Ready to Learn, Ready for K: Somerville's Early Education and Care Plan
A Plan for our Children's Future

Presented by the Somerville Early Education Steering Committee
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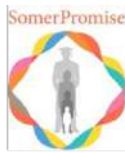
Ready to Learn, Ready for K: Somerville's Early Education and Care Plan
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Executive Summary

In 2014, the report, *Maximizing Children's Potential: The Somerville Five-Year Plan for Early Education and Care*, laid out a vision for a fully integrated system that would best support young children and their families. That document has guided Somerville's remarkable progress in early education and care. This new report, ***Ready to Learn, Ready for K: Somerville's Early Education and Care Plan*** reviews the progress to date and sets a bold vision and strategic direction for the next three years.

Current data on school readiness has shown that for our vulnerable students, persistent learning gaps remain that predict later success in school and in life. This reality is broadly understood within our community to be unacceptable, increasing a sense of urgency to build on practices and programs that have proven to be successful in reducing these gaps. We must make early education and care a top priority in Somerville at a time when there is local momentum, rooted in our City's core commitment to equity, to create a system that serves all children.

Our solution is to develop, over the next three years, a "braided" system of early education that makes access to high-quality programs an option for every family in Somerville. The focus areas for this new direction includes realignment of School Department, private and City resources in support of the commitment to universal kindergarten readiness. This will require a new leadership structure and new, targeted resources to fund critical program improvements, bringing the currently fragmented system of care into a coordinated team. In this way, the City's family-centered values will be reflected in a system that truly serves all children.

This report identifies four essential needs for Somerville to meet its commitment to children and families, and makes recommendations for each.

- Identified Need #1: Mixed-Delivery Partnership Model to Achieve High-Quality Early Learning in All Settings
- Identified Need #2: Single Point of Entry: Information and Access for Families
- Identified Need #3: Building and Sustaining Prenatal-Age 5 Comprehensive Wrap-Around Services
- Identified Need #4: Data Sharing - Student Insights for Early Education

Plan components:
The building blocks of high-quality early childhood experiences.
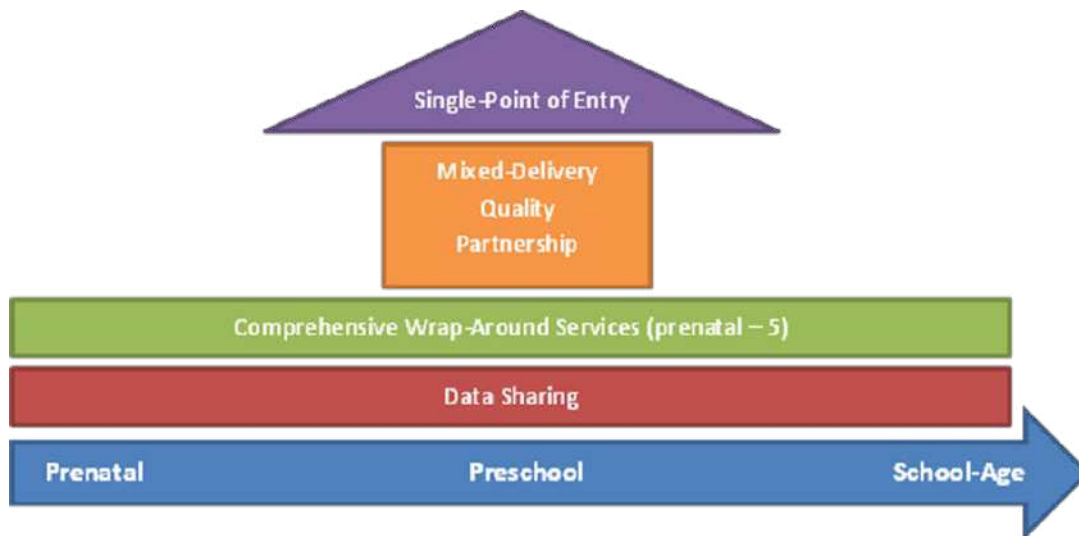
Recommended Capacity-Building: New Structures and Interagency Positions

- Year 1 (2017-18): Current staff restructuring, job descriptions, team building
- Year 2 (2018-19): Hire part-time system designers, determine support positions
- Year 3 (2019-20): Hire full-time coordinators, full implementation

Desired Outcomes

- ❖ All participating programs meet same high-quality standards.
- ❖ Directors and teachers supported in meeting quality goals.
- ❖ Families have a range of programs to choose from that meet need.
- ❖ Families have "one stop shopping" for a range of programming.
- ❖ Families can easily be referred to and register for openings in a timely manner.
- ❖ Families knowledgeable about child development and readiness.
- ❖ All families connected to resources and have relationships with supporters and providers.
- ❖ System grows to serve older children and broader range of need.

By formalizing the relationships between city, school, and private community-based agencies, ensuring consistent funding, and designing a tailored mixed-delivery system for Somerville, attainment of our goals of quality, access, and readiness is within reach. These identified needs and accompanying recommendations are an attempt to build on our successes and move Somerville from a siloed system of education and care, to a cooperative, collaborative, integrated system that better meets the needs of children and families, and those who serve them.

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In the winter of 2013-2014, members of the Early Childhood Steering Committee submitted a report to the School Committee and the Mayor's Office. The report, *Maximizing Children's Potential: The Somerville Five-Year Plan for Early Education and Care*, laid out a vision for a fully integrated system that would best support young children and their families and caregivers. In addition to this vision, the report provided an overview of key elements in such a system, Somerville's current resources in service to these elements, and a five-year plan to advance Somerville's leadership in the area of early education and care.

This plan reviews the progress to date and sets a bold vision and strategic direction for the next three years. Key aspects of this plan include close collaboration with community-based partners in support of the District, City, and the Somerville School Committee's commitment to universal kindergarten readiness. This new direction builds on past work and is part of the work of the Community Cabinet, an interagency collaboration supported by the work of By All Means and the Education Redesign Lab at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. As such it takes into account the work happening across multiple entities that support children and families including health, human services, schools, and community-based nonprofits.

Fig. 1 Preschool's Connection to Somerville's Prenatal-College Continuum.
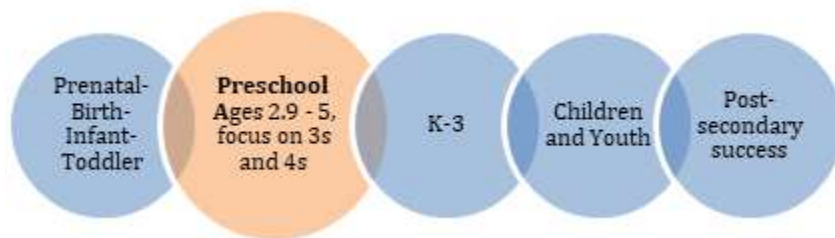
Goal 1: Continue building a quality early education and care system.
Goal 2: Leverage preschool momentum and best practices to improve services for all ages.

Challenges in Early Education and Care

> *An increasing sense of urgency has developed given current data on school readiness. Students who enter formal schooling ready to learn have advantages, yet despite overwhelming evidence supporting the benefits of early education, opportunity gaps exist.*

The focus on access to high-quality early education and care in Somerville is aligned with the City's efforts to make Somerville, as Mayor Joe Curtatone espouses, "a great place to live, work, play, and raise a family." However, an increasing sense of urgency has developed given current data on school readiness, and later success in school and in life. This link is well established: Students who enter formal schooling ready to learn have advantages that persist throughout their education and lives. Yet, despite overwhelming evidence supporting the benefits of quality early education, enormous opportunity gaps exist locally and in the broader community. This gap appears in grade three reading levels, but takes root in early childhood, and is correlated with school readiness factors. *Appendix A of this report includes grade three reading trend data, as well as additional data on Somerville children, families, and programs.*

While public schools grapple with the achievement gap, especially for at risk populations, childcare centers face other challenges that can impact quality. High staff turnover, impacted by low wages, is a challenge for centers as they can struggle to promote program quality under these conditions. The woeful inadequacy of childcare subsidies at the state level highlights the struggle to address the persistent achievement gaps for our most vulnerable students in Massachusetts. This reality underscores the importance of action at the local level. We urge Somerville to act on behalf of its own children by supporting a profession critical to a solid foundation for a lifetime of learning.

Given the wealth of research on the importance of the early years in a child's development, we know that we can reverse these disadvantages. Children's vocabulary at age 3 has been positively correlated with achievement at grade 10 (Snow, 2007). Economists point to the overall financial and societal benefits when families and children are engaged in quality care experiences within their communities (Heckman 2011; Rand 2017), teachers who receive training and worthy wages stay longer and teach more effectively (Barnett, 2003; Whitebook, Phillips, Howes, 2104); and children who experience high- quality preschool programming outperform peers who lack this opportunity, especially for minority children (Nores, Barnett, Joseph, Stull, & Soderberg, 2017). All of these studies, and data of our own, give us confidence to move forward with a bold plan.

Local Investments and Achievements

In Somerville our early investments to support early education and care are beginning to bear fruit. Since 2013, our achievements have been many.

Achievements in Kindergarten Readiness for All Initiative
- School Committee goal of K Readiness, first adopted in 2015, reflects a deep, community-wide commitment to early education as a core equity goal for Somerville.
- The position of Director of Early Education was created, building leadership and a bridge and between public schools and the larger community.
- Development of a K Readiness assessment tool (Kindergarten Entry Skills Inventory - KESI) to track Somerville's progress in meeting readiness goals.
- Kindergarten entry data (KESI), which has been systematically collected since 2015, indicates positive trends in the areas of literacy and math.
- Incoming preschoolers to SPS screened for the first time to ensure supports.
- Whole Child focus that balances pro-social and play aspects of children's development with early skills for numeracy and reading.

Achievements in High-Quality Curriculum and Instruction
- Teachers in Somerville Public Schools (SPS) and in our partner centers are cooperatively building shared curriculum and instructional practices to ensure a consistent and coherent curriculum.
- Somerville's two instructional coaches (one new position in FY16 and another supported in FY18) have coached in over 24 classrooms and reached over 40 teachers across the city this year alone to support consistent, quality practices.
- The new Somerville Early Education curriculum website, www.somervilleearlyed.com gives easy access to best curriculum practices.
- Nationally normed and recognized tools (CLASS and ECERS) used to assess baseline practices in public school and community settings, informing our professional development plans.

Achievements in Mixed-Delivery Partnerships: A Robust Early Education Ecosystem
- Collaboration between SPS and Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS) Head Start allows Somerville to leverage state, federal and local resources to best serve a high needs population.
- Development of a formal MOU between CAAS and the City of Somerville, in 2016, allows Head Start services to be provided in our school buildings in three classrooms. Somerville is one of the few cities in the state with this level of collaboration.

- Collaboration with SomerPromise, Health and Human Services Department, Cambridge Health Alliance forged new possibilities for future work.
- Cambridge-Somerville Directors' Group, co-led by Director of Early Education, provides support for center-based program directors.
- Professional development and instructional coaching offered at no cost to community-based teachers.
- Transition to kindergarten activities connect community-based teachers with public school teachers to share information about children.
- The Community Cabinet, as part of the *By All Means* initiative co-led by Superintendent Skipper and Mayor Curtatone, maintains a strong focus on Early Education and promotes a vision of broad-based ownership of K readiness, across city departments and community agencies.

Achievements in Prenatal-Age Three Family Engagement
- Partnership and close working relationship between Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC) and SomerPromise.
- SomerBaby pilot launched in 2016, Welcome Baby Bags delivered to 80 families.
- SFLC multilingual Play Groups serve 600 young children.
- Parent-Child Home Program home visiting for 39 families.
- Home visiting focus groups with immigrant families to understand needs and preferences.
- Family liaisons in all district schools.

Achievements in Advocacy & Outreach
- Presentations at the National Association for the Education of Young Children, statewide advocacy and planning meetings, testimony at the State House in support of Preschool Expansion and Early Childhood funding.
- Ready4K partnership with Stanford University provides twice-weekly text messages to parents to support early literacy skills at home.
- Preschool registration is now online and aligned with district registration.
- Registration flyers sent to families with 4-year olds for the first time (2017-18).
- Ongoing needs assessments to gauge family need, center capacity, and raise awareness of early education and care options.

Achievements in External Resources that Support Internal Growth
- *Early Learning Challenge Grant (ELCG, 2013-15)*
  - Built strong relationships in the community and plant seeds of quality care throughout the city.

