

The Benjamin Brown School is a K-5 school and is the only school in the Somerville Public Schools with this configuration. The Capuano Early Education Center educates PK and K students.¹ The six other elementary schools have a PK-8 configuration.

The 5th grade students at Brown are integrated into other 6th grade classrooms in the district. The six other schools in SPS that Brown School parents can select for their students are:

- Argenziano
- East
- Healey
- Kennedy
- West
- Winter Hill

Historically most students from the Brown School have attended the Kennedy School and the West Somerville Neighborhood School. In the spring of 2022, 19 Brown 5th graders were transferred to Kennedy and West and one student moved out of the district. In spring of 2023, 18 Brown 5th graders transferred to Kennedy and West and 3 students were transferred to Argenziano and Winter Hill.

The student population at the Brown School was impacted by the pandemic. The total population of the school was reduced by approximately 20% from 225 students to 181 on October 1, 2021. Brown's enrollment has since rebounded and on October 1, 2023 there were 225 students. As a result, the concern about where the 5th grade students will transfer is more acute now and will become more pronounced in the coming years than it has been in the past few years.

Currently there are 29 students enrolled in Brown's 5th grade class. Here are the projected openings in other schools in the district for grade 6 for SY 24-25. Openings could change as students move into and out of the district this spring. In addition, we do not know the exact number of students who will be moving from SEI-1 or special education specialized classrooms into general education. Lastly, we may have 1-2 students from the 5th grade class at the Brown transfer to a private school or move out of the district.

Argenziano	7
East Somerville	0
Healey	5
Kennedy	10
Winter Hill	10
West Somerville	12-13

¹ Most of the K students from Capuano attend East Somerville Community School for 1st grade because of the close geographic proximity of both schools. There is an additional section in Grade 1 at East to absorb all those students. Historically most Capuano K families have been assigned to their first choice school. This year 85% of all families were assigned to their first choice 1st grade classroom, last year it was 95%.

For future years, projected enrollment at the Brown School indicates that there will be more students moving on after 5th grade than there will be open seats in 6th grade at Kennedy or West. It should be noted that due to open enrollment, enrollment projection can change as students leave and move into the district throughout the school year. There are open seats in grade 6 at other schools across the district, but they are further geographically from the Brown proximity and historically have not frequently been selected as first or second choice of families.

	Projected Enrollment at Brown for SY 24-25	Projected openings at Kennedy for SY 24-25	Projected Gen Ed openings at West for SY 24-25	Projected Gen Ed openings at Healey for SY 24-25	Projected Gen Ed openings at Argenziano for SY 24-25	Projected Gen Ed openings at East for SY 24-25	Projected Gen Ed openings at Winter Hill for SY 24-25
Gr 5	38	2	1	25 (could be 11) ²	7	0	9
Gr 4	31	7	6	21 (could be 12) ³	7	0	11
Gr 3	44	2	5	27 (could be 16) ⁴	2	1	17
Gr 2	36	4	6	32 (could be 21) ⁵	7	0	10
Gr 1	45 (includes 2 students moving from Capuano K)	0	3	46 (could be 25) ⁶	4	22 (17 seats may go to students from Capuano K)	17 ⁷

Temporary solutions that have been used in the past:

- Adding an additional classroom to the Kennedy or West a so-called “Bubble” classroom.
 - Currently there is no physical space for this classroom at West.
- Increasing the class sizes in middle school at Kennedy and West.
 - Throughout the district most general education classrooms are capped at 23 students. Each classroom could be expanded to 26 students per class per union contract.

² 14 SEI-1 students who may move to general education classes

³ 9 SEI-1 students who may move to general education classes

⁴ 11 SEI-1 students who may move to general education classes

⁵ 12 SEI-1 students who may move to general education classes

⁶ 21 SEI-1 students who may move to general education classes

⁷ There may be some transfers from Special Education substantially separate programs to Gen Ed but that is not known at this point.

- A cohort of students from Brown have joined another school further away geographically.
 - In the past a group of students from Brown enrolled at the Argenziano for 6th grade.

Each temporary solution has short term and long term advantages and disadvantages.

Moreover, the demographics of the three schools vary from the district averages. None of the three schools house specialized programs for English Language Learners. The Kennedy contains two programs supporting students needing specialized classrooms to meet the need of their IEPs. Neither Brown or West contains any specialized programming.

	% of White students	% English Learners	% Students with IEPs
District wide	39	23.2	20
Brown	60	8	8 *Data from last year
Kennedy	68	7	21*
West	62	7	16 *

The School Committee could adopt an assignment policy regarding how Brown 5th grade students are assigned.

The current practice is that 5th grade Brown families are surveyed and indicate their top four preferences. Assignments are made using the following criteria:

- Sibling preference - Any student who has a sibling who is currently in grade 6 or 7 (and next year would be in grade 7 or 8) at another SPS school and if that is the family's first preference and there is an available seat.
- Proximity - All things equal, if there are more families who would like a particular school than there are available seats, there is a random lottery among all the students who have proximity to that school. Any family who is not assigned to that school will be placed on a waitlist which is determined by random lottery.
- Preference - Remaining students are assigned to available seats at the school of their preference. If their first choice is full, students are assigned to their next school of preference where a seat is available and added to the waitlist.