capuano Early Childhood Center, the Arthur D. Healey School, the East Somerville Community School, and the John F. Kennedy School will receive funding to support arts-related workshops and programs over the next several months. Somerville High School musicians will also benefit from the STARS program.

One of the STARS Residency Programs will provide \$18,000 to fund a puppetry workshop series for the kindergarten classes at the Capuano Healey, and Kennedy Schools. The residency will bring [Cozy Arts](#) creator, artistic director, and puppeteer Faye Dupras to each school to present “Imagination Station.” Over 12 visits, students are introduced to puppetry, music, and art that deepens their understanding and application of several social emotional skills needed to recognize and celebrate diversity.

Ms. Dupras coordinates with each school’s kindergarten teaching team to introduce Mrs. Flutterby (Ms. Dupras), furry puppet Rory, and other puppet friends. Rory needs help solving a social emotional challenge, such as how to say hello to a new neighbor, and he and Mrs. Flutterby brainstorm solutions with the students. Placing the students as “experts in kindness” allows them to better identify and articulate their own feelings and be open to others’ perspectives. Students work together to develop and build their own new Cozy Community puppet characters that reflect the personal qualities they have discussed throughout the residency. The culminating event is a student performance with their puppets for fellow students and their families.

[East Somerville Community School](#) students also will receive arts enrichment with the Council funds. Heloiza Barbosa received a \$6,100 grant that will produce an audio documentary with students of the school’s debate club about their learning journey.

At Somerville High School, MCC also funded a STARS residency that benefits string musicians. This \$6,100 grant to the [Boston Chamber Music Society](#)’s (BCMS) Teaching Artists Program provides weekly coaching sessions for students in the school’s string orchestra as well as free access for students and their families to attend BCMS concerts.



[According to its website](#), MCC has a budget of \$15.7 million, including an appropriation of nearly \$14 million from the state of Massachusetts and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and other sources. The agency also runs the Mass Cultural Facilities Fund in partnership with MassDevelopment.

MCC funds reach every community in the Commonwealth. Its mission is to promote excellence, education, access and diversity in the arts, humanities and sciences, to improve the quality of life for all Massachusetts residents and contribute to the vitality of our communities and economy.

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