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SOMERVILLE SCHOOL COMMITTEE SEEKS COMMUNITY INPUT ON POWDERHOUSE STUDIOS PROPOSAL

New Innovation School Proposal Reaches Final Stage of Approval Process

Somerville, MA – On January 7, 2019, the Powderhouse Studios (PHS) proposal that would add a brand new school to the district reached the fourth and final stage of the Massachusetts Innovation School approval process after the Somerville Teachers Association ratified an agreement advancing the authorization of PHS as the newest school in the Somerville Public Schools (SPS) system. That January 7th vote activated a 60-day window for the School Committee to gather input from the community, deliberate, and vote on the school's final plan. If the School Committee votes to approve the plan, Powderhouse Studios would become the newest school in the district, and would serve up to 40 students ages 13-15 in its first year. Powderhouse Studios would open its doors in September of 2019, offering a new year-round project-based school option to Somerville students.

The concept of a new district Innovation School was put forth by local nonprofit Sprout & Co. in 2012 with their submission of a prospectus for the “Somerville STEAM Academy”. After approval of the prospectus in 2012, the founding members of the Somerville STEAM Academy put together a proposal team to develop the initial plan for a new Innovation School. That plan was approved in 2014 and a revised plan, which included a name change from Somerville STEAM Academy to Powderhouse Studios, was approved in 2017. Work on navigating through the Innovation School legislation process and fine-tuning the plan in collaboration with the district, has continued since. In 2016, Powderhouse Studios was one of 10 national winners of the [XQ Super School Project](#) that awarded a 5-year, \$10 million grant to each winning team to implement their proposed project.

Members of the Powderhouse Studios team will be presenting their proposal at the January 14th School Committee meeting, 7:00pm at the City Hall Chambers (93 Highland Ave.). School Committee meetings are open to the public and live-streamed at <http://somervillecityma.iqm2.com/Citizens/Default.aspx>. To further assist the community in learning more about the PHS proposal and provide input, the School Committee will be hosting two public hearings and a community presentation in the coming weeks. The first public hearing will be held on Wed., January 23rd, 6:00pm at the East Somerville Community School (50 Cross St.) and the second on Wed., February 6, 6:00pm at the West Somerville Neighborhood School (177 Powder House Blvd.). The Powderhouse Studios Community Presentation will take place on Tuesday, February 12th, 5:30pm at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School (115 Sycamore St.). Visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us/powderhouse-proposal for more information.

Community members are encouraged to attend other upcoming School Committee (SC) meetings, during which SC members will continue to deliberate on this important proposal, or to reach out directly to a School Committee representative ([contact info here](#)). Members of the community are also invited to stop by any of the upcoming [School Committee Winter Office Hours](#) at locations throughout the city to ask questions and offer input. The School Committee will take a final vote on the 2017 Innovation Plan at the March 4th School Committee meeting.