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Dear Somerville Public Schools Families and Staff,

As we enter the next phase of the extended closure of schools, we hope you are doing ok given the continuing challenges, and gradually settling into your new family schedules. We have finalized our district Remote Learning Plan (more details below), and are continuing to expand our supports to ensure that families have the basic resources they need during this difficult time. We encourage you to reach out to 311 if you have a particular question or need, and the amazing 311 staff will direct you to the appropriate resource. I wish you all a healthy and peaceful week.

NEW INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

SPS Remote Learning Plan: We have developed a district Remote Learning Plan that will guide our teaching and learning approach for the remainder of the school closure period. Our SPS Remote Learning Plan is informed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) guidance, which centers around the following 3 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.

Our district Remote Learning Plan launches on Tuesday, April 7, 2020 and can be accessed at www.somerville.k12.ma.us/RemoteLearning. As we mentioned on Friday, one of the common threads you will see in our plan is our continued priority on the overall wellness of our students and staff, and ensuring that students and families have the resources and support they need throughout this crisis. Educators will be reaching out to students and families directly with specific information about their plans for instruction and staying connected with their students.

Virtual Job Fair: Somerville Public Schools is hosting a Virtual Job Fair on April 15, 10:00am – 12:00pm. Candidates are invited to apply for anticipated positions in our district for the 2020-2021 school year through SchoolSpring at www.schoolspring.com/jobs/?employer=16902, then visit our Virtual Job Fair page at www.somerville.k12.ma.us/VirtualJobFair to request a meet-and-greet. Representatives from each school and several departments will be available to talk to applicants briefly. Registration for the event ends April 10th.

Technology Devices for PK-2: We are awaiting an order of Kindle Fire 7 tablets within the next week or two, and will be sharing a distribution schedule with PK-2 families shortly thereafter. These devices are for parents who need a device to share materials with their PK-2 students. Further details will be sent to families once the order has been received and a distribution schedule has been finalized.

Friday Food Pantry Bags at ESCS: Thanks to a donation of about 2,000 additional lbs. of food pantry items and fresh produce from Food for Free (www.foodforfree.org) this week, approximately 100 weekend bags will be available for ESCS families in need to pick up on Friday, April 10, between 9:00 and 11:00am. This donation is in addition to the 200 weekend bags of food that the City of Somerville and Food for Free have been donating each week. Those 200 bags will be distributed among the three remaining meal distribution sites (Healey, Winter Hill, and West Somerville schools). Families can also continue to pick up daily breakfast and lunch Grab-and-Go meals, 9:00-11:00 a.m. Mondays-Fridays, at the four sites.

Scheduled School Holidays: Except for the last official day of school now being Friday, June 19, there are currently no additional changes to the district calendar. School holidays and breaks will be observed as scheduled. There will be no remote instruction this Friday, April 10 (Good Friday), or from April 20-24 (April break), and district staff will be observing April 10 and April 20 (Patriots Day) as school holidays. However, please note that distribution of *Grab-and-Go meals will continue to take place as scheduled on school holidays and breaks*. Please visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us/district-school-year-calendar-2019-2020 for the current year's complete calendar.

Just for Fun: The Art Institute of Chicago offers videos, interactive features, and tours. Visit them virtually at: <https://www.artic.edu/visit-us-virtually>

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, Healey, West Somerville, and Winter Hill schools. No ID required. Bring a bag if you are picking up for multiple family members, and 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.
- **Distribution of Diapers:** 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, 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.*** 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:** A reminder that 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.
- **Somerville Public Library:** The Somerville Public Library offers a treasure trove of digital resources that can be accessed at www.somervillepubliclibrary.org. A library card is needed to gain access to the databases from home. If you need assistance resolving an issue with a library card, or if you're not sure you have an SPL library card and would like to apply for one, email somrefquestions@minlib.net.

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.

Thank you for all you continue to do to support our kids and each other during this crisis.

Respectfully,

Mary Skipper, Superintendent