



## Somerville Council of PTAs 2023 Election Candidate Questionnaire

The Somerville Council of PTAs organized the following questionnaire for candidates in the 2023 Somerville municipal elections, including Mayor, City Council, and School Committee. As a 501(c)(3) organization, this activity is for voter information purposes regarding education and schools in the City of Somerville. *We make no endorsements and offer no support for individual candidates.*

Individuals listed as [certified candidates](#) on the Somerville election website were contacted in early October at the listed email address. For any emails that bounced, attempts were made to reach an alternate address listed in campaign materials. Two reminder messages were sent out notifying of the deadline of October 23 at 11:59pm. We understand candidates are busy or may have missed our messages, so we encourage them to still submit. We can be reached at [somerville.ptas@gmail.com](mailto:somerville.ptas@gmail.com) with any questions.

***Candidates still have the opportunity to fill out the questionnaire and any responses will be added to this document as they are received.***

Two questions were asked of each candidate via Google Form.

- 1) **School Buildings:** Given the state of our school buildings, what would you do specifically in your role to fix them? What is your position on neighborhood schools vs consolidation? How you will ensure parents and caregivers are involved in this conversation?
- 2) **Education:** Aside from buildings, what do you think are the most important issues facing Somerville Public Schools? How would you work with parents and caregivers to increase family engagement on these issues?

**Optional additional information:** Please feel free to link to any additional information (campaign website, document, etc.) regarding your views on education and children in Somerville.

Answers are below, listed according to the candidate order on the Somerville election website.

**Click on a name to jump to the candidate's answers:**

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# Mayor

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## Mayor

### Katjana Ballantyne

#### **School Buildings:**

Our city has legacy infrastructure issues that must be addressed, because of decades under investment. This must be informed by our projected educational needs and enrollment as well as with the input of our families and staff. I've worked not just to establish and accelerate this larger building process and methodically gather the data we need to inform planning, but I've also worked to advance additional interim improvements to heating and cooling systems, playgrounds, energy efficiency, and improved maintenance protocols and systems.

My administration instituted proactive systems stress testing and upgrades for the first time in more than two decades, and we are actively working to accelerate funding options with the MSBA. To be clear, we have some excellent facilities at our new High School and our younger or more recently renovated schools, but it is my mission to ensure that every school in Somerville equitably offers the quality learning environments our students and teachers deserve and need. That will require resources, determination, time, and significant funding, and I've laser-focused my administration squarely on this.

We are actively in the process of pooling reports, gathering more information, and having ongoing community discussion to determine what is best for our neighborhood school. Community process, input is important in deciding what will work for our community.

As an elected official I am known for inclusive leadership, requiring and delivering on community process every step of the way on projects. Examples are; 1) Clarendon Public Housing Redevelopment, a housing project – currently 216 units redeveloping to 600 housing units, hosted 11 community meetings, one labor forum, proposed & supported intersection redesign of rte. 16 & Powderhouse Blvd. Inclusive leadership is an important value; 2) with WHCIS are in the beginning of project development determining how to process. Broadly understanding where we are currently; ordered assessments, waiting for reports, collecting other reports, collecting other data, gathering information etc. which will be shared with community, and actively solicit community members membership in building committee. I also wholeheartedly support SPS administration and SPS School Committee establishing a visioning process.

#### **Education:**

An important priority is addressing the “conditions” of learning. Supporting learning starts with ensuring school readiness in the years from 0 to pre-K, so our students arrive ready and able for our dedicated teachers to help them reach their best outcomes. Then from day one of pre-K through to graduation, we need the critical combination of skilled and inspiring teachers

alongside an educational system built to meet the needs of the whole child to create the ideal conditions for learning, growth, and development. Our students need health and stability as a foundation— including but not limited to stable housing, family support, food security, healthcare, wellness, and more. And they need a school district that creates the best possible environments for our outstanding teachers and staff to deliver the quality academics, enrichment, athletics, special programs, and inspiration that will enable our children to learn, achieve, and thrive.

As Mayor my goal to ensure that Somerville be a place where our children can learn and thrive. In terms of staffing, I am proud of our historic first time ever increase of \$8.4M (10%) in the school budget. We've added 10 additional mental health staff at all levels, including Behavioral Therapists and Social Workers for youth. We've launched an optional 13th year of school to help young adults. I've also established a new Director of Youth Services role, which will support youth priorities and services across City government.

As noted above, there are a variety of ways both to inform parents and caregivers and make sure their questions and concerns are heard. It is also important that our youth be engaged and be part of the process. To that end, we've opened teens centers in the East and West and employed teens during the school year to plan an additional one.

