



Center for Collaborative Education

Transforming schools for student success

Center for Collaborative Education receives grant to support the redesign of Somerville High School

Building learning opportunities for students outside of the traditional classroom

Boston, MA - The [Center for Collaborative Education](#) (CCE), in partnership with [Somerville Public Schools](#) (SPS), is pleased to announce the acceptance of a \$300,000 grant, made by the [Barr Foundation](#), to plan the redesign of the Somerville High School learning experience. The grant award is part of the Barr Foundation's [Preparing for Post-Secondary Success Through the Wider Learning Ecosystem initiative](#) to support public high schools across New England in creating a wider learning ecosystem that includes the myriad educational, business, and non-profit organizations within their surrounding communities.

Over the next two years, the partners will participate in a planning and design process that will result in an actionable implementation plan to transform the Somerville High School (SHS) educational model to better meet the needs of all of its students. This grant will enable Somerville to redesign its current high school model and build a system that exposes and connects all students to personalized, out-of-school learning experiences that more completely prepares them for college, career, and citizenship upon high school graduation. Throughout the two-year planning process, some new model components will be piloted, with full implementation of a wider learning ecosystem to launch in the 2019-2020 school year.

The redesign of Somerville High School will focus on three significant areas:

1. **Out-of-School Learning:** Providing every SHS student with at least one significant and extended out-of-school learning experience prior to graduation. Students would be able to select the opportunity that best meets their needs and interests, such as service learning, job internships, apprenticeships, dual enrollment in college, and other early college experiences.
2. **Personalization:** Incorporating personalized learning plans that match a student's learning interests and needs to a pathway that helps them attain all graduation requirements.
3. **College and Career Readiness:** Ensuring that every SHS student is prepared to succeed in college and career through core learning experiences that help them build the knowledge and skills for post-secondary success, such as dual enrollment, early college experiences, internships, and cross-disciplinary Capstone projects—a long-term research and reflection project that engages students in their role as change agents in their communities and in the world.

In order to design a new high school model that accesses learning experiences outside of the traditional school walls, CCE, SPS, and SHS will engage a wide representation of Somerville community partners in this work. A planning coalition with representatives from higher education institutions, local businesses, government agencies, and community support services will be formed to provide input throughout the SHS redesign planning process. CCE and SPS will also conduct focus groups to engage key stakeholders, including former and current students, families, SHS faculty and staff, and district

personnel. The valuable input and feedback from all stakeholder groups will help inform the high school redesign recommendations and plans.

As post-secondary pathway options for students continue to evolve, incorporating real-world experiences as a core component of a high school education helps students gain the 21st century skills they need to succeed in an ever-changing global environment and in career pathways that may not yet exist. The SHS redesign seeks to make the learning experience relevant to today's world and to students' interests, better ensuring that students are active participants and leaders in their own education.

"It is critically important that we place students at the center of their own learning. The school experience should build upon students' creativity, individuality, and curiosity through flexible pathways that connect students to the world around them," explains Dan French, Executive Director of the Center for Collaborative Education. "Our vision for Somerville High School has students as the lead agents of their own learning experience, allowing them to learn with purpose, address real-world problems, and work in collaboration with teachers, practitioners, employers, and other community members."

"We're excited about the opportunity to work with CCE and our many partners to envision and plan a new model at Somerville High School that leverages the resources in our dynamic community and the surrounding area to provide every student at SHS with an educational experience that fully engages them and prepares them for the next steps in their journeys," states Mary Skipper, Superintendent of Schools. "We look forward to building on the excellent teaching and learning that is going on at SHS, and are incredibly grateful for The Barr Foundation's support and vision."

"We are so fortunate to have partners such as The Barr Foundation who are fully dedicated to helping communities realize their visions of ensuring that every student they serve is prepared and ready to succeed academically and in life," added Somerville Mayor, Joseph A. Curtatone. "Education is a collective responsibility. As a city, we're committed to working alongside our many community partners to support today's youth as they prepare to be tomorrow's leaders."

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About the Center for Collaborative Education

The [Center for Collaborative Education](#) (CCE) has, for the past twenty years, been a part of the wide conversation around education, equity, and next generation best practices that maximize success for all students. CCE's current work focuses on three strategic program areas: District and School Design; Instruction and Assessment; and Research, Evaluation and Policy. In these areas, CCE works directly with educators and other professionals in schools, districts, and states to increase educational access and opportunity for all students, with particular attention to groups that have historically been underserved, including students of color, low-income populations, and English language learners.



About Somerville Public Schools

[Somerville Public Schools](#) (SPS) serves a diverse population of about 5,000 students in pre-K to 12, including nearly 1,300 students at Somerville High School. SPS students represent more than 50 different languages. Working with students from around the world that come with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, SPS places an emphasis on supporting the “whole child” through a data-informed, collaborative system of support. Its vision is to develop the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical potential of all students by providing students with the skills, opportunities, and resources that will nurture innovative ideas, foster pride in diversity, inspire students to become lifelong learners and empower them to enrich their communities.

