



Somerville Public Schools

Education • Inspiration • Excellence

Mary E. Skipper, Superintendent

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Dear Somerville Public Schools Families and Staff,

As we continue to prepare for the next two weeks, we want to make sure that our families are aware of important resources and updates. In the weeks to come, we will be sending information out regularly via email. We are working as fast as we can to put measures in place to support students and families but we recognize there is more we can and will do.

How a community comes together in times of crisis says so much about the value that a community places on people and relationships. We are incredibly proud of the way the Somerville community – families, staff, partners, businesses, and the community at large -- are reaching out to ensure that our students and families get the support they need during this challenging time.

District Updates

- Starting Monday, March 16, our Food & Nutrition Services Department will be making take-home breakfast and lunch meals available to SPS students and families in need. Families can pick up meals Monday through Friday between 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. at 3 central locations across the city -- East Somerville Community School, Winter Hill Community Innovation School, and West Somerville Neighborhood School. SPS staff and volunteers will be outside each school to hand out packaged breakfasts and lunches. As a reminder, if you are showing symptoms of illness, we ask that you please make alternate arrangements for pickup of your meal. We will also be asking families to follow social distancing norms during the pick-up process.
- The Somerville Backpack Program will continue to be in operation in a limited capacity. Families who receive Friday backpack bags will be receiving a phone call or email about picking up bags during this closure period. If you do not receive a call or email, please reach out to Meghan Bouchard at mbouchard@k12.somerville.ma.us.
- In partnership with Riverside Healthcare and Home for Little Wanderers, we have developed a protocol to ensure that SPS students who are receiving therapeutic support from these partners can continue to access those services. Riverside Healthcare and Home for Little Wanderers will be reaching out by phone to appropriate families to obtain parent permission that will allow them to continue checking in remotely with students on their caseloads.
- Our academic team has been assembling high quality, age-appropriate, accessible grade-level resources to provide options for students to continue learning during this extended school closure. Look for more information this weekend, along with a link to a new online resource page on our website, which will be available starting Monday, March 16.

Additional Community Resources

- The Somerville Food Security Coalition has put together the following comprehensive food resource guide that includes a list of community meals, food pantries, and other food-related resources: <http://somervillefoodsecurity.org/resources/food-resource-guide/>.
- 3 Somerville organizations are looking for volunteers to help with food access during this crisis:
 - Somerville Food Security Connection (<http://somervillefoodsecurity.org/get-involved/>). Volunteers are needed to help with community responses to increased temporary food access needs. Work includes helping to bag food from Greater Boston Food Bank for distribution, helping with food deliveries, etc. The SFSC connects to many food providers in the city and is constantly updating itself during the coronavirus emergency. Please contact: Lisa Brukilacchio at lbrukilacchio@challiance.org
 - Food For Free (<https://foodforfree.org>), which runs the Somerville Backpack Program in partnership with the SFLC and SPS schools, is mobilizing a volunteer team. They will be in touch with interested folks regarding opportunities as they fall into place. Food For Free Volunteer

form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSed0cSIoOc7-Fvoms3VHR1Lc44fjql-vTNknz_a-7T_sKDnrw/viewform

- Project Soup. www.somervillehomelesscoalition.org/food-security/.

We are so grateful for your commitment to our students and to our community. We will continue to keep you informed on a regular basis.

Sincerely,

Mary Skipper, Superintendent