



# Somerville Public Schools

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March 15, 2020

Dear Somerville Public Schools Families and Staff,

We are continuing to learn of important resources to support students and families during this period of extended school closure. Over the last few days, there has been overwhelming support from individuals and organizations eager to lend a helping hand. Below are some reminders and a list of new resources available to you as we continue to work together as a community to weather this crisis.

## District Programs and Updates

- Our academic team has been working diligently to assemble a list of high quality, age-appropriate, accessible grade-level resources to provide continuity of learning and help students stay engaged and connected during this extended school closure. You can access those resources at [www.somerville.k12.ma.us/home-learning](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/home-learning). Educators will continually be adding to the site, so please check back regularly.
- Starting Monday, March 16, with the assistance of teachers, we will be surveying families to determine which families need a Chromebook and have no access to other devices at home. We will be sending out mid-week a rollout plan for pick-up of those devices by families identified as needing that resource. Please note that Comcast is offering free internet service to families in need for two months, effective Monday. For information on how to apply and sign up for Internet Essentials from Comcast, visit <https://www.internetessentials.com/covid19?fbclid=IwAR14yMNHVYitrLe6z722Nlt9baZ90dFpKnU9UUFj8SITCyel6cd-gbyukWw>.
- Starting Monday, March 16, SPS students and families in need can pick up breakfast and lunch 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](mailto: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.
- For a list of resources and articles on how to talk to your kids about COVID-19, please visit [www.somerville.k12.ma.us/TalkingAboutCoronavirus](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/TalkingAboutCoronavirus).

## 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](mailto: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-Fvoms3VHR1Lc44fjq1-vTNknz\\_a-7T\\_sKDnrw/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSed0cSIoOc7-Fvoms3VHR1Lc44fjq1-vTNknz_a-7T_sKDnrw/viewform)
  - Project Soup. [www.somervillehomelesscoalition.org/food-security/](http://www.somervillehomelesscoalition.org/food-security/).

**Other Important Information:**

- For national updates and the latest information on travel restrictions, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.
- The City of Somerville is posting frequent local and state updates on their Coronavirus website, as well as information about efforts to support Somerville families: [www.somervillema.gov/coronavirus](http://www.somervillema.gov/coronavirus).
- All Coronavirus-related communications from the District are being posted at: [www.somerville.k12.ma.us/coronavirus-information-prevention](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/coronavirus-information-prevention).
- Remember to [wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds](#), especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Sincerely,

Mary Skipper, Superintendent