Cradle to Preschool: Somerville, MA

January 25, 2020

Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor
Somerville, MA
Established in 2009
Quickly established early childhood as a priority focus area
2013 strategic plan identified need to think creatively about citywide early education and care
Focus = support & coordinate mixed-delivery system
Children’s Cabinet

- Established in 2016
- Led by Mayor and Superintent of Somerville Public Schools (SPS)
- Monthly meetings
- Goal = strengthen collaboration between City, SPS, and community partners
By All Means

- Initiative out of the Ed Redesign Lab at HGSE
- Launched in 2016 to rethink education and child support systems
- Supports 7 U.S. communities in this work by providing knowledge sharing, training, accountability, and connections to potential funders
Somerville’s Cradle to Preschool Strategy

- Universal Home Visiting for Newborns
- Early Literacy
- Tuition Assistance Fund & Coordination
- Branding & Strategic Outreach
- Family Engagement & Multilingual Support
Braided Funding: By All Means encourages partner communities to diversify their funding sources and supports them in efforts to do so.
SomerBaby

- Home visiting program for Somerville families with newborns
- $1.5M grant from Commonwealth Children’s Fund will support program expansion to serve all families
- Tiered service model: number of visits and services provided tied to family need
- Partnership with Institute for Community Health to measure program impact
281

Families served to date

79%

Percent of SomerBaby families who speak a language other than English at home
Somerville Partnership for Young Children

▷ Initiative led by SPS to create a mixed-delivery early childhood education and care system
▷ $1.5M grant from Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative provides tuition assistance and wraparound services to families & support for providers
$76,500
Tuition assistance provided in year 1

$63,800
Salary stipends provider to teachers in year 1

50
Mentoring hours provided to program directors
A Few Lessons Learned

- It’s not just about the wellbeing of kids; it’s about the wellbeing of families and communities.
- Breaking down silos is challenging, but it is essential to keep everyone at the table.
- Cabinet allows for collective prioritization & coordinated strategy for applying for funding.

- The next big question: how do we institutionalize this approach so that changes in leadership don’t disrupt the good work that’s underway?