



Mayor Katjana Ballantyne
City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

September 15, 2022

Dear Mayor Ballantyne:

We, the Somerville Council of PTAs, are writing to express our concern about the state of our school facilities. The Somerville Council of PTAs is made up of and represents the PTAs at each of the Somerville Public Schools. Just this year, we have seen critical system failures across the Somerville Public School system – major HVAC failures, repeated power outages, broken elevators, leaking plumbing, disrepair at schoolyards, dangerously high classroom temperatures, and more. The well-documented state of disrepair at several buildings routinely disrupts school operations and risks the health and safety of our students, educators, and staff. These impacts fall especially hard upon some of our most disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals in our communities.

We have seen the disruption caused by the neglect of our school facilities. In just the past 15 years, there were major student displacements after East Somerville burned, Brown's roof collapsed, and Winter Hill's air quality closed it completely during COVID. We cannot repeat the pattern of running our buildings to failure and then enduring the disruption and expense of emergency repairs. It is primarily our students who bear the brunt of these impacts.

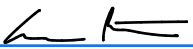
We are requesting the following urgent actions:

- **Talk to us** - In-person attendance at an upcoming Council of PTAs meeting to discuss school facilities, clear communication about renovation timelines and priority relative to other City capital projects
- **Finish the job** - Long overdue projects need to be completed or initiated immediately
- **School Punch Lists** - The formation of an audit group for each school building, including City personnel, parents and caregivers, and school staff, to catalog small- and medium-scale projects that especially focus on safety, accessibility, and classroom environment
- **Community participation and planning** - Formation of a School Facility Committee that includes parents and staff, centering these decade- and century-long infrastructure decisions in the communities they serve, including looking to future SPS enrollment needs and potential new facilities
- **Funding** - Substantial increase in funding for improvement and maintenance projects on the above "punch lists," especially focused on \$25,000-\$500,000 projects during the critical summer window

Our current system is clearly not working. The City has repeatedly funded study after study telling us what our students, staff, and families already know – our school facilities are in a serious state of disrepair and some are approaching systemic collapse. We urgently need leadership to reinvent our City's patchwork system so that we can meet the educational needs of our City's youngest residents both now and in the future.

Sincerely,
Somerville Council of PTAs


Cc: Mary Skipper, Superintendent, Somerville Public Schools
Jeff Curley, Interim Superintendent, Somerville Public Schools
Somerville City Council
Somerville School Committee


Leiran Biton (Sep 15, 2022 09:53 EDT)

Leiran Biton
President, Somerville Council of PTAs



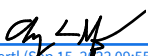
Joanna Taylor
President, Albert F. Argenziano School PTA


Ryan Williams (Sep 15, 2022 13:09 EDT)

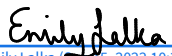
Ryan Williams
President, Brown School PTA


Elizabeth A. Larkin (Sep 15, 2022 11:19 EDT)

Betsy Larkin
President, Capuano Early Childhood Center PTA


Amy Mertl (Sep 15, 2022 09:55 EDT)

Amy Mertl
President, East Somerville Community School PTA


Emily Lalka (Sep 15, 2022 10:38 EDT)

Emily Lalka
President, Healey School PTA

Caroline Rosas
Caroline Rosas (Sep 15, 2022 09:44 EDT)

Caroline Rosas
President, John F. Kennedy School PTA
Vice President, Somerville High School PTSA


Callie Wisner (Sep 15, 2022 09:38 EDT)

Callie Wisner
President, West Somerville Neighborhood School PTA

Uma M. Murugan
Uma M. Murugan (Sep 15, 2022 10:12 EDT)

Uma Murugan
President, Winter Hill Community Innovation School PTA