**Additional information:**

[https://katjana.org/en/plan/education\\_recovery](https://katjana.org/en/plan/education_recovery)

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**Mayor**

**William Tauro**

**School Buildings:**

First on my agenda would be to personally oversee the immediate financial requests from State and Federal institutions as well as private funding to ensure that a facility, suitable for educational learning, can be achieved. The accommodations suitable for children must be installed immediately, as my belief is, that any significant interruptions, and neglecting the teaching of any child is unacceptable for their rearing. After of which, the proper Project Manager would be assigned to not only ensure the success of the project, but, be professional and courteous, to answer concerning questions, if any, or report progress, to the parents and citizens of the respective school on a scheduled basis.

In past history Somerville schools provided education through neighborhood schools. It gave a comfort of a non regimental military approach and instilled pride and meaning into the child and parent. Parents and guardians that accompanied their children to and from school, felt a pride, and comfort, of local access. Many currently discuss usage of vehicles. and try alternative methods to transport their child to and from school, then local access is the belief, in my respective opinion, of a more effective choice to combat the current global warming. Within the four point one square miles of city space, children span all over. To cram so many into a

confined area of learning not only creates an overburdening within the schools but neglects the individual child from full attention of the teaching facilities available. To facilitate the consolidation into one large school, would only be effective if the availability of a low attendance of children were the main focus making the learning process more effective to the attendees.

Advertisement through distribution and hosting of regular scheduled meetings or (coffee hours), while presenting full informative displays would be my choice of information for distribution. During which time, feedback will be noted and considered to the future approach of any given topic on the agenda. If parents and caregivers are unavailable, then an online website will be made available twenty four hours, seven days a week, with a monitored attendee for quick responses. If online is unavailable, then a correspondence will be made available through a drop center box for convenience of access with a response mailer.

**Education:**

Finances are what keeps the proper function of any institution going strong. That has always been an issue in history. More funding can always provide a comfort level to increase sustainability within the respective school and provide the children with a higher education, reflectively making their productivity in society more effective for future generations. (The belief is you learn well, you teach well.) The topics of teaching are always most important. The child needs to learn the basic skillset in order to perform comfortably and effectively in society at younger ages. As they grow older, they automatically explore new avenues of learning and social behaviors. Some students are pushed through the system and are neglected from learning the basic requirements that are needed to function in today's world. Effective teaching requires, effective Teachers. Hiring the best Teachers available is very important in so many ways. Flexibility enables the teaching methods to become more productive.

I would conduct regular scheduled meetings for all parents and caregivers to enable their opinions to be heard and absorbed into consideration for better methods of application in teaching. Opening channels gives a wider range of views that become applicable ideas and methods. No parent or caregiver should have good thoughts kept to themselves when it could effect the betterment of the entire scholastic achievements. We all learn from another.

**Additional information:**

Please feel free to learn more about my views for a better and safer future for Somerville by visiting my website at: [www.Williamtauro.com](http://www.Williamtauro.com)

## **School Committee**

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### **Ward 1 - School Committee Emily Ackman**

No response received

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### **Ward 2 - School Committee Ilana Krepchin**

No response received

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### **Ward 3 - School Committee Sarah Phillips**

#### **School Buildings:**

- 1) I am pushing to ensure that community visioning is part of the K-8 master building planning process, as I see this process as a chance to talk and think as a community about what we value and want to maintain or change in the way we configure our buildings.
- 2) As part of this effort, I will continue to advocate for the staffing and budget the school district needs to make these conversations happen and ensure students, families, and educators in the public schools have authentic, meaningful input into decisions about our school buildings.
- 3) I support the efforts of my colleagues to get the city to present it's progress and next steps to the school committee monthly at a full school committee meeting and will continue to try to hold them accountable with my questions and comments.
- 4) Although the joint School Committee/City Council Buildings Committee was my idea, I don't think it's helping us jointly hold the city accountable. I will work with the Chair of the School Committee, the President of City Council, and the School Committee representatives to the committee to figure out ways of improving the efficacy of this committee.
- 5) I will advocate for renovating the boxing gym at the Edgerly in order to ensure all Winter Hill students are able to learn in the same building next year.

I do not have a position on neighborhood schools vs. consolidation. I believe the School Committee with input from students, families, and educators should clarify the values we want to see in the K-8 master plan, the problems we need the K-8 master plan to solve, and then evaluate options like neighborhood schools/consolidation against those values and problems.

