



Somerville Public Schools

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September 6, 2017

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SOMERVILLE EARLY EDUCATION PARTNERS WITH LESLEY UNIVERSITY TO OFFER TEACHER RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Lesley-Somerville Early Childhood Internship Program offers access to strong teaching mentors and hands-on practice to strengthen early childhood workforce

Somerville, MA – The Somerville Public Schools has entered its second year of an early education partnership effort with Lesley University that offers graduate students looking to enter the early education field with hands-on internship opportunities in the district. The Lesley-Somerville Early Childhood Internship Program provides students with the option to earn a Master of Education in Early Childhood Education and an Initial Teacher License in just over a year through full-time work and study. This residency program aims to strengthen the supply of qualified early childhood educators entering the field.

“Lesley University has a long history of collaborating with school districts and independent schools to provide unique teacher preparation experiences known as residency programs,” said Lisa Kuh, Director of Early Education at Somerville Public Schools. “All designed a bit differently, a residency model allows the student to really get to know the school or district and to do the bulk of their learning onsite in real-world experiences, with classes at the institute of higher education to support it. The Lesley-Somerville Early Childhood Internship Program is the newest addition to [Lesley's residency offerings](#). It is the only urban early childhood program, and students learn to teach in Somerville's diverse and engaging public schools. The impact of such programs is seen in the strong relationships that students develop with teachers, children, families, and communities in which they work. They do not just drop in to classrooms to do student teaching; instead, they become part of the fabric of the school and neighborhood communities, learning about what children and families need. Thus, when they eventually have their own classrooms, they are uniquely prepared to serve them.”

Designed for those who intend to become teachers of children in pre-K through 2nd grade, Lesley students are drawn to this particular residency program because of the access to strong teaching mentors and the opportunity for everyday, hands-on practice in an early childhood classroom. Somerville instructors collaborate with Lesley core faculty in order to best ensure the students' success. The Lesley-Somerville Early Childhood interns actively participate in their classrooms, even creating their own curriculum pieces tailored to the interests of their students. The children in these classrooms benefit as well from this partnership, with access to more educators who are deeply invested in their education.

“These types of partnerships play such an important role in our educational system and in our communities,” added Superintendent of Schools, Mary Skipper. “Not only do these types of partnerships help to prepare the next generation of educators by providing them critical, relevant experience working alongside seasoned educators, they also provide our classroom teachers with additional support in the form of aspiring educators who are eager to learn and to have a positive impact in their communities.”

The first cohort of two Lesley students completed their residency at the end of July after having worked at the [Michael E. Capuano Early Childhood Center](#) and [East Somerville Community School](#). In a recent [video highlighting the Lesley-Somerville Early Childhood Internship Program](#), they reported that the program has helped them to expand their professionalism as educators and learn how to effectively respond to their students. The 2017-2018 cohort will consist of three graduate students who began the program in June, and who will work alongside teachers at a range of sites across Somerville. The program coordinators hope the number of Lesley students participating in the program will grow as the partnership continues, with the ability to accommodate six to eight students each year while still keeping the group small enough to offer quality, individualized assistance.

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