- ○ The ELCG state grant contributed to the design and launch of the *Somerville Hub, www.somervillehub.org,* - the online resource for families seeking programming and services for young children in our city.
- *The Taly Foundation (2016-18)*
  - ○ $11K for Literacy Curriculum Development
  - ○ New Balanced Literacy Curriculum Guides and Pacing Guides
  - ○ Consult with the Lectio Group - Balanced Literacy Development
  - ○ Professional development on Dialogic Reading
  - ○ New curriculum materials
- *Preschool Expansion Strategic Planning Grant (2016)*
  - ○ The Department of Early Education and Care Preschool Expansion Strategic Planning Grant enabled district and community-based partners to create a strategic plan for opening subsidized slots for income eligible families in partner centers should state funding become available.
- SomerPromise, Somerville's Cradle to Career initiative, supported a needs assessment of centers to gain an understanding of the overall childcare landscape in the city. Early Childhood Associates Needs Assessment of Center (2016). *(See Appendix A)*
- Needs assessment of 83 high needs families and 363 mid-upper income families showed need for full day, high-quality care.
- Strong data tracking capability has been built into our planning efforts, to include adoption of a unique identifier for young children as they enter our city.
- Strategies for Children consult with EESC to develop new three year plan (2018).

Next Steps for Somerville

We have successfully leveraged existing resources but must now think strategically and creatively about the steps needed to meet our City's commitment to equity. Today, we submit a new report, **Ready to Learn, Ready for K: Somerville's Early Education and Care Plan,** which sets a strategic plan for the next three years and incorporates lessons learned over the past five years. It focuses on assuring that all of Somerville's children

> *We are ready for the next step - building on our achievements to create a coherent, quality, accessible system of early education and care for all.*

arrive at Kindergarten ready for success. However, this is not as simple as opening more programming within the public schools – there is neither space nor capacity to do so, and such an approach would not align with our commitment to a mixed-delivery system of high-quality options for families. As noted in the following section, our approach to increasing access and quality via partnerships will require new collaborative and leadership structures across city departments, private child care

providers, and other agencies in the city that support children. We must take a prenatal through school-age approach, and serve the needs of the whole child. We must make early education and care a top priority in Somerville at a time when there is local momentum, rooted in our City's core commitment to equity, to create a system that serves all children.

Commitment to Collaborative Mixed-Delivery Partnerships: New Structures

This renewed commitment to educational equity requires new oversight. We recommend that a leadership or governance team be in place to vote on major decisions related to plan components, and voice concerns that may arise. Governance power should be equitably distributed among parties impacted. The governance team would be responsible for all major decisions related to planning and implementing mixed-delivery quality enhancements. This team would represent Somerville Public Schools, the City's Department of Health and Human Services, and community-based early education and care organizations. The Early Education Steering Committee (EESC) would continue to meet to share and generate ideas, research models, share insights from direct service, and fine-tune strategies and program components.

This system will also require new staffing patterns within and across agencies and organizations. Some will created by restructuring existing personnel and departments, while others will be new positions. Our local and national research on other successful cities, including our By All Means partners, demonstrates that new leadership structures builds capacity to meet family need. *(See Appendix B for details).*

The *Maximizing Children's Potential* plan of four years ago committed to a "mixed-delivery" system of early education in Somerville. Mixed-delivery work is an effort to establish a collaborative, cooperative system of early education and care options and services. Our commitment reflects a community-wide approach to a system of care that includes a range of early childhood care providers in our city. Needs assessments and monitoring of state and

> *State and national efforts in the mixed-delivery space have achieved greatest success when schools, agencies, and cities partner in this effort, collaborating to build a system with the capacity to serve all children and families.*

national trends over the past four years support this approach. State and national efforts in the mixed-delivery space have achieved greatest success when schools, agencies, and cities partner in this effort, collaborating to build a system with the capacity to serve all children and families. For this reason, we can state definitively that for Somerville, kindergarten readiness goals will not be met by the school as sole lead agency opening new programs. Rather, we must sustain and build quality in both public schools and

community-based settings, requiring increased collaboration and calibration with the city and local agencies.

Significant progress has been made in meeting many of the identified needs and identified gaps in our first report, and the results to date have helped to clarify next steps. However, this shift from simply opening more programming to increasing access and quality as well as collaboration among city departments, local agencies, and schools, has opened up new challenges. The current needs are described below, accompanied by recommendations that will build on Somerville's already strong leadership in early education, and create the systemic changes that will improve access to and quality of early education and care options in our city.

NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our "Ready to Learn, Ready for K" strategic plan seeks to build a high-quality, equitable early education and care system in Somerville. It builds off of ongoing work at the preschool level, extending to reach children and families from prenatal to school-age. Our plan identifies four major needs, and proposes four corresponding solutions. The individual components being proposed are separate, but fit together as "building blocks" to create one cohesive system.

Fig. 2 Plan components:
The building blocks of high-quality early childhood experiences.
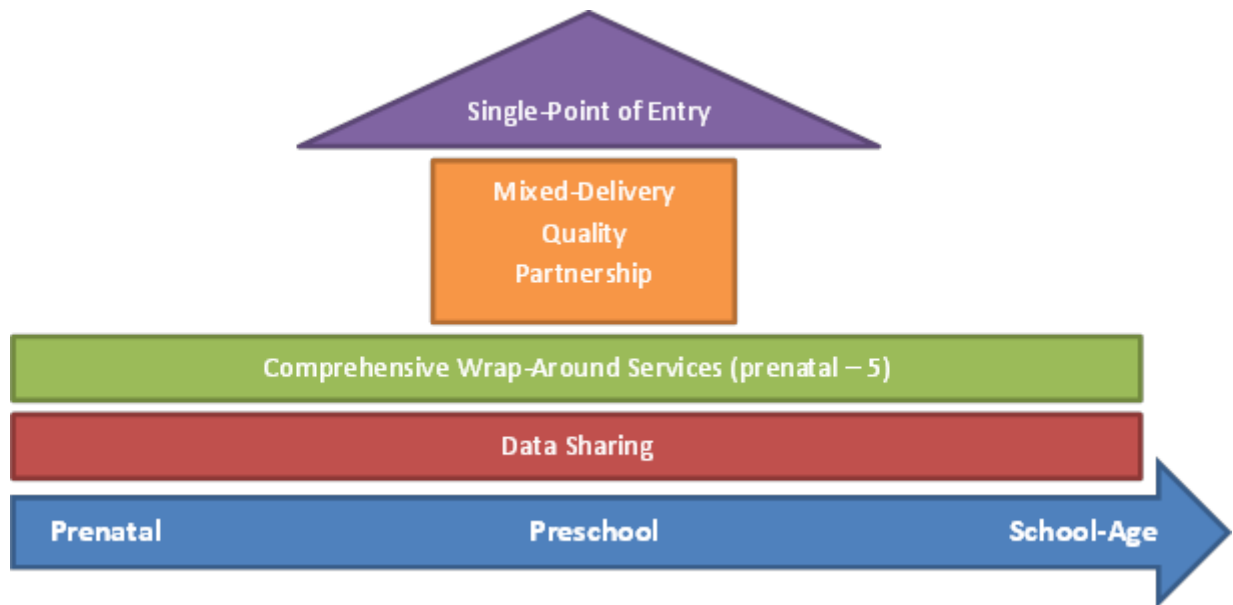
Identified Need #1 Mixed-Delivery Partnership Model: Achieving High-Quality Early Learning in All Settings

The Mixed-Delivery model establishes a collaborative, cooperative system of early education and care options and services across agencies and programs. Our Head Start-Somerville Public Schools partnership is a successful example of two agencies cooperating to offer children and families the highest quality full day programming. However, we seek to establish a formal system of partnering with a range of centers that meet mutually determined readiness standards - A Somerville Early Education Network.

Somerville Public Schools (SPS) currently has strong, yet informal, partnerships with a few local child care centers, providing instructional coaching and professional development. For centers, access to high-quality professional development and coaching is a significant financial burden. In a mixed-delivery system, collaborative and free learning experiences for teachers and directors is an important in-kind savings. However, more formalized partnerships with participating centers are needed to support fidelity to quality practices. Additional strategies we would like to pursue include: identifying and incentivizing income eligible and sliding scale slots in centers, shared enrollment and registration, developing curriculum guidelines, and director/educator development. Eventually this model can be replicated in Out-of-School Time and other partnerships. We are mindful of wage disparities between district and community-based early educators, and will work over time to address these and other disparities between partners. All of these components support family access to high-quality programming.

Recommendation #1: Establish an Early Education Mixed-Delivery Team and Coordinator
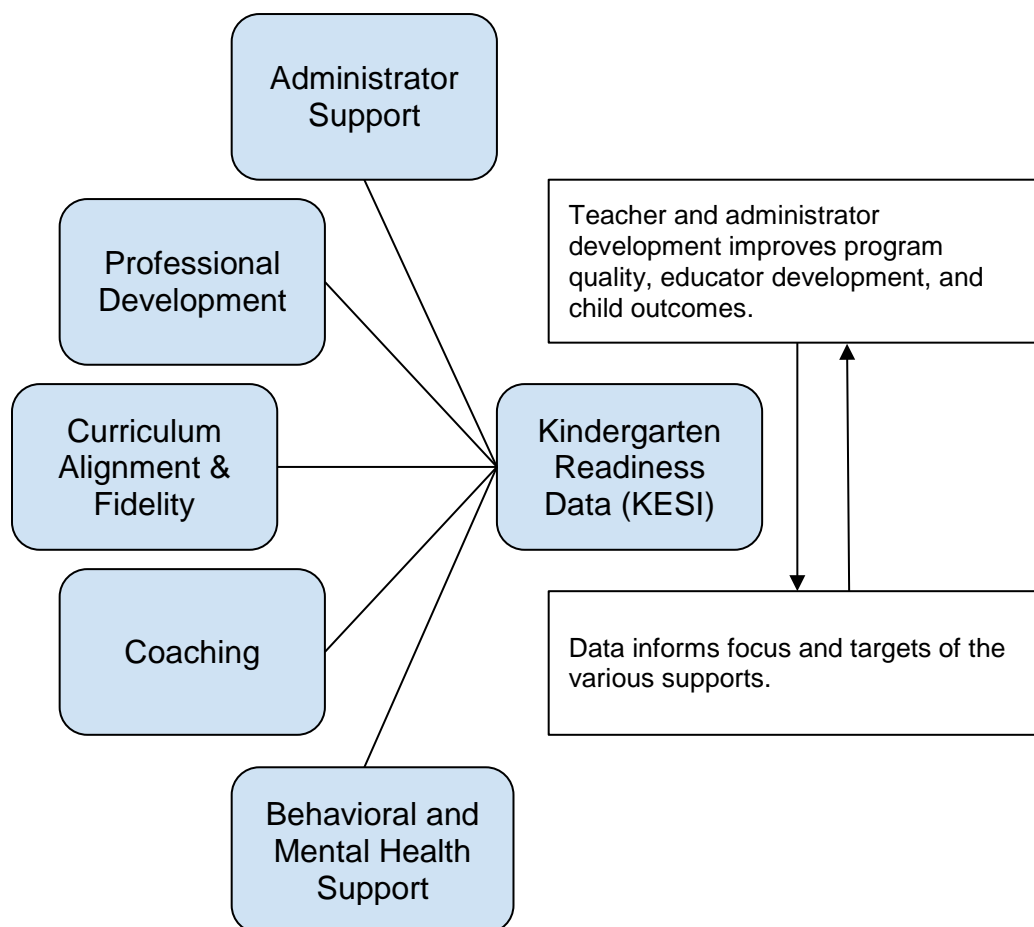- Establish the Somerville Early Education Network of centers.
- Establish and hire an interagency position responsible for managing the onboarding of centers, building access to slots for income eligible families, and support for center directors.
- Develop an outreach strategy to engage all families in the importance of early education and care, and the options available.
- Develop an agreed upon set of readiness goals for children and a plan for communicating these expectations to families.
- Continue to assess and support the design of Somerville's Mixed-Delivery efforts and best lead agency strategy that includes both SPS and other city agencies, funding sources, and a strong, high-quality cross-provider network.
- Monitor program quality in collaboration with the Director of Early Education.
- Monitor program access in collaboration with Single Point of Entry Coordinator and Director of Early Education.
- Continue to fund and expand Early Childhood Instructional Coaching model to support quality in SPS and partner programs, and provide Director Coaching to sustain quality.
- Collaborate with physical, mental, and behavioral health service teams to ensure access to services.