#### **Education:**

I think ensuring high-quality rigorous instruction for all students is currently the most important issue facing the Somerville Public Schools. I think there is broad consensus in the district to focus on this issue, but focusing on instruction sometimes conflicts with parent and caregiver needs and priorities as it did during recent controversies regarding math curricular changes at the high school and common planning time for educators.

I believe we can find both-and solutions for many of these conflicts and know that they are easier to find when parents and caregivers are formally included in district planning processes. I will advocate for these kinds of opportunities wherever I can. For example, formal parent and caregiver representatives on the team planning for the start of common planning time next year could help ensure that family needs for childcare and instructional time are addressed even as we make more time for critically necessary educator collaboration, norming, and professional development.

Finally, I will continue to ask families and caregivers for input on these issues via my newsletter, coffee hours in the community, and one-on-one conversations. As the need arises, I will work to elevate their concerns to the Superintendent and my colleagues on the School Committee.

**Additional Information:**

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## **Ward 4 - School Committee Andre Green**

No response received

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## **Ward 5 - School Committee Laura Pitone**

No response received

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## **Ward 6 - School Committee Ellenor Barish**

No response received

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## **Ward 7 - School Committee Leiran Biton**

### **School Buildings:**

Rebuilding the Winter Hill Community Innovation School, and responding to the needs of the families and educators displaced by the failure at the Winter Hill, must be the number one priority of the School Committee. All major decisions around addressing these needs and rebuilding the school must be made in partnership with our Winter Hill Wildcat community. Similarly, we must press the City to move on an aggressive timeline to build a new Brown

School building. When I was President of the Somerville Council of PTAs, I convened a meeting between our PTAs and Mayor Ballantyne and Interim Superintendent Curley to urge action to address our school buildings, well before the failure at the Winter Hill. I'm proud of how we stood together and spoke with one voice to urge for immediate action.

To respond to the crises we now face, we need to engage with the entire SPS community to come to decisions around the future of our school buildings. Doing so in a collaborative spirit between families, administration, and educators across the City will help ensure that we not only meet the moment, but that we also meet the needs of our District for decades to come.

On School Committee, I will request frequent updates from the Mayor and her staff about the status of rebuilding efforts, including contingencies and "plan B" efforts. The City must move with urgency on these efforts whether or not the City receives state funding through the Massachusetts School Building Authority. Each building's redevelopment plan should follow the required process needed for design, but the City must allocate resources to accomplish the plans and subsequent rebuilding without delay.

In thinking long-term about our buildings—specifically in whether to continue Somerville's tradition of neighborhood schools vs. consolidation—I support exploring a central middle school or junior high school model of education that would allow for more focused learning, enrichment, after school activities and meaningful professional development for educators. A central middle school or junior high school would also allow the District to invest more into our neighborhood schools. Even with a central middle school/junior high, we could retain some pre-K through eighth-grade schools for those families and educators seeking a more tight-knit community, while other schools could function solely as traditional elementary schools.

All decisions around the future of our schools—buildings, educational models, etc.—will benefit from robust outreach and input from families at all our schools. To accomplish that, I will participate in regular office hours, community feedback sessions, family town hall events, and visits during PTA coffee hours to ensure that decisions are made with in partnership with the families and educators to better serve the educational needs of our students.

**Education:**

One of my biggest priorities is increasing funding for push-in support services for students in classrooms. As the parent of a student at Somerville High, I am learning about the Open Honors classroom format. Open Honors classrooms allow for kids to move between "college prep" and "honors" levels, and for more integrated cohorts of students. But teaching to both levels simultaneously can be exceptionally challenging for even the most experienced educators. In our Open Honors classes, as with our classrooms at the elementary and middle school levels, we must provide focused support for students with greater needs by dedicating greater resources for push-in services. It shouldn't—and often isn't—just up to one teacher. Instead, the classroom teacher can most effectively teach the entire class, and meet each individual student's needs, when specialized push-in needs are served by paraprofessionals, reading and math specialists, and other educators.

All significant changes in policy across the District and at our individual schools should be developed in partnership with our families, not only with our partners in the teachers' union. The recent action at the Healey to end looping without prior engagement from families was deeply disturbing. As a School Committee member, I will seek to strengthen our partnerships with families, and I will regularly engage with families to stay in touch with what issues are arising and bring your priorities to the School Committee.

Learn more about my other positions at [Leiran4Somerville.com/issues](http://Leiran4Somerville.com/issues).

