



MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

Independent State Review Affirms Strong Foundation and Clear Direction for Somerville Public Schools

Cites strong leadership, supportive classrooms, commitment to equity, and effective systems that support student success

October 6, 2026 - (**SOMERVILLE, MA**) - An independent review of Somerville Public Schools conducted on behalf of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has highlighted the district's strong foundation for teaching and learning, supportive classroom environments, commitment to equity, investment in educators, and comprehensive student and family supports.

The review, conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in April 2026 and released in August 2026, examined the district across six areas of district effectiveness, including leadership, curriculum and instruction, assessment, educator development, student support, and financial and asset management.

Reviewers found strong alignment between the district's strategic plan, school improvement efforts, budget development, and instructional priorities. They also highlighted Somerville's collaborative leadership culture, growing use of data, investment in professional learning, and systems designed to support students academically, socially, and emotionally.

Classroom observations also found that students generally experience positive, supportive environments where they feel known and respected by adults, with particularly strong findings related to emotional support.

"This review gives us an important opportunity to celebrate the progress happening across Somerville Public Schools while also identifying where we can continue to grow," said Superintendent Dr. Rubén Carmona. "The findings affirm the strong systems our educators and leaders have built around teaching and learning, student support, family engagement, and equity. We are proud of that progress and committed to building on it."

The review also identified opportunities for continued improvement. Among them are strengthening more consistent implementation of the district's Multi-Tiered System of

Supports (MTSS), as well as providing families with greater clarity around student performance as reflected report cards, and ensuring consistent implementation of classroom scaffolding and supports for students with disabilities. The review also highlighted opportunities to further strengthen financial forecasting and budget planning, with new budgeting software and staff training expected to support more accurate, effective, and sustainable financial projections.

District leaders said those recommendations will help sharpen priorities already underway during the 2026–27 school year.

“One of the clearest messages from the review is that our next challenge is consistency and coherence,” Dr. Carmona said. “We have strong practices happening throughout Somerville. Our responsibility now is to ensure that students experience that quality regardless of their school, classroom, background, or individual learning needs”

The district will use the findings to inform ongoing work around instructional rigor, MTSS, data use, communication with families, inclusive practices for students with disabilities, and long-term financial planning.

The 102-page DESE review examines leadership, instruction, assessment, educator development, student support, and district operations, along with key data and recommendations. The full report is now available on the Somerville Public Schools website.

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