Desired Outcome #1: All participating early education programs in Somerville meet the same high-quality early learning standards. Directors and teachers have support in achieving quality goals. Families have a range of programs to choose from to meet their needs.

Theory of Change: Investments in Mixed-Delivery Quality Lead to Impact

Many factors impact a child's readiness for kindergarten. A theory of change behind our mixed-delivery system is that a strong network of relationships and supports will lead to high-quality experiences for children and increase readiness for kindergarten. When families have access to high-quality programs, children will have experiences that prepare them for kindergarten.

In addition, results from our Kindergarten Entry Skills Inventory (KESI) can inform future investments, including the focus of professional development and coaching. For instance, if social-emotional scores are found to be consistently low year-to-year, then coaching can be offered in this domain. Or if certain subgroups of children or children from particular centers score low, coaching or administrator support can be targeted accordingly. *(See Appendix A for a summary of KESI data)*

Administrator Support

Professional Development

Curriculum Alignment & Fidelity

Coaching

Behavioral and Mental Health Support

Kindergarten Readiness Data (KESI)

Teacher and administrator development improves program quality, educator development, and child outcomes.

Data informs focus and targets of the various supports.

<u>**Identified Need #2 Single Point of Entry:**</u>
<u>**Achieving Information and Access for Families**</u>

In a Mixed-Delivery system, a Single Point of Entry is critical to ensure that families have easy access to information they need to make decisions about early education and care that best meet their needs. While the Somerville Hub offers basic information about the range of choices available in Somerville, it is not, and was never meant to be a registration platform, or a substitute for personalized access for families from a variety of ethnic, linguistic, and economic backgrounds. The vision for the single point of entry is that it would provide information about early education openings in public schools, Head Start, and center-based early education and care settings, as well as extended care options. In addition, an effective single point of entry is designed to make actual registration in school day and out-of-school time programming easier for families. Currently, the Parent Information Center and Somerville Family Learning Collaborative are the first point of contact, but staffing structures there are not sufficient to support the full needs of families. Eventually, the Single Point of Entry will serve as "one stop shopping," a multilingual tool that enables families to register for a range of programming beyond the school day and beyond early childhood as part of a comprehensive system. The system will be initially piloted with preschool options.

Recommendation #2: Create a Single Point of Entry System and Support Staff Structure
- Continue researching Single Point of Entry models and decide upon the best design for Somerville *(See Appendix C).*
- Create and hire a short term position to design and build the technical side of the Single Point of Entry.
- In conjunction with Head Start and other partners such as SPS Community Schools' afterschool program, provide Somerville families with a place to learn about and register seamlessly for school-day and extended care programming; will include a range of program offerings in our mixed-delivery system, serving children from birth through school-age. Year One focus on programs serving three and four year olds.
- Restructure and/or expand Somerville Family Learning Collaborative and Parent Information Center (PIC) to include multiple agencies, looking inward at existing human capital and resources, and outward to potential collaborations.
- Ensure equitable access for all languages and cultures represented in Somerville through family liaisons/advocates, multilingual services, outreach to hard to reach families, and new partnerships with cultural groups and immigrant-serving organizations.

- Support mixed-delivery outreach strategy to engage all families in the importance of early education and care, and the options available.

Desired Outcome #2: Families experience "one stop shopping" for early education programs. Program administrators can refer and register families to openings in an easy, timely manner. System grows over time to also serve older children and address a broader range of socio-economic needs.

Identified Need #3 Building and Sustaining Prenatal-Age 5 Comprehensive Wrap-Around Services

The Early Education Steering Committee's focus on quality and access to programs for four-year-olds grew out of the *Race to the Top/Early Learning Challenge Grant* and subsequent Preschool Expansion Planning Grant that focused on alignment between public and private programs and boosting the quality of experiences just prior to kindergarten. However, we recognize that there is a need to extend our focus to the prenatal to school entry landscape to better support children and families prior to and during early preschool years. Overall health and wellness including mental health, physical and cognitive development, and behavioral issues, as well as housing, food insecurity, and newcomer supports need better integration across agencies. *(See Appendix A for a review of community data).*

Our commitment is to develop a "through any door" approach to serving families. Currently, the SPS-funded Somerville Family Learning Collaborative is at capacity. In addition, multiple agencies and city departments are responsible for aspects of this support system but there are gaps and interagency and interdepartmental collaboration is not systematized. A Comprehensive Wrap-Around Network that coordinates and "braids" a range of services is a strategy many communities use successfully to meet the varied needs of families. To serve young children and their families well we need a system that meets the needs of the whole child - before birth and through the high school years, and early childhood is an integral part of this system. The Wrap-Around Coordinator would focus on prenatal through age 5, thus adding capacity to SomerPromise which has a cradle to career focus and lacks current capacity to coordinate targeted supports for young children. We are well positioned to develop the prenatal through age 5 aspect of this work.

Recommendation #3: Targeted Investments in Prenatal-Age 5 Comprehensive Services, implemented by a Wrap-Around Network

- Support the development of an interagency Comprehensive Wrap-Around Network headed by a Wrap-Around Coordinator, who oversee a team of service providers who address behavioral and mental health needs, food insecurity, housing, early intervention, health care and other wrap-around services.
- Coordinate and provide targeted behavioral and mental health supports to children in the Somerville Early Education Network.
- Build on the success of SomerBaby to develop a robust prenatal and new parent support model, that stays connected with families through preschool and kindergarten.
- Develop a robust home visiting program building on the success of the Parent Child Home Program.
- Inventory and map the programs currently serving prenatal through school entry and align with family needs.
- Continue to assess the needs of families and the types of care they want and use, prenatal through high school.
- Participate in *By All Means* and Nellie Mae supported Somerville Vision for Learning visioning process that addresses learning across the life span.

Desired Outcome #3: All expectant parents and parents of newborns, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers are supported in Somerville, connected to resources and relationships, and knowledgeable about child development and school readiness.

Identified Need #4 Data Sharing: Student Insights for Early Education

Somerville Public Schools, in collaboration with Code for America, developed the Student Insights dashboard. This innovative tool, widely adopted in Somerville schools over the past several years, enables educators to closely track a child's educational history over time. The "dashboard" simplicity assures that key information is shared and is used effectively to maximize every student's learning. SPS is actively working to adapt Student Insights for our youngest learners. Applying this to our partners in center-based programs, and even a version that follows children from birth, is critical to ensuring that no child experiences gaps in early education and care that jeopardize their success as learners. Early identifiers have been shown to better connect children and families to the services and supports they need to thrive.

Recommendation #4: Enhanced Data Systems to Support Young Learners
- Work across agencies to establish a unique identifier for all children in Somerville, birth-age 5 and utilize the Insights dashboard system to track children's services and experiences.
- Utilize SomerBaby initiative as a pilot for early years data sharing.
- Explore use of Student Insights to meet the needs of early learners.
- Develop and formalize data sharing agreements and data analysis team with oversight by the Kindergarten Readiness Governance Team.

Desired Outcome #4: Data drives decision-making to improve kindergarten readiness. Services for children and families improve over time thanks to accurate, timely data, shared collaboratively among partners. Protections are in place to ensure privacy safeguards.

Closing:
By formalizing the relationships between city, school, and community-based organizations, ensuring consistent funding, and determining the "just right" mixed-delivery system for Somerville, our goals of quality, access, and readiness will be within reach. These identified needs and recommendations are an attempt to build on our successes and move Somerville from a "parallel play", siloed system of education and care, to a cooperative, collaborative, integrated system that better meets the needs of children and families. Below is a new 3-year plan that expands upon our prior work, picking up in the 4th year, and shows both progress and vision for future work.

	Ready to Learn, Ready for K: Somerville's Early Education and Care Plan 3-Year Vision *Note: Year 1 represents Year 4 of the original 5-Year Plan*			
	Identified Need #1 Mixed-Delivery Partnership Model to Achieve High-Quality Early Learning in All Settings Leads: SPS, HHS, EESC, Shared Services, Strategies for Children *Capacity Building: Mixed-Delivery Partnership Coordinator*			
Element	**Rationale & Benefit**	**Year 1: 2017-18**	**Year 2: 2018-19**	**Year 3: 2019-20**
Mixed Delivery Partnerships	**Partnerships support access, quality, and choice.**	SPS-Head Start Collaboration 2nd classroom added at Capuano (total of 3, 2 at Capuano, 1 at Healey) Begin designing partnership criteria and K readiness standards *Capacity Building:* Develop job description for part time Mixed-Delivery Partnership Coordinator	SPS-Head Start Classrooms co-staffed with SPS & HS Teachers with some wage parity *Capacity Building:* Hire part-time Mixed-Delivery Partnership Coordinator for FY 2019-20 Development of MOU for collaboration with other centers	*Capacity Building:* Full-time Mixed-Delivery Coordinator in place. Formal MOUs with subsidies or funded slots for income eligible families in 1-2 partner centers Continue efforts for wage parity
Quality Improvement	**Quality programming supports readiness for school and life**	Balanced Literacy curriculum development Ongoing teacher coaching in SPS and centers. Emphasis on environment,	Balanced Literacy, Math, Science, SEL curriculum implemented in partner centers Regular CLASS observations	Formal MOUs increase fidelity to curriculum implementation Director coaching and leadership development

		practices that support healthy social and emotional development.	Teacher supervision pilot in partner centers	Ongoing teacher coaching and supervision with partner centers.
High-Quality Program Access & PEG Advocacy and Implementation	**State-Funded Preschool Expansion Grants (PEG) support city efforts to provide quality and access for income eligible families and positively impact K readiness.** **Advocating for needed state funding to implement at scale informs planning at the local level.**	Advocate for passage of *An Act Ensuring High-Quality Pre-K Education*, for PEG funds in FY19 state budget. Apply for DEEC CPPI strategic planning and sustainability grant.	Monitor state policy. Continue advocacy. Revisit 2016 PEG plan and update.	Monitor state policy. Continue advocacy. If funding available, apply and begin PEG implementation. Align with Mixed-Delivery Partnership work.
Out of School Time	**Meeting the needs of working families reduces stress for children and parents.**	Increase in Preschool Afterschool to 45% Implementation of new sliding scale	Increase Preschool afterschool to 50% Support professional development Support staffing challenges Align afterschool registration with SPS	Continue to support staffing challenges and professional development needs.

Identified Need #2 Single Point of Entry: Information and Access for Families (online and in-person) Leads: SPS Parent Information Center, Health and Human Services Representative, Early Education Steering Committee Community-Partner Representative. *Capacity Building: Single Point of Entry Team & Coordinator*				
Element	**Rationale & Benefit**	**Year 1: 2017-18**	**Year 2: 2018-19**	**Year 3: 2019-20**
Awareness, Outreach, Access	**Access to information means knowledgeable constituents who can prepare children for school and life.**	Family Needs Assessments SPS Outreach Flyers to families of 4 year olds Early Ed and Care options mailing to 1000 families birth-4 Early Ed/Readiness Awareness Campaign ***Capacity Building:*** Single Point of Entry (SPE) Design Specialist, job description for design of SPE	Coordinate Head Start and SPS outreach Coordinate after school and SPS outreach Interagency, "through any door" messaging and outreach (pediatricians, libraries, early intervention, churches, etc.) ***Capacity Building:*** Hire part-time SPE Design Specialist, ***Capacity Building:*** Job description for full-time SPE Coordinator ***Capacity Building:*** Using current human capital and internal resources, develop an personalized SPE structure	***Capacity Building:*** *SPE team and coordinator in place.* Unified outreach messaging for partner programming across the city, including Prenatal-5 programming and services

Registration	**Ease of program registration enables families to access the programs they want.**	Online registration for Preschool aligned with K registration	Somerville Public Schools (SPS), Head Start and Community Schools (afterschool) have aligned registration with resource and referral support	Registration includes 1-2 partner center-based programs TBD; Registration includes a range of out of school time partners TBD
Transition to School	**Child and family support for school transition leads to a successful school experience.**	Summer Explore Kindergarten program for children entering K (5th year)	Summer Explore (6th year) Coordinate summer programming content to align with Head Start Summer Program	Summer Explore (7th year)