**Additional Information:**

I'm so grateful to the PTAs for providing this opportunity for families to learn about my position on the issues. I am always happy to hear from families and teachers. Contact me in whatever way is most convenient for you.

Website: [Leiran4Somerville.com](http://Leiran4Somerville.com)

Facebook: [Facebook.com/Leiran4Somerville](https://Facebook.com/Leiran4Somerville)

Email: [Leiran4Somerville.com](mailto:Leiran4Somerville.com)

Call/text: 617-863-2315

# City Council

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## At-Large Kristen Strezo

### School Buildings:

Our school infrastructure needs to be immediately addressed. As a mom in the school district, I know firsthand how important it is that our children learn in a safe environment. I will continue pushing for immediate action and more funding to be dedicated toward repairing our schools.

The conversation regarding school consolidation must involve parents and caregivers in the community. I understand that each school has its distinct culture and I hope to preserve and cherish that, specifically by keeping Winter Hill and the Brown School independent. I hope to hear from caregivers first before any action is taken to understand whether they support neighborhood schools and what change they want to see.

### Education:

Every child should have every opportunity to thrive in their learning environment. I want to ensure that all parents and caregivers feel supported by expanding before-school and after-school support for our children and teens. I strongly support free Universal Pre-K programs, as well as expanding Special Education services.

I'm also working to expand crossing guard services. As of September, 2023, we have around 33 crossing guards out of 55 openings. While this shortage of crossing guards is regional, we must do all we can to ensure our youngest residents can cross safely. We now have more children crossing McGrath Highway with the Winter Hill School relocation. But we have no staffed crossing guards at Broadway and McGrath which deeply concerns me. We need immediate action.

### Additional Information:

<https://kristenstrezo.com>

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## At-Large Will Mbah

No response received.

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## At-Large Jake Wilson

### School Buildings:

The City Councilor has powers of financial oversight, approval of multi-year contracts, and zoning ordinance amendments that all could potentially play a factor in new school construction.

As for existing buildings, our budget priorities conveyed to the mayor early in the budget process can influence budgeting decisions, and we always have our budget review and approval role to fall back on if we feel the mayor's proposed budget doesn't adequately address school building maintenance needs.

As a parent whose children attend the Somerville Public Schools elementary school down the street, I value having quality neighborhood schools throughout the city. A major drawback to neighborhood schools, however, is that in a segregated city like ours, a pure neighborhood school model is going to result in segregated schools. We can see that reflected in the vastly different makeup of schools in the eastern half of the city compared to schools in the western half. Allowing for school choice and having attractive, unique programs and curriculum at different schools can help with that. The location of neighborhood schools also can be a key factor in avoiding segregated schools. If a school is located in between neighborhoods with different socioeconomic makeups, it can effectively draw from both neighborhoods.

Everything we do as a municipal government needs to be done with transparency and through public processes. Where there are options, these need to be thoroughly explained to the public, with the public given the opportunity to provide feedback. And when it comes time to make a decision, the public should be able to weigh in on this choice.

**Education:**

This is a very different conversation, depending on the part of the city and the individual school. City-wide, equity is a major issue. As mentioned earlier, schools in the eastern half of Somerville look very different from schools in the western half. The families at East Somerville, Healey, and Winter Hill might have an entirely different set of concerns and challenges than families at the Brown, Kennedy, and West Somerville. This means teachers can face different challenges in the classroom as well, and the PTAs at these schools often are operating in entirely different universes. Engaging families in addressing equity problems can be extremely tricky, as the ability to engage involves a high degree of privilege that not every family has. So meeting families where they're at becomes key. That means trying meetings at different times and with interpretation available and the option to participate remotely. And advertising these meetings in multiple languages and in non-digital channels also is essential.

Beyond equity, ensuring that students and staff feel safe and secure at school is a must for learning to happen. Having staff trained in dealing with trauma can help students dealing with trauma at home and help prevent that trauma from being passed on to other students at school.

**Additional Information:**

I've served as both President and Treasurer of the Friends of Healey PTO, and have worked with PTAs of most other SPS elementary schools. I know the challenges of funding enrichment and off-site learning to maintain equity that are faced by the Healey and the schools in our city with similar socioeconomic makeups.

And I'll point out that my commitment to new school construction didn't begin with the collapse of the ceiling at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School in May. I don't recall hearing much about new school construction during the campaign two years ago, but I called for this to happen when running for office in 2021 and made it a key position in my campaign. I also included this as a top priority in my look ahead at 2023 back in January. (Link: [https://www.jakeforsomerville.org/newsletter\\_20230120](https://www.jakeforsomerville.org/newsletter_20230120))

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## **At-Large Willie Burnley, Jr.**

No response received.

