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Dear Somerville Public Schools Families and Staff,

We are continuing to finalize our district Remote Learning Plan, and will be launching that on our website next week. Below please find some details on what the plan will include and an update on 3rd quarter grading. Again, we appreciate your partnership as we go down this new pathway together.

NEW INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

SPS Remote Learning Plan:

Somerville educators and administrators are working collaboratively to develop a Remote Learning Plan that is cohesive, engaging, inclusive, and equitable. Our first priority during these challenging times is to maintain a sense of safety, belonging and continuity in young people's lives. Our aim is to do this by creating avenues for connection with friends and teachers and by providing structure, routine, and predictability through the delivery of learning activities. We are actively working with STA and our other units as we enter this next phase of the closure.

DESE Guidance: As a reminder, DESE issued general guidance to serve as a baseline for districts' development of a remote teaching and learning plan. DESE's guidelines are informed by three core beliefs:

- Health, safety, and wellness are top priorities
- A focus on equity and potential disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable students
- Maintaining connections between school staff and students, and helping all students continue their learning

With these beliefs in mind, DESE recommends remote learning models that focus on the following:

- Schools support students to engage in meaningful and productive learning for approximately half the length of a regular school day, with learning taking place via a combination of educator-directed learning and student self-directed learning
- Remote learning focus on reinforcing skills already taught this school year and applying and deepening those skills, recognizing that in some cases, teachers and students may wish to continue with new material, particularly at the high school level. In those cases, schools should consider equity of access and support for all students.
- Recognizing that the individual student experience will vary depending on student age, individual and family needs, access and capacity for remote learning (including access to technology and the internet), and the ongoing health of students, families, and staff.

Somerville Public Schools Remote and Continued Learning Vision:

During this time of school closure, our vision is to expand educational opportunities for all students in an equitable manner through a variety of developmentally appropriate, inclusive, and accessible learning opportunities that continue to foster the academic and social emotional growth of all students while facilitating student agency and staff development through an environment of equity.

Practices that you can expect from Somerville Educators:

- Opportunities to provide students with experiences to practice existing skills and deepen learning, rather than introduce new learning, especially making sure students can keep progressing in their literacy skills and building math fluency skills.

- Promoting curiosity and hunger for learning in multiple ways, whether it's having students do a research project, watch a science video of the day, study the biography of a civil rights leader, watch educational TV, read a range of non-fiction books, or do a project outdoors.
- Student instructional supports to engage in meaningful and productive learning for approximately half the length of a regular school day.
- Instruction may be synchronous, meaning in the form of group or class work with students. Instruction might also be asynchronous, meaning work prepared by staff for video/cable or other distribution to students for independent work or work supervised by parents.
- Instruction through web based systems such as Google Classroom, DoJo, Schoology, email/chat, or phone to facilitate provision of educational materials and instruction to students.
- Communication with families in a preferred method (e.g. email, chat, phone) and to provide feedback to students on assigned work.

Additional guidelines will be included on our Remote Learning website. Again, we expect to launch that site next week as we continue to develop a more standardized approach to instructional delivery and partnership with families. Please keep in mind that our plan will update frequently to reflect new teaching and learning practices. We appreciate your patience and flexibility in ensuring all students receive appropriate supports and remain engaged in their learning.

K-8 3rd Quarter Grades, April 2020: For the third quarter marking period, which ends on April 1, students will be receiving progress reports in Aspen X2, which they earned for work they completed prior to the unexpected school closure. Teachers will be posting comments by the end of the school day Monday, April 13, 2020. K-8 parents will receive an email once progress reports are posted with instructions on how to gain access. Please contact your child's teachers with any questions regarding the progress report. Somerville High School and Next Wave/Full Circle families should have already received information about 3rd quarter grading.

Just for Fun: Free geography games, available in multiple languages: <https://www.seterra.com/>

CONTINUING PROGRAMS AND IMPORTANT LINKS

Continuing Programs and Resources

- ***Breakfast and Lunch Grab-and-Go Meals*** can be picked up Mondays-Fridays, 9:00-11:00 a.m. at the East Somerville Community School, Healey School, West Somerville Neighborhood School, and Winter Hill Community Innovation School. No ID is required. Bring a bag if you are picking up for multiple family members, and please remember to dress appropriately for the weather as we may ask you to stand out in the elements to ensure that we follow social distancing norms.
- ***Other food-related resources in the city***, visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us/food-resources.
- ***Chromebook Distribution.*** Chromebook distribution to students in grades 3-12 who do not currently have a device at home is continuing this week at each school. Schools are reaching out to students with information on distribution days and times.
- ***Distribution of Diapers:*** Starting this week, distribution of free diapers and wipes to families with babies or young children will continue on **Wednesdays only from 9:00-11:00a.m.** at each of the four school food distribution sites (East Somerville Community School, Healey School, West Somerville Neighborhood School and Winter Hill Community Innovation School). Diaper distribution will continue through April and while supplies last.
- ***Comcast Internet Essentials:*** We want to remind families that Comcast is offering two months of free internet service to families in need, through their Internet Essentials program. ***If you qualify for the***

school free/reduced lunch program, you are eligible for this important service. The Somerville Family Learning Collaborative and schools will be helping families who do not currently have internet service connect to this important resource. Information on how to apply and sign up for Internet Essentials from Comcast is available at: <https://internetessentials.com/>

- **AP Exams:** Due to the COVID-19 health crisis, there will be no in-person AP Exams in 2020. Instead, College Board is creating 45-minute online exams designed to be taken at home. This website (<https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/coronavirus-updates>) has more details, free resources for students to prepare for exams, and will have an exam schedule by April 3rd. Please contact your student's AP teacher or Melanie Kessler at mkessler@k12.somerville.ma.us if you have questions.
- **Instrument Rentals:** The Somerville Public Schools has three major vendors for the rental of music instruments. Rick Saunders has been working with these companies to provide loaner instruments to families who have not been able to access their rental instruments. Needham Instruments and Acoustic Strings of New England are providing replacement instruments for students whose rental instrument is not accessible. We have not been able to connect with Johnson String Instruments. Please contact Mr. Saunders rsaunders@k12.somerville.ma.us if you have any questions.

Curriculum Resources and Tech Support Available Online

- High quality grade-level home learning resources: www.somerville.k12.ma.us/home-learning.
- High school online resources: www.somerville.k12.ma.us/shs
- List of resources from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to help students stay engaged in their learning while at home: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/ed-resources.html>
- WGBH's new online Distance Learning Center: www.wgbh.org/distance-learning-center
- PBS LearningMedia: <https://mass.pbslearningmedia.org>
- If you are having trouble with your device, please submit a request for support using this [Somerville Public Schools Remote Tech Support Contact Form](#).
- Language Support for Technology Questions: SPS parents/students who need language assistance with technology should call 311 or email 311updates@somervillema.gov. A bilingual educator will contact you to assist you. Dial (617) 666-3311 if you are calling from a number outside of Somerville.

Other Important Links

- Visit www.somervillema.gov/coronavirus for the most current information on COVID-19.
- Visit www.somervillema.gov/coronavirushelp for additional resources and ways to contribute during the COVID-19 crisis.
- Talking to your kids about COVID-19: www.somerville.k12.ma.us/TalkingAboutCoronavirus.

We will be in touch again on Friday.

Until then,

Mary Skipper, Superintendent