Identified Need #3 Building and Sustaining Prenatal-Age 5 Comprehensive Wrap-Around Services Leads: HHS, SPS, Local Agencies *Capacity Building: Comprehensive Wrap-Around Services Team & Coordinator*				
Element	**Rationale & Benefit**	**Year 1: 2017-18**	**Year 2: 2018-19**	**Year 3: 2019-20**
Health and Wellness (Including Mental and Behavioral Health)	**Access to early screening, health care and maintaining health and wellness at home impacts school success.** **Early support for mental and behavioral**	Shape Up Under 5 launched SomerBaby launched Mental health and behavioral health supports for centers pilot ***Capacity Building:*** Support the vision for a	Engage pediatricians and health professionals in outreach Comprehensive and coordinated Mental Health supports for centers ***Capacity Building:*** Hire part-time	Expand from Year 2. ***Capacity Building:*** Early Education components of Comprehensive Wrap-Around Services team in place.

	health issues positively impacts children's readiness for learning and school.	Comprehensive Wrap-Around Services Team Coordinator Prenatal-Gr 12	Comprehensive Wrap-Around Coordinator for Early Education	
Screening Assessment Supports	**Early screening identifies behavioral, mental and physical health, and cognitive needs, enabling proactive support.**	Use Child Find Screening of all incoming SPS Preschool Students Preschool Report Card Assessment data analysis 3rd Year of Kindergarten Entry Skills Inventory. Calibrate data.	Institutionalize Preschool Screening in SPS preschools Support preschool screening in community programs	Aligned screening across SPS and partner centers
Home Visiting and Family Support	**Connections with families supports overall family health and builds awareness of child development and school readiness.**	Continue implementing Parent Child Home Program Focus groups to learn needs and preferences of families, build awareness of current programming.	Pilot Home Visiting Program in SPS - summer and school year SomerBaby home visiting pilot brought to scale	Expand Home Visiting Expand SomerBaby

Identified Need #4 Data Sharing: Student Insights for Early Education				
Lead: SPS director of early education, SPS data manager, EESC community-partner representative. *Capacity Building:TBD*				
Element	**Rationale & Benefit**	**Year 1: 2017-18**	**Year 2: 2018-19**	**Year 3: 2019-20**
Data Sharing	**Early identification and identifiers support alignment with programming and services.**	Student Insights launched for SPS preschool classrooms Sharing registration processes SPS-HS	Student Insights - SomerBaby Identifier Pilot Student Insights-Head Start Pilot	Expand Student Insights and Identifier to Partner Centers
Student Insights and Observational Assessments	**When early childhood educators have systematic ways to track children's progress they can offer higher quality experiences and interventions.**	Teachers introduced to Student Insights without full implementation	Training and support for teachers, coaches, and administrators on use of Insight and integration with other tools.	Systemic use of Student Insights to track children's progress.
Quality Observation Analysis	**Shared analysis of classroom quality indicators boosts overall quality and informs teacher practice.**	Pilot ECERS and CLASS in SPS and Centers	Institutionalize yearly ECERS and CLASS observations in public and center-based programs	Expand support of and timeline for ongoing quality observations.

Appendix A.
Somerville Data as Context: Children, Families, Programs, Community

Young Child Population

Somerville children by single year of age

< 1	1	2	3	4	5	Total
850	776	705	567	601	490	3,989

Birth-4 average:700; Birth-5 average: 665
Source: Census 2010

Somerville Birth-5 total: 4,120; Average B-5 single year: 687
Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015 5-year average.

Based on these two sources, there are **650-700** children per single year of age at any point in Somerville, approximately **4,000** children under age six.

Poverty rate and racial demographics of young children

Birth-5 population	Somerville	Massachusetts
% of children living below poverty	18%	17%
% Black or African American	8%	7%
% Asian	8%	6%
% Hispanic or Latino	20%	17%
% White	52%	63%
% of children who are another race, or two or more races	11%	6%

Source: Strategies for Children, Fast Facts: Somerville, Census 2010, ACS 2011-2015.

Somerville Public Schools - Kindergarten Enrollment

sy12-13	sy13-14	sy14-15	sy15-16	sy16-17	**5-year avg**
476	447	467	441	419	**450**

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

There is a noted decline in child population once children reach school age. An estimated 200-250 children per year opt out of Somerville Public Schools by kindergarten, either moving out of the city or enrolling in charter or private schools. Interviews with Kindergarten Readiness partners revealed anecdotes of families moving to neighboring communities due to housing costs. Somerville has become a desirable community for young families to stay and raise children, if they can afford it.

Community Indicators

The city's *Sustainable Neighborhoods* report (2015) highlighted the scope of the housing challenge for families and low-income residents.
- Predicts a housing shortage, 9,000 units by 2030;
- Housing cost burdened: 38% of renters and homeowners alike spend 30% or more of income on housing. Many of these are "severely housing cost burdened" spending 50% or more of income on housing.
- Findings suggest the "vast majority of low-income families, who in turn comprise the vast majority of SPS students, are at risk of displacement or extreme cost burden." (p. 7)
- And, "families with children are far more likely to be living in poverty than other types of households. Citywide, 9.5 percent of families live in poverty, while 15.7 percent of families with children under 18 live in poverty." (p. 9).

The Wellbeing of Somerville report (2017) analyzed a wide range of socio-economic, health, wellbeing, and education data for distinct age ranges. Highlights to inform Kindergarten Readiness planning include:
- Large population of young adults, "25-34 age group representing 32.3% of the total population (compared to just 13.6% statewide)" (p.15)
- "The foreign-born population of the city as of 2015 was 24.7% of the estimated total. The top five countries of birth for foreign-born Somerville residents in 2015 were Brazil, Portugal, China, India, and El Salvador." (p. 15).
- Thirteen percent of the total population speaks Spanish or Portuguese as a primary language. (p. 16). However, for the SPS Pk-12 student population, 49% have a first language other than English. (SFC Fast Facts, DESE)

- High cost of child care relative to state averages, "Full day tuition for center-based care in Somerville averages $25,000 for infants and $16,000 for preschool age children." (p. 37)
- State education data show "60.2% of Somerville students were classified as high needs in the 2016-2017 school year, higher than the 45.2% state average. A high needs classification includes students with disabilities, English Language Learners, students who are homeless or in the foster system, those who perform far below grade level and students who otherwise are in need of special assistance and support." (p. 47). Economically disadvantaged students represent 39.4% of SPS students, and 21.7% receive special education services, both higher than state average.
- Clear recommendations for prenatal - age 4, covering access to programs and services, cultivating healthy habits, and strengthening social networks and support systems.

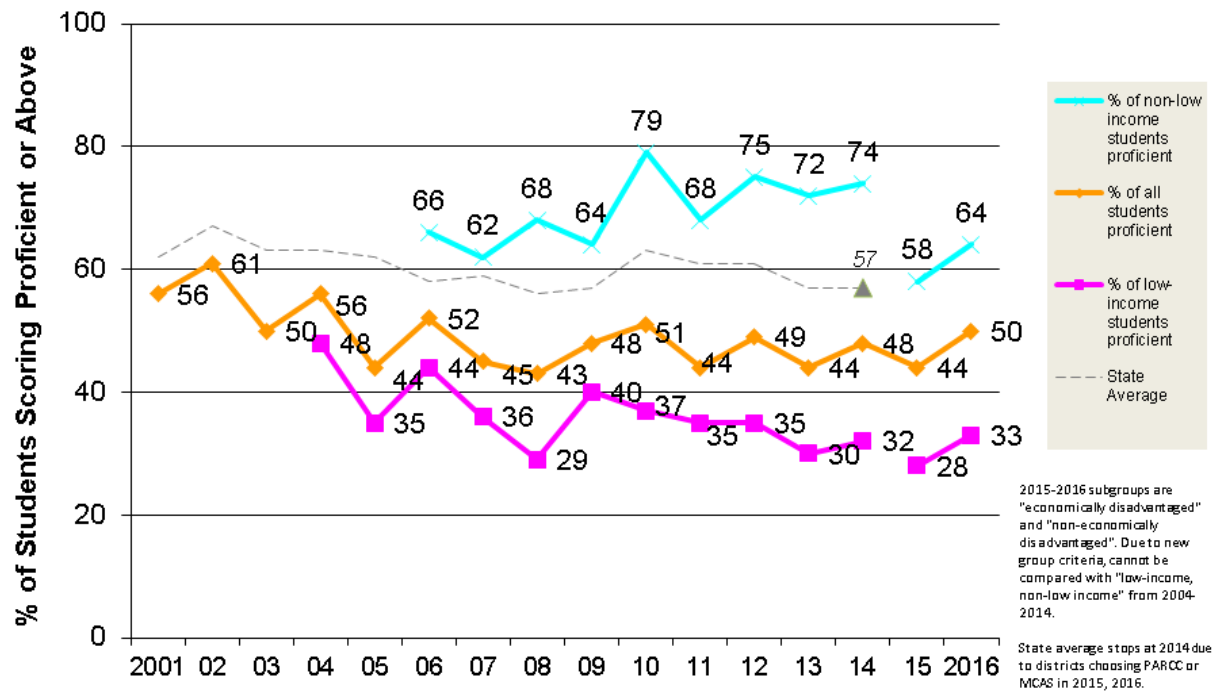## Child Success Indicators: Third Grade and Kindergarten

Research shows that reading proficiency in third grade is a key predictor of future success in school. Somerville students trail the state average in third grade reading, and a wide achievement gap is evident between low-income students and their more affluent peers.

Next-Generation MCAS 2017 % of third grade students who meet or exceed expectations in reading	Somerville	Massachusetts	Difference
All students	38%	47%	-9
Economically disadvantaged	22%	29%	-7
Non-economically disadvantaged	54%	58%	-4
Economic achievement gap (point difference between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students)	32 points	29 points	+3

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

In 2017, Massachusetts administered a new version of the test, Next-Generation MCAS. Looking at a 16-year trend under the previous test, we see that the average scores have decreased slightly over time, and the gap between low-income students and their more affluent peers has grown wider over time.

Third Grade Reading Proficiency in Somerville, 2001-2016 MCAS, by Income

Legend:
- % of non-low income students proficient
- % of all students proficient
- % of low-income students proficient
- State Average

2015-2016 subgroups are "economically disadvantaged" and "non-economically disadvantaged". Due to new group criteria, cannot be compared with "low-income, non-low income" from 2004-2014.

State average stops at 2014 due to districts choosing PARCC or MCAS in 2015, 2016.

To improve early childhood outcomes throughout the birth - third grade continuum, earlier data points are needed as indicators of progress. Fortunately Somerville Public Schools, under the guidance of the Director of Early Education, has a range of early childhood program data to inform decision making. This includes child outcome data in early literacy (Kindergarten DIBELS scores), and the district-created tool KESI: Kindergarten Entry Skills Inventory. All children are assessed using both tools during the fall of the Kindergarten year. Results show large percentages of children fall below key benchmarks in kindergarten.

KESI data over three cohorts of kindergarten students indicate progress in early literacy, math, and approaches to learning, but decline in social-emotional.

Kindergarten Entry Skills Inventory (KESI), Trends 2015-2017

Domain	2015	2016	2017	15-17
Early Literacy	7.6	8.0	8.1	0.5
Mathematical Concepts	7.6	8.1	8.6	1.0
Fine Motor	8.6	8.7	8.7	0.1
Gross Motor	9.0	9.1	9.0	0.0
Social-Emotional	8.7	8.6	7.9	-0.8
Approach to Learning	7.6	7.7	8.0	0.4
Overall	**8.2**	**8.4**	**8.4**	**0.2**

 * Index is out of a possible 10.

Looking at KESI data by the child's preschool experience, we see that scores across domains are highest for SPS and Centers. Head Start, which serves a more disadvantaged population, has slightly lower scores than other program types. The lowest score is for children with no preschool experience.

Examining specific groups of children, economically disadvantaged score overall 0.9 points lower than non-economically disadvantaged, and limited English proficiency students score 1.4 points lower than English fluent peers.

KESI data by preschool experience, 2015-2017 3-year average

	SPS (SMILE, including CAP)	Head Start (3 programs)	Centers (Somerville, Cambridge)	None/ Unknown	Overall
Early Literacy	8.3	6.7	8.7	5.8	7.9
Mathematical Concepts	8.8	8.1	9.3	6.9	8.1
Fine Motor	8.9	8.4	9.0	7.4	8.7
Gross Motor	9.0	9.3	9.2	7.9	9.0
Social-Emotional	8.0	6.9	7.9	6.8	8.4
Approach to Learning	8.1	6.4	8.4	6.9	7.8
Overall	**8.5**	**7.6**	**8.7**	**7.0**	**8.3**

* Index is out of a possible 10.