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## **At-Large Charlotte Kelly**

No response received.

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## **Ward 1 - City Council Matt McLaughlin**

No response received.

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## **Ward 1 - City Council Matthew Ryan Hunt**

### **School Buildings:**

While the City Council does not currently have budgetary powers, as a Councilperson I would advocate strongly for our schools be allotted their due in the city. In a historically underrepresented part of the city, stronger advocacy for our residents is needed. I would fight to maintain community-based schooling for the children of the ward. I vow to keep parents and other caregivers in continuous conversation about the on-going state of our schools. Public representatives are beholden to their constituents and should always be responsive to the cares and concerns of the people of the ward.

### **Education:**

In a word: equity. In East Somerville, working people need our schools to be properly resourced so that the children here can thrive. Different language needs, afterschool programs for working parents, are just a few of the issues that are acutely felt in our part of the city. Families (of whatever construction) should have a strong voice supported by local representatives advocating for our schools.

### **Additional Information:**

Please feel free to reach out at [HuntWard1Somerville@gmail.com](mailto:HuntWard1Somerville@gmail.com),  
<https://www.facebook.com/HuntWard1Somerville>

<https://www.instagram.com/huntward1/>  
<https://twitter.com/MHuntWard1>

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## **Ward 2 - City Council JT Scott**

No response received.

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## **Ward 3 - City Council Ben Ewen Campen**

No response received.

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## **Ward 3 - City Council John Fitzpatrick**

No response received.

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## **Ward 4 - City Council Jesse Clingan**

No response received.

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## **Ward 5 - City Council Jack Perenick**

### **School Buildings:**

The Council is responsible for our school buildings. We have deferred maintenance of many of our schools for many years (decades) and are desperately in need of a new round of investments in our school buildings. Taking into consideration the new enrollment study, I also recognize the need to build to accommodate a level or slightly elevated student population. However, the enrollment study also found that our school population will have increased special education needs. An essential part of our Council's role is soliciting the interest and ultimately receiving subsidy funds from the MSBA and ensuring our community is maximally served by our state authorities. As a Councilor I see a large part of my role as serving as a two way communications point for families and the school system/city.

I do not favor a consolidation of our community schools, in particular of the Brown and Winter Hill Schools. I have come to this opinion having met with many families who have reached out to Councilor Gómez Mouakad, and further from having met many families on the campaign trail. Parents of students at both schools have strongly voiced to meet that they would like to keep their community schools. Further, the legal difficulties surrounding the preservation of open space would present a serious hurdle to finding a suitable 3rd site, as has been a hurdle for many other school projects in the city in past decades.

Myself, I personally formed a view after many meetings with parents one-on-one and during meet and greets at schools and playgrounds. I would continue to take that approach of meeting with parents individually and in group to hear about their motivating concerns around school proposals. I value the early input of parents, especially when their views can be used as the basis of forming the options ahead, rather than being used to narrow down options of as the basis only to provide limited choice within already limited options.

One of the most essential parts of the Ward Councilors work as well is to stay in frequent communication and collaboration with our School Committee member Laura Pitone. While many parts of the Council's work is only peripherally related to schools, there is many efforts which the Council's assistance can move along other priorities. Among many things which come to mind, providing universal after school care—through to 6pm is largely constrained by our lack of availably municipally controlled space, and to a lesser extent a lack of non-profit partners. These are issues I remain committed to assisting with.

**Education:**

There are of course many and varied issues facing children, parents and caretakers throughout the city, but I will briefly mention two of them.

A huge part of my campaign has focused on how we can reduce costs for residents living in the city. This mainly focuses on housing affordability, something which is also acutely important for families who often need larger living spaces to accommodate more people and younger children. Promoting more affordable three-bedroom homes is a high priority I highlighted in my questionnaire to Somerville YIMBY, a Somerville group dedicated to promoting the development of more affordable housing and promoting livability in our residential housing.

In general, I think communication and our community outreach and opinion gathering could be further improved in the city. The people who are most affected by changes in city policy should be consulted: before any new projects or decisions are taken, during the policy process, and after a policy change has been initiated to evaluate the result. Also during this process, the city needs to be actively, respectfully, and frequently communicating to parents on the status of projects or plans.