For aggregate categories, table shows unweighted average between sites.

KESI data by selected populations, 2015-2017 3-year average

|	Economically Disadvantaged	Non- Economically Disadvantaged	Limited English Proficiency	English Fluent	Overall
Early Literacy	7.1	8.5	6.6	8.3	7.9
Mathematical Concepts	8.1	9.0	6.6	8.7	8.1
Fine Motor	8.3	8.9	8.1	8.9	8.7
Gross Motor	8.7	9.1	8.6	9.1	9.0
Social-Emotional	7.0	8.1	7.1	8.8	8.4
Approach to Learning	7.0	8.3	6.9	8.1	7.8
Overall	**7.7**	**8.6**	**7.3**	**8.7**	**8.3**

* Index is out of a possible 10.

Preschool Access

It is helpful to know as much as possible about what children have experienced prior to being administered KESI in Kindergarten. Preschool access and enrollment are high in Somerville relative to other communities, with 98% of kindergarten students having had some form of preschool. This compares with only 75% in New Bedford, 53% in Springfield, and 47% in Lowell (Strategies for Children analysis of preschool expansion plans, 2017).

SPS Registration Data, 2017
Source: Parent Information Center (PIC)

For those **entering Pre-K**,
- 71% (156 children) attended a center-based/family care program.
- 29% (64 children) did not attend a program/family child care.
  - Among these children, 62.5% (40 children) were home-bound with at least one adult.
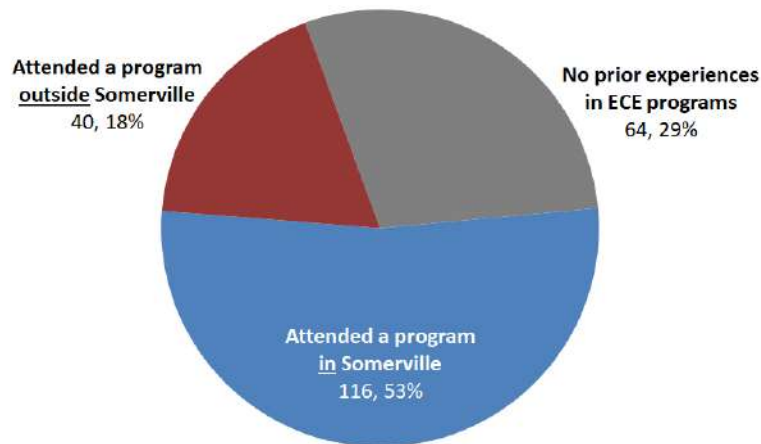
For those **entering Kindergarten**,
- Only 2% (7 children) reported no prior Pre-K experiences.
- Over half (55.2%, 243 children) attended a SMILE program or the ECIP program.
- 85% (372 children) attended a program in Somerville. Only 1 out of 10 children (11%, 51 children) attended a program outside Somerville.
- The predominant reason for school choice is "Close to my home" (45.9%, 202 families). Next is "Academic approach" (19.5% ,86 families). The third popular choice is related to siblings (13%, 57 families).
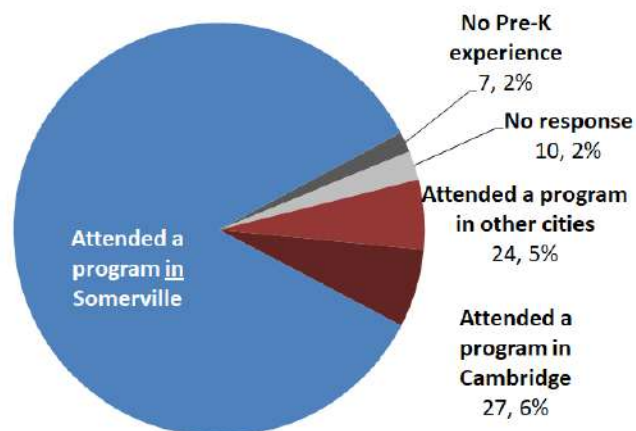
Some SPS preschools have waitlists while others do not. Most community-based centers (76%) have waitlists, and unmet demand is highest for infant and toddler care.
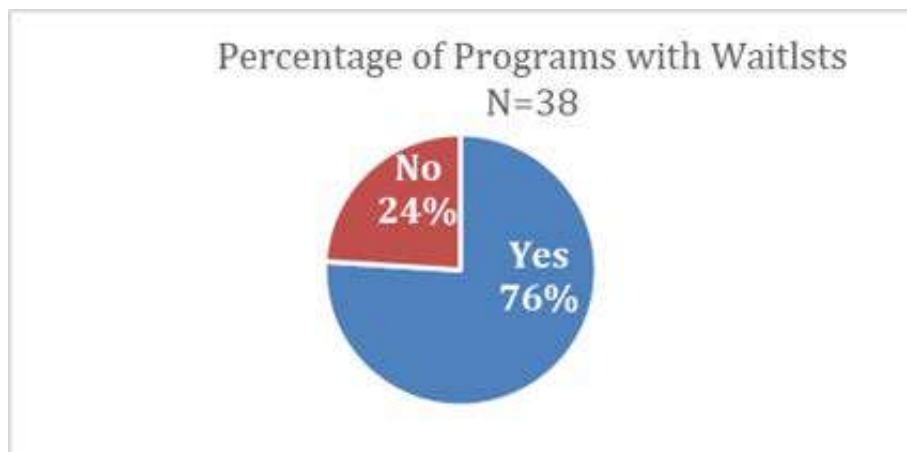
Preschool Quality

Research shows that it is the quality of the preschool experience that matters most, not simply whether a child attended or not. Somerville has a growing collection of data on preschool quality, collected across program type. This includes classroom quality (CLASS scores), frequency of child screenings and utilization of special needs services, and teacher wages.

At the Domain level of the CLASS tool, the Somerville baseline classrooms exceed the National average in each Domain. *[All CLASS ratings are on a 7-point scale]*

AVERAGE CLASS DOMAIN SCORES COMPARED TO NATIONAL AVERAGE N=9
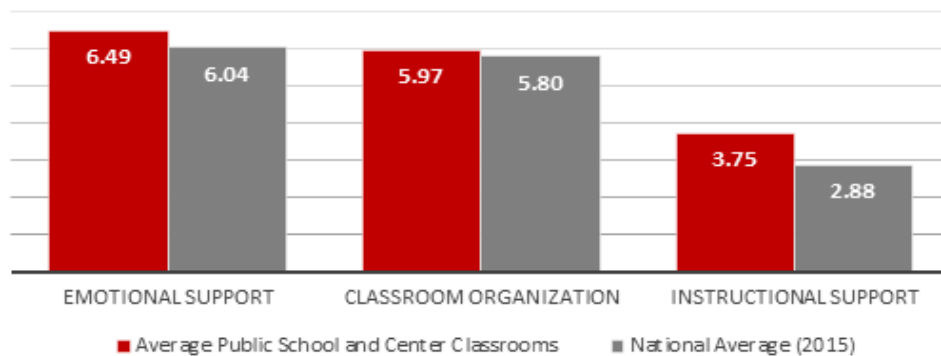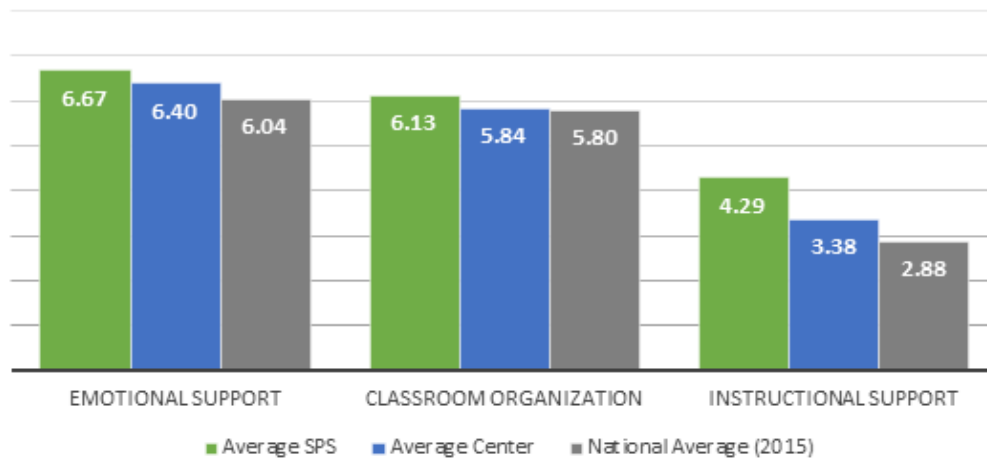

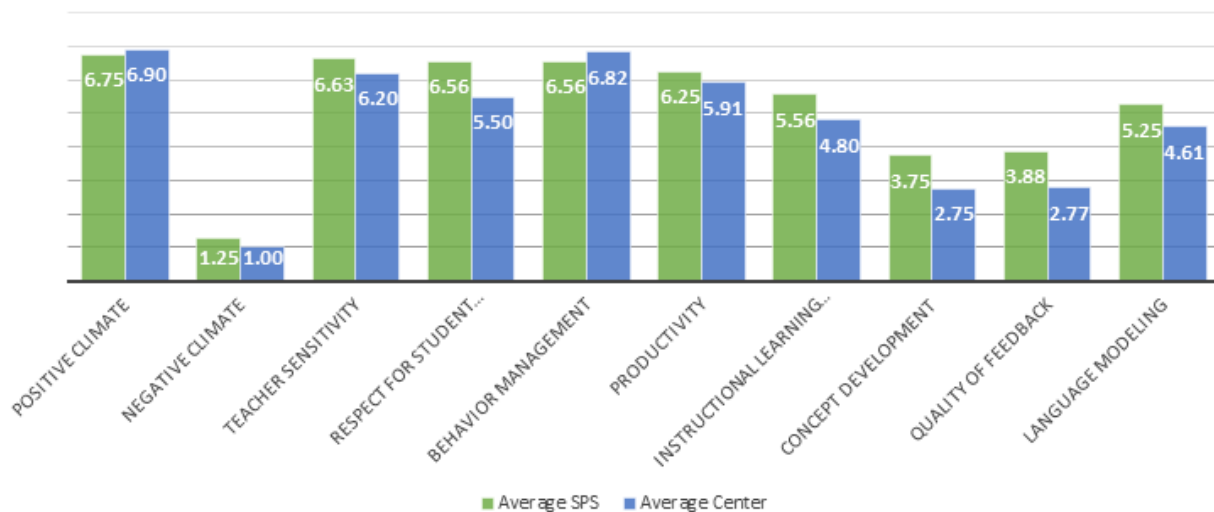**AVERAGE CLASS DIMENSION SCORES COMPARED TO NATIONAL AVERAGE N=9**
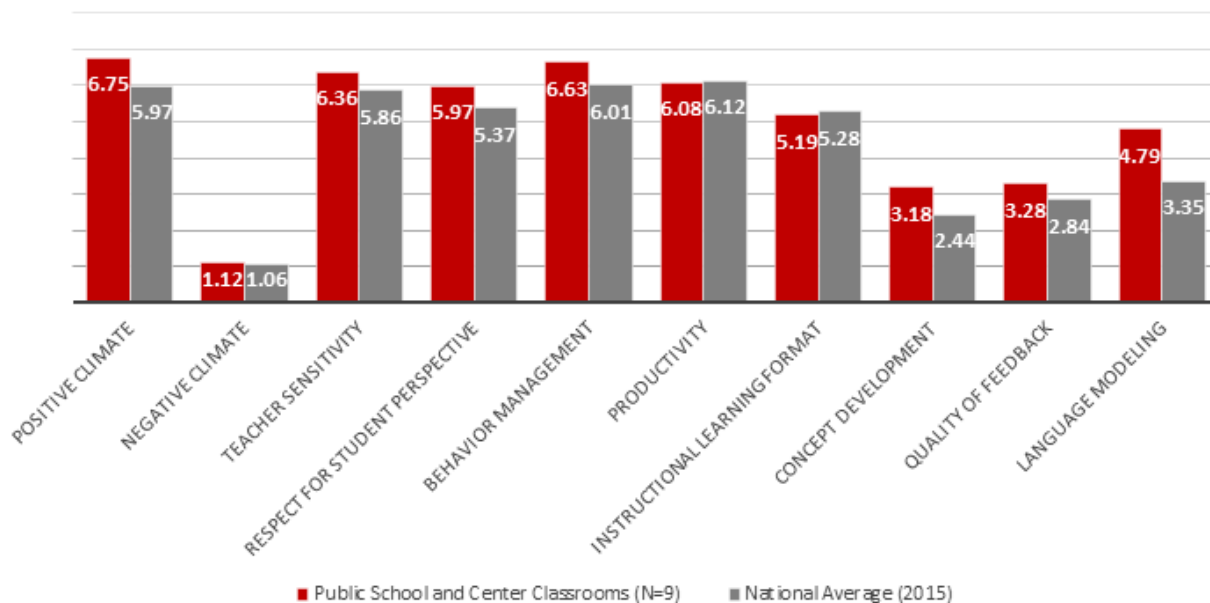
It is useful to compare CLASS scores by program type, in this case Somerville Public School classrooms and community-based centers.

AVERAGE SCORES BY DOMAIN FOR SOMERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS PRE-K AND CENTER-BASED PRE-K AND NATIONAL AVERAGE

	EMOTIONAL SUPPORT	CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION	INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT
Average SPS	6.67	6.13	4.29
Average Center	6.40	5.84	3.38
National Average (2015)	6.04	5.80	2.88

AVERAGE SCORES BY DIMENSION FOR SOMERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS PRE-K (N=4) AND CENTER-BASED PRE-K (N=5)

|	Average SPS	Average Center
POSITIVE CLIMATE	6.75	6.90
NEGATIVE CLIMATE	1.25	1.00
TEACHER SENSITIVITY	6.63	6.20
RESPECT FOR STUDENT...	6.56	5.50
BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT	6.56	6.82
PRODUCTIVITY	6.25	5.91
INSTRUCTIONAL LEARNING...	5.56	4.80
CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT	3.75	2.75
QUALITY OF FEEDBACK	3.88	2.77
LANGUAGE MODELING	5.25	4.61

Note that the differences in CLASS Scores between the two types of settings are small, and likely to be statistically insignificant given the small sample size. However, larger differences in three Dimensions may be important to note moving forward. These include:

- Respective for Student Perspective: SPS (6.56) and Centers (5.5)
- Concept Development: SPS (3.75) and Centers (2.75)
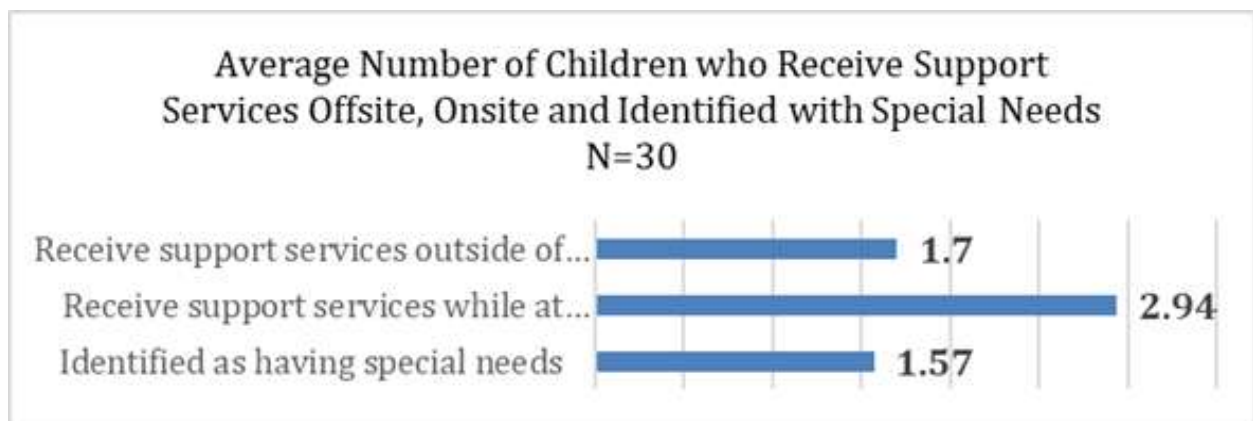- Quality of Feedback: SPS (3.88) and Centers (2.75)

Special education screenings and services vary among community-based programs. Just under half do not conduct any sort of developmental screening.

Centers that Conduct Developmental Screenings
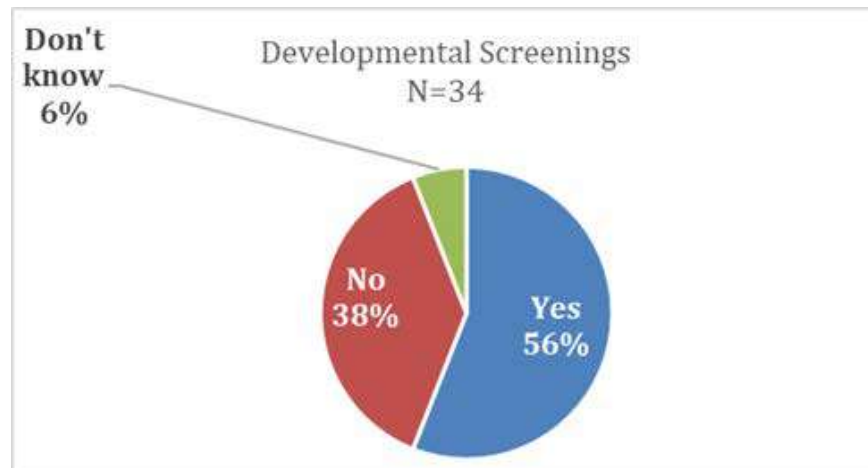
Developmental Screenings
N=34

Don't know
6%

No
38%

Yes
56%

Source: Needs Assessment of Programs, Conducted by Early Childhood Associates, October 2015.
N=# Programs, Almost 100% of childcare programs responded.

Identification of Children Who Need Services – These reports from childcare providers are very low and not indicative of the large number of children who need services. What this tells us is that centers may not refer, may have little knowledge of the referral process, and therefore children are likely under-identified.

Average Number of Children who Receive Support Services Offsite, Onsite and Identified with Special Needs
N=30

Receive support services outside of...	1.7
Receive support services while at...	2.94
Identified as having special needs	1.57

Source: Needs Assessment of Programs, Conducted by Early Childhood Associates, October 2015.
N=# Programs, Almost 100% of childcare programs responded.

Early Educator Development

The quality of the early education teaching workforce is a key driver of program quality and child outcomes. Children who attend high-quality preschools do better in elementary school and in life. In recent years, there has been growing awareness of workforce challenges: high turnover, low wages, mixed credentials and qualifications. In particular, the disparities between public school teachers (both preschool and kindergarten) and center-based educators can be quite large.

SPS has embarked on an intentional professional development and coaching strategy. Since beginning in 2015, the number of preschool teachers receiving coaching has gradually increased. New partner centers have joined the collaboration each year, and a second coach was added in 2017.

Teachers Coached

Year	Teachers Coached
2015-16	27
2016-17	24
2017-18	40
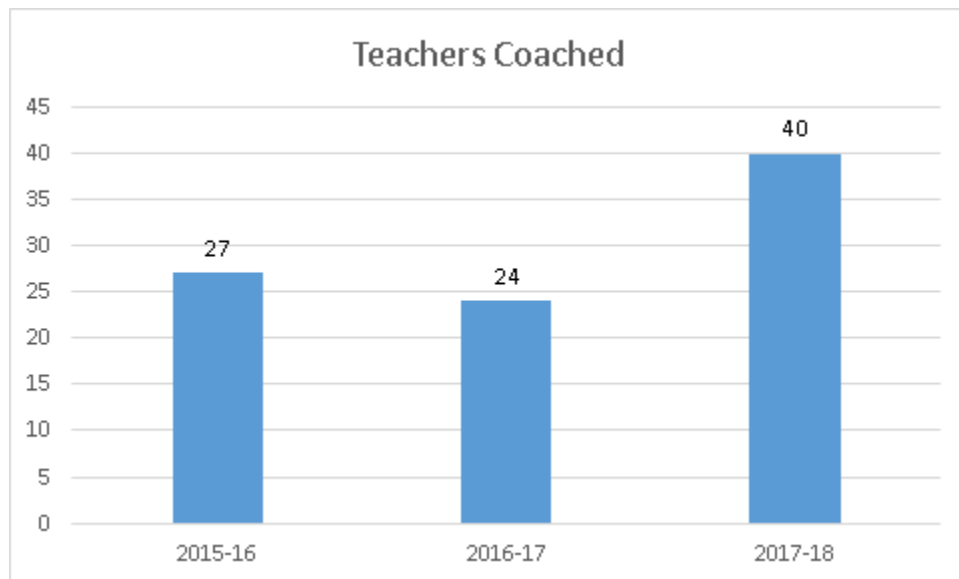
Wage disparities - A recent survey of 36 center-based educators in Somerville found 61% of respondents earning between $10 and $20 per hour. A teacher earning $15 per hour, 40 hours per week, 48 weeks per year would earn a yearly salary of $28,800. That rate is lower than a SPS paraprofessional who earns $18.83 without degree and $23.23 with degree, yet higher than their annualized salary due to a 30-hour work week ($22,600 (no degree) and $27,900 (degree)). It is however far lower than the starting salary (Step 1 w. MA degree) on the SPS teacher pay scale, $52,014.

Salary comparisons, private and public early educators in Somerville.
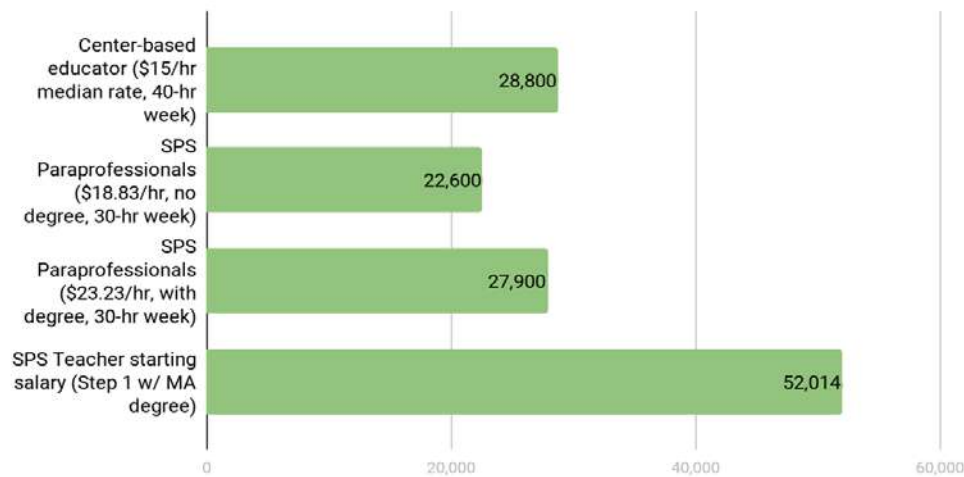
Massachusetts' Preschool Expansion Grant program and other models such as the New Jersey Abbott Preschools seek to correct these disparities by offering pay parity for non-district teachers, equivalent credentials, professional development, and program hours. On-site coaching has emerged as a best practice in preschool, and is one of the key drivers of quality in Boston's preschool program.

Family Awareness and Program Utilization

Family engagement is key to ensuring all families know of the programs and services available in the community, and are actively connecting to programs based on their needs and eligibility.