**Additional Information:**

Yes! Please visit [JackforSomerville.com](http://JackforSomerville.com) specifically my issue pages on affordability, schools, and parents. I also did a Reddit AMA where I talked about our school buildings on [r/Somerville. https://www.reddit.com/r/Somerville/comments/17ceet/so\\_you\\_want\\_to\\_be\\_on\\_the\\_city\\_council\\_eh\\_city/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Somerville/comments/17ceet/so_you_want_to_be_on_the_city_council_eh_city/)

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## **Ward 5 - City Council Naima Sait**

### **School Buildings:**

We have neglected our school buildings for way too long. It's unacceptable that our children are learning in buildings that are unsafe and unhealthy. As a teacher at Somerville High School before and after the building was rebuilt, I have seen firsthand what a poorly maintained school building looks like, and what investing in a proper school building can mean for our students. I have organized with both educators and parents around renovating and rebuilding our schools. This is an urgent matter and we must expedite the process.

As City Councilor I will fight for funding and transparent processes to ensure that all students in Somerville attend safe, healthy, and accessible schools starting with the Winter Hill Community Innovation School. If the administration is not communicating adequately, I will advocate that they do so by filing a formal order for a full City Council meeting asking the Mayor to share a clear school building improvement process and a clear way for parents and caregivers to engage with that process. I will vote in favor of rebuilding and renovating our schools.

Currently, there is no clear process and no way for constituents to engage in this conversation. As a Somerville Public Schools teacher for 7 years, I know how long it takes to build and feel part of a school community and how hard it is to have that be disrupted. We need to quickly ensure that there is a clear and transparent school building plan driven by community engagement so that we can come to a final outcome that is anchored by our community's needs and values.

### **Education:**

In my 7 years as a teacher in Somerville Public Schools, I have heard from both the staff and the students on the importance of having:

Smaller class sizes for educators and reduced caseloads for counselors and special educators.  
Staffing every general education classroom from pre-kindergarten to 3rd grade with a paraprofessional.

Staffing classes that are not capped at 18 students with a paraprofessional.

Staffing every newcomer class with a paraprofessional.

Hiring reading and math interventionists.

Additional licensed social-emotional support such as counselors and social workers.

Making all SPS accessible.

Having a free after-school program for all.

Offering translation and interpretation services.

For all the above, it's important that we listen to families, educators and school staff in order to determine the needs in each school. It's important that we seek input from all the families, especially the ones that cannot advocate for their children as easily due to language barriers,

working two jobs, unfamiliarity with the school system, etc. As a City Councilor, I will work on engaging more families to be strong unified advocates for funding these critical needs so that they are prioritized in the city budget.

**Additional Information:**

<https://www.naimaforSomerville.org/issues>

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## **Ward 6 - City Council Jack Connolly**

No response received.

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## **Ward 6 - City Council Lance Davis**

No response received.

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## **Ward 7 - City Council Judith Pineda Neufeld**

**School Buildings:**

Every student in Somerville deserves to be in a healthy and accessible building in order to learn safely and effectively, and many of our school buildings are badly in need of updates. During the beginning of the Winter Hill Community Innovation School crisis, I spoke at the City Council meeting and urged the mayor and her administration to treat this like a crisis and employ better and more transparent communication methods with parents and students. Additionally, I voted, along with my colleagues, in urgent funding votes to get the community and our infrastructure and engineering teams what they needed to make the swift changes to ensure the least amount of interruption to the school year as possible.

It is also critically important that our students have access to high-quality and usable space for outdoor learning. I am proud as City Councilor to have advocated for and secured funding for the recently completed West Somerville Neighborhood Schoolyard, and in my next term on the Council I will look to continue allocating funding for improvements to our school buildings.

**Education:**

There are several critical issues currently facing Somerville's children and families, and as City Councilor I always seek out the input of parents and caregivers to understand the impact the Council's decisions have on our schools and our families. In my next term on the Council I will push for additional mental health resources for our schools, especially for those in the LGBTQ+ community and students still recovering from the lost learning and isolation of the pandemic. I have also looked to address housing stability, especially for Somerville families so that our students are able to stay at their current schools without disruptions in their learning. As City Councilor I have pursued policies for safer walking, biking, and public transit access for all, including implementing street calming and other safety features that will protect our young people walking and biking to school. I plan to continue improving street safety and mobility

around our city to reduce traffic accidents and help drivers, cyclists and pedestrians all safely share the roads. I have also championed language justice across our city so that all students and families have the opportunity to access many of the resources and services our city has to offer.

**Additional Information:**

[www.judyforsomerville.com](http://www.judyforsomerville.com)

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