A 2017 needs assessment by Dr. Erin Hennesey, Tufts University, surveyed 363 families, majority white, with higher education degrees. Findings include:

- About 1/3 not aware of SMILE programs, especially folks in Clarendon Hill and Winter Hill neighborhoods.
- Most families choose care by perceived quality.
- Between 42% and 68% of families have two arrangements for child care, with number highest for those with infants and 4 year olds.
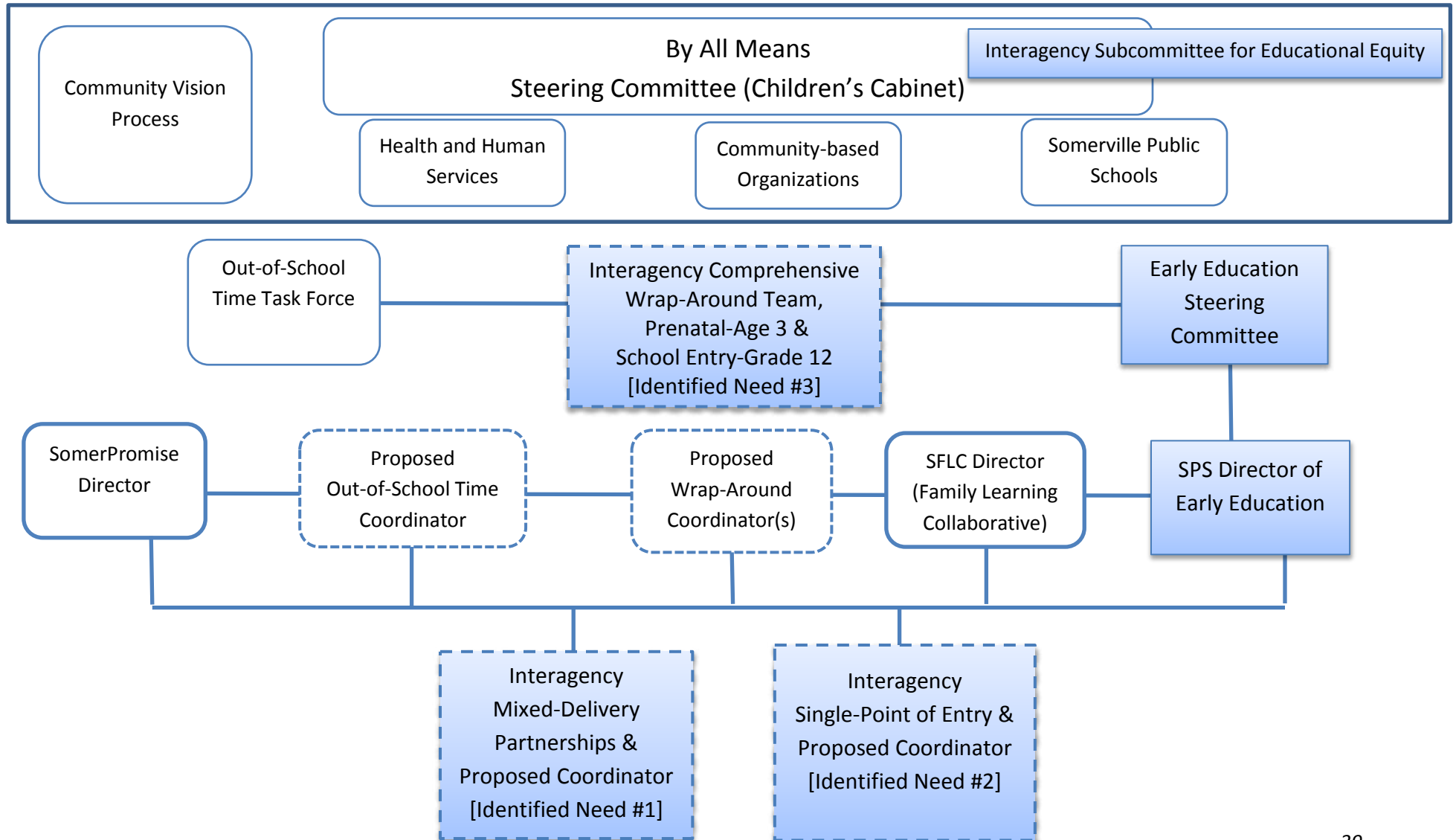
As a companion to the needs assessment, focus groups were conducted with home visitors and playgroup facilitators representing over 200 families. Compared to the needs assessment survey respondents, the focus group participants work with and represent a lower-income group (i.e., teen moms, low-income families utilizing early head start), and families that spoke multiple languages. Findings include:

- Providers felt that their client would want and would benefit from their child participating in quality care.
- Many barriers to them accessing care: safety and accessibility (e.g. hours of operation, transportation) take precedent over quality.
- There was a sense that families' lives were more chaotic and variable, which makes enrolling and maintaining enrollment in care difficult.
- Many of these families are also trying to move out of the city due to affordability (moving to areas like Chelsea).

Appendix B: Workflow and Collaboration Chart

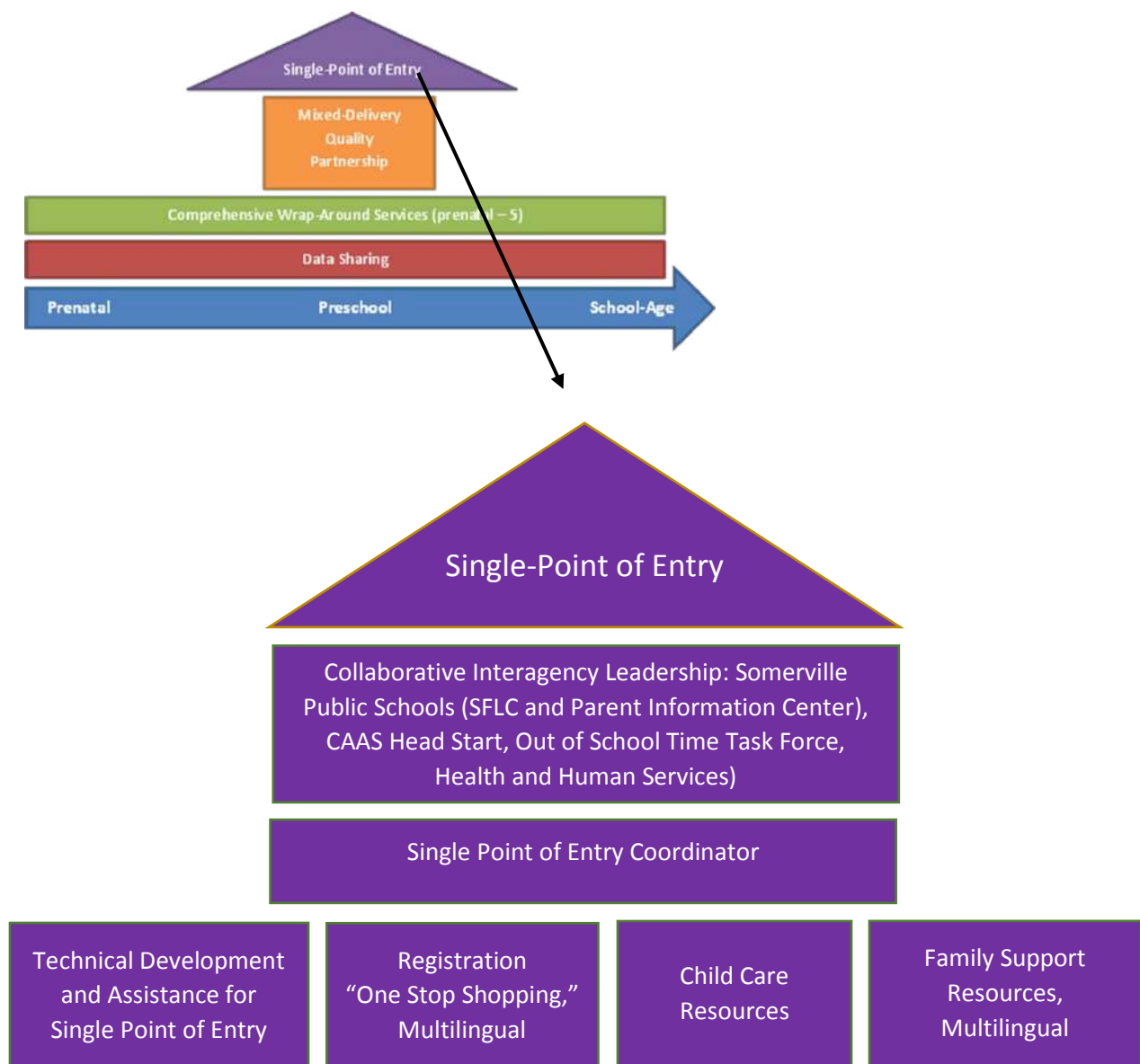Blue = Preschool and K Readiness   White = Related entities

Solid Line Boxes = Existing Structures/Entities   Dotted Line Boxes = Proposed Teams, Positions

Community Vision Process

By All Means
Steering Committee (Children's Cabinet)

Interagency Subcommittee for Educational Equity

Health and Human Services

Community-based Organizations

Somerville Public Schools

Out-of-School Time Task Force

Interagency Comprehensive Wrap-Around Team, Prenatal-Age 3 & School Entry-Grade 12 [Identified Need #3]

Early Education Steering Committee

SomerPromise Director

Proposed Out-of-School Time Coordinator

Proposed Wrap-Around Coordinator(s)

SFLC Director (Family Learning Collaborative)

SPS Director of Early Education

Interagency Mixed-Delivery Partnerships & Proposed Coordinator [Identified Need #1]

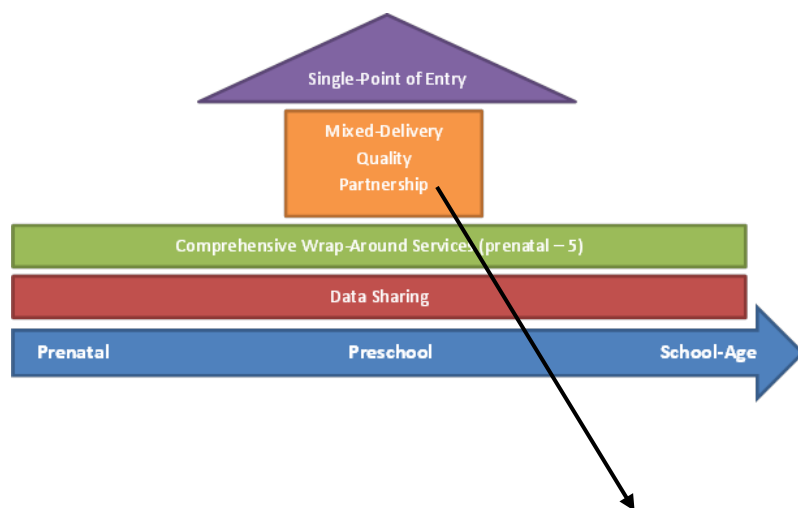Interagency Single-Point of Entry & Proposed Coordinator [Identified Need #2]

Notes:

- **By All Means Children's Cabinet & Interagency Subcommittee for Educational Equity.** Goal: Policy change. An offshoot of By All Means Children's Cabinet, consists of 5-7 leaders, including: Mayor Curtatone or designee, Somerville Public Schools Superintendent or designee, Director of Health and Human Services or designee, Executive Director of at least two community-based early education and care programs, and one state legislator. Chairperson rotates annually. Meets three times per year or as needed, with staffing support by SPS Director of Early Education.

- **Early Education Steering Committee (EESC).** Goal: Effective programming implementation. Consists of directors, practitioners, implementers, parent representatives, and other content experts. Facilitated by SPS Director of Early Education. Meets monthly to share implementation updates, fine tune tactics.

- **Recommended Capacity-Building: New Structures and Interagency Positions**
  - Year 1 (2017-18): Current staff restructuring, job descriptions, team building
  - Year 2 (2018-19): Hire part-time system designers, determine support positions
  - Year 3 (2019-20): Hire full-time coordinators, full implementation

Single-Point of Entry

Collaborative Interagency Leadership: Somerville Public Schools (SFLC and Parent Information Center), CAAS Head Start, Out of School Time Task Force, Health and Human Services)

Single Point of Entry Coordinator

Technical Development and Assistance for Single Point of Entry	Registration "One Stop Shopping," Multilingual	Child Care Resources	Family Support Resources, Multilingual

Single-Point of Entry

Mixed-Delivery Quality Partnership

Comprehensive Wrap-Around Services (prenatal – 5)

Data Sharing

Prenatal   Preschool   School-Age

Somerville Early Education Network
Collaborative Interagency Leadership: Head Start, Somerville Public Schools,
Early Education Steering Committee, Health and Human Services
Slots for income eligible families in high quality settings.

Mixed-Delivery Coordinator
Vouchers & subsidies, enrollment specialist, director support, quality support

Organization-Specific Directors, Principals, Education Coordinators

Public Preschools

Head Start Preschools

Participating Private Center-Based Programs

Participating Family Childcare Providers

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               Single-Point of Entry
              ┌─────────────────────┐
              │    Mixed-Delivery    │
              │       Quality        │
              │     Partnership      │
              └─────────────────────┘
┌───────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Comprehensive Wrap-Around Services (prenatal – 5)  │
└───────────────────────────────────────────┘
┌───────────────────────────────────────────┐
│               Data Sharing                 │
└───────────────────────────────────────────┘
│ Prenatal        Preschool        School-Age ▶
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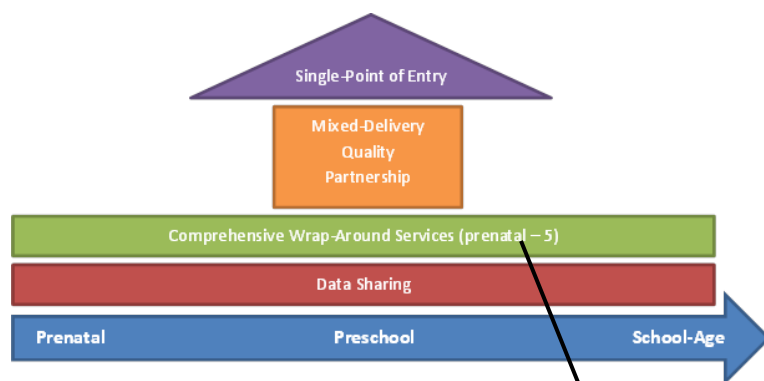
Comprehensive Wrap-Around Network (Prenatal – 5)

Collaborative Interagency Leadership: Community Action Agency of Somerville & Head Start, Early Head Start, Early Intervention, Riverside, Somerville Public Schools Special Education, Somerville Family Learning Collaborative, Early Education Steering Committee, WIC, Housing, Health and Human Services, Cambridge Health Alliance

Wrap Around Coordinators

Inter-Agency Collaborators, Executive Directors, Department Chairs

Early Intervention	Mental & Behavioral Health Service Providers	Prenatal and Pediatric Services	Parenting and Family Support Groups (includes SFLC Playgroups, Parent Home Visiting Program, Early Head Start)

Appendix C.
Single Point of Entry Models: Coordinated Enrollment and Shared Referral Practices in Other Cities

The Somerville "Ready to Learn, Ready for K" plan has identified single point of entry (SPE) as a need for its local early childhood system. Desired outcomes for a SPE system are:

- Families experience "one stop shopping" for early education programs.
- Program administrators can refer and register families to openings in an easy, timely manner.
- System grows over time to also serve older children and address a broader range of socio-economic needs.

Several models exist nationally that can inform the design of Somerville's SPE system. Across the nation, state and local early education regulations vary considerably, resulting in conditions that may hinder or facilitate SPE creation (i.e. citywide preschool programs (Denver), state laws requiring common local applications (Louisiana)). Though many of the cities and counties with SPE are much larger than Somerville, the common principals behind SPE models are generalizable to small cities, and include:

- **Customer service and transparency** - Desire to get accurate, timely information to families.
- **Technology** - Online search tools and maps, customizable to a families preferences and eligibility.
- **Efficiency** - Goal of improving impact by increasing system efficiency, including filling empty slots.
- **Collaboration** - Cooperation and shared referrals across multiple public and private entities in the mixed-delivery system.

SPEs and coordinated enrollment are in place in several cities and states, and have been recommended in others and in national policy reports.[1] SPEs are likely to be an increasing trend as mixed delivery early education efforts continue to grow in numbers.

Potential challenges to SPEs include power dynamics between entities, privacy concerns over child and family data, and technical issues relating to web-based platforms. To complement web-based search tools, most SPE models feature offline support, family navigator-type engagement to help families search and enroll.

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[1] See for example: Melnick, H. et al. (2018). Building an Early Learning System That Works: Next Steps for California. Learning Policy Institute; and The Mayor's Early Learning Council. (2014). The State of Early Learning. Rochester, New York.

A. Chicago

In summer 2017, Mayor Emmanuel announced a new city-wide universal preschool application, a single point of entry for over 600 programs.[2] The system was developed with family focus group input, 150 parents total. Characteristics of this SPE system include:

- A focus on 3- and 4-year-olds;
- Mixed delivery – multiple operators: Chicago Public Schools (CPS), Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) and city-administered community-based sites;
- No or low-cost programs;
- Online registration form with preference matching, works on any device;
- Map tool, shows availability, program type (CPS or Community) and NAEYC accreditation;
- Public Library branches offer registration support to families;
- Video explaining registration steps and contact info; and
- Good FAQ for parents on logistics, mentions quality standard for community-based programs that are included in Chicago Early Learning.
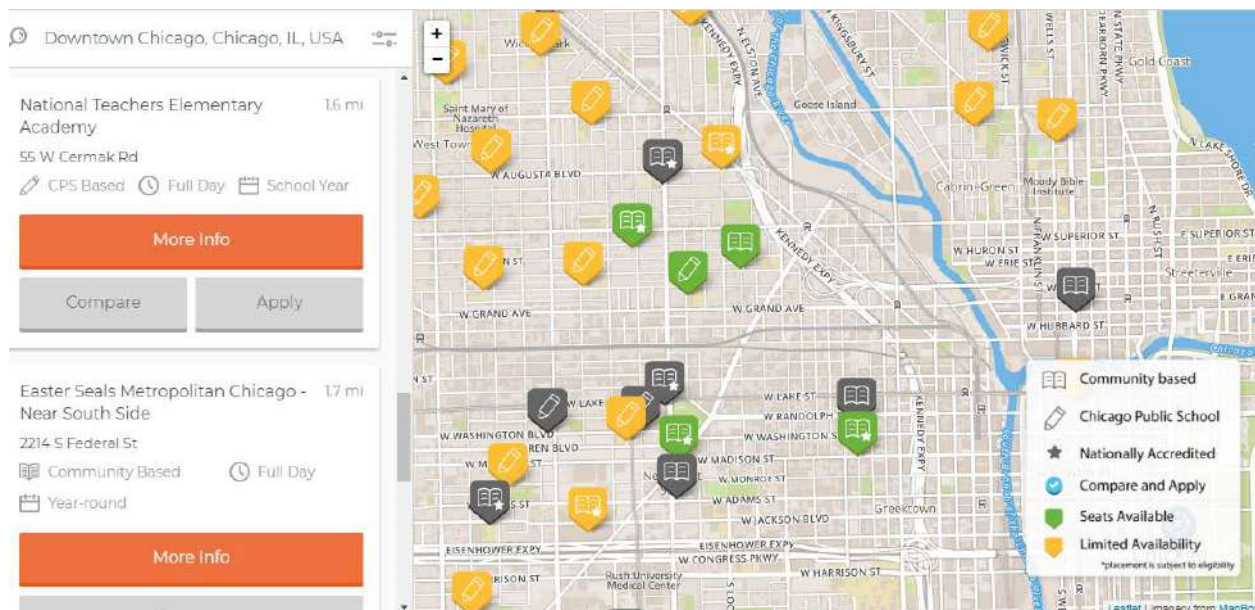
For more information, contact: Samantha Aigner-Tregworgy, Director of Early Education Policy, City of Chicago, samantha.aigner-treworgy@cityofchicago.org. Samantha led work on the single-entry system roll out in 2016.

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[2] City of Chicago. (2017, July 31) Mayor Emanuel Launches Improved Universal Preschool Application to Help Families Enroll in Early Learning Programs. Retrieved from https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/mayor/press_room/press_releases/2017/july/OnlinePreschoolApplication.html; http://www.chicagoearlylearning.org/.

Locally-run preschool programs have emerged in cities in recent years. Most utilize mixed-delivery, but through a single branded "program," often financed locally using special taxes or philanthropic support.[3] These models are often run by the city, public schools, or third party, thus are structurally more unified than Somerville, but may offer insights on SPE.

B. **Denver Preschool Program** utilizes an online tool helps families find and pay for preschool, based on income, tuition estimates.[4] Features include:

- Map search tool, with locations, tuition, QRIS ratings and CLASS ratings;
- Tuition credit estimator; and
- Site translation in Spanish (some broken links).

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[3] Muenchow, S. and Weinberg, E. (2016). Ten Questions Local Policymakers Should Ask About Expanding Access to Preschool. American Institutes for Research.

[4] https://dpp.org/

For information on the creation of Denver Preschool Program, including governance, family engagement, and quality controls, see *The Denver Preschool Program 2006 - 2016: From An Innovative Concept to a National Model* (Denver Preschool Program, August 16, 2017). After reviewing this document, for more specific information contact Ellen Braun, Deputy Director, Denver Preschool Program ellen@dpp.org

C. **New York City**   New York City greatly expanded access to preschool in 2013, through its Prekindergarten for All initiative.[5] At the time, this was the largest, most rapid local expansion in history.
- The "Pre-K Finder" map tool allows selections by child age, program type (operator), day length, and program feature (extended hours, income eligibility, language support).[6]

D. **Louisiana and New Orleans**

A 2012 education reform law in Louisiana included key provisions for early education, including mandating a single application at the local community (parish) level for all free early childhood education programs. The main programs are Early Head Start, Head Start, and LA4 state-funded preschool. The law also requires twice annual child counts of the B-4 population, an effort to collect and report data on children and the percent that are high-needs and receiving services. Data shows a glut of preschool openings and lack of infant/toddler services.

The state agency in Louisiana offers guidance on coordinated enrollment, including:

- All communities must submit a coordinated enrollment plan.
- Identifying challenges to families without coordinated enrollment and benefits with.
- Law requires taking family preference into account, regs advise on preference matching.
- Coordinated information campaign to families.[7]

The third-party Enroll NOLA organization conducts this work for New Orleans, using an online enrollment system, with separate early childhood and K-12 portals. A K-12 common enrollment system was established in 2011 to address unique charter school district (98% of schools).[8]

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[5] Muenchow, S. and Weinberg, E. (2016). Ten Questions Local Policymakers Should Ask About Expanding Access to Preschool. American Institutes for Research.

[6] https://maps.nyc.gov/upk/

[7] Louisiana Believes. (2016). Presentation: 2016-2017 Coordinated Enrollment Plan. Retrieved from: https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/early-childhood/coordinated-enrollment-cohort-1-and-2-webinar.pdf?sfvrsn=4

[8] Strategies for Children phone conversation with Kristen Illarmo, Enroll NOLA, and Teresa Falgoust, Agenda for Children. (2017, March 17). https://enrollnola.org/

Two additional models worth considering for Somerville are Durham, North Carolina and Fairfax, Virginia. These communities do not appear to have an online SPE, but they have clear commitment to mixed-delivery and "one stop shopping" for families.

E. Durham's Partnership for Children

Durham is part of the statewide Smart Start initiative in North Carolina, a system of awarding early education and care funding to county level administrators, who have some program and spending flexibility. LPI report features North Carolina's Smart Start as a model for coordinated enrollment:

> *In some North Carolina counties, Smart Start coordinates applications and enrollment across programs or agencies to create a single point of entry for families entering the system. For example, in Durham County, the local Smart Start has developed a shared application process that encompasses the state preschool program, Head Start, and Title 1 preschool programs. Families fill out a single application, which they can turn in to any local agency that administers ECE, including the local Department of Social Services, Child Care Services Association, Smart Start, Head Start, and Durham Public Schools. These local partnerships have helped unify what could be a fragmented ECE landscape and developed a more seamless experience for families.* [9]

Durham's Partnership for Children's Executive Director Laura Benson says, "there is 'no wrong door' for families accessing preschool services."[10] The agencies together review the applications and assign children to program sites based on eligibility, location, family need, and program capacity. For more information, contact: Laura Benson, Executive Director, laura@dpfc.net. , www.dpfc.net

F. Fairfax, Virginia.

Similar to Somerville, Fairfax has a strong mixed-delivery model, with collaboration across multiple private and public entities and a "go to where the children are" philosophy. Quality improvement efforts include:

- Comprehensive wrap-around services;
- Coaching and mentoring;
- Teacher recruitment and retention efforts; and
- Shared data.

SPE established at county-level. No clear web-based or coordinated enrollment. For more information contact Rhonda Houck, Fairfax County Office for Children.[11]

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[9] Melnick, H. et al. (2018). Building an Early Learning System That Works: Next Steps for California. Learning Policy Institute

[10] Wechsler, M. (2016). The Road to High-Quality Early Learning: Lessons From the States. Learning Policy Institute.

[11] Voices for Virginia's Children. (2015). Preschool in Fairfax: Start with the Children;
Go Where They Are. Retrieved from https://vakids.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Fairfax-Profile-2015-final.pdf