



Somerville Public Schools

Education • Inspiration • Excellence

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Dear Families and Staff:

We welcomed our largest group of students back to our classrooms this week, with more than 980 students from grades 3-6 transitioning to our in-person hybrid model. We now have close to 2,500 students back in our classrooms and are preparing for the return of our 7th and 8th graders next week. We are excited to have students and staff members back in our school buildings, and look forward to having our PK-8 students transition to full in-person learning, five days a week starting the Monday after April Break.

Grade 7 and 8 Transition to Hybrid In-Person Model:

Next week, we anticipate approximately 435 grade 7 and 8 students will transition to a hybrid in-person model. As with previous phases, grade 7 and 8 teachers will teach remotely from their classrooms on Monday and Tuesday, Wednesday will be an all-remote day, and students return on Thursday and Friday. Grade 7 and 8 students in Cohort A will be in-person on Thursday, April 15, and grade 7 and 8 students in Cohort B will be in-person on Friday, April 16. All other students will continue their current remote or in-person schedules next week. The following week is April Break. There will be no classes from April 19-23, and all district offices will be closed on Monday, April 19 in observance of Patriots Day.

COVID-19 Testing, including April Break Schedule

We want to remind families that as part of our comprehensive set of [health and safety measures](#), students and staff are required to participate in baseline testing prior to returning to in-person instruction, and to subsequently participate in routine COVID-19 assurance testing. [Baseline testing](#) is available at the Kennedy and the East Somerville each Wednesday during designated times. Families are notified about baseline testing schedules as their scheduled return date approaches. We will offer COVID-19 assurance testing over the April Break as noted below. All staff and students are **strongly encouraged** to maintain their testing schedule during April Break, so as to not lapse in the SPS Assurance Testing Program and to help continue to keep our community safe. Students in Cohort A should test on Tuesday, and students in Cohort B should test on Thursday during one of the designated times listed in the table. Staff are recommended to attend at least one test during April Break.

APRIL BREAK TESTING SCHEDULE		
April 19-23		
	TUESDAY APRIL 20	THURSDAY APRIL 22
ESCS	8:00-10:00AM 3:00-6:00PM	8:00-10:00AM 3:00-6:00PM
Healey	8:00-10:00AM 3:00-6:00PM	8:00-10:00AM 3:00-6:00PM
Kennedy	8:00-10:00AM 3:00-6:00PM	8:00-10:00AM 3:00-6:00PM

Grab-and-Go Meals Distribution During and After April Break

Grab-and-Go meals will also be available over the April Break on the following schedule.

- Wednesday, April 21: 9:00-11:00 a.m. at the Healey, Winter Hill, ESCS, and WSNS
- Friday, April 23: 9:00-11:00 a.m. at the Healey, Winter Hill, ESCS, and WSNS

Starting Monday, April 26, Grab-and-Go meals will only be available for pickup at the main entrance of the new Somerville High School from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. No ID is required for Grab-and-Go meals, and families are encouraged to take as many as they need.

Transition to Full In-Person Learning Starting April 26 for PK-8 and Select Students at SHS

As indicated in last week's update, we will be moving to full in-person learning five days a week for PK-8 students after April Break, starting Monday, April 26. **There will be a 2-hour delayed start on Monday, April 26 only for all in-person students so that in-person staff can rapid test that morning before resuming classes. April 26 start times for students who are in-person are 10:45 for pre-K and 10:15 for grades K-8. The select groups of high school students who are in-person at SHS will also be starting 2 hours later than their regular start times on Monday, April 26. We have updated our [Schedule of Phases](#) to reflect the 2-hour delayed start on 4/26 for in-person students only.** Remote students will start at their regular time on Monday, April 26. All students will resume their regular in-person start times on Tuesday, April 27.

Somerville High School Family Survey and SHS Class of 2021 Graduation

We will be sending out a survey to Somerville High School parents next week as we continue to await additional guidance from DESE on high school students. We expect to receive that guidance sometime this month. We are also actively looking at options for the space we have at the new Somerville High School building to be able to bring back more SHS students.

The SHS Graduation Committee is finalizing graduation plans for the Class of 2021. The Committee meets every two weeks and includes students, parents, community members, SHS educators, members of the PTA, and a School Committee representative. Thanks to a very generous donation of \$27,000 from the SHS Scholarship Foundation, SHS graduating seniors will be celebrated in a number of ways, such as with banners posted around the City and through senior spotlights recognizing students on social media. Students will receive caps & gowns as well as swag bags with SHS memorabilia and other gifts. Additional plans are being finalized and families of SHS seniors can expect to receive more details on graduation sometime over the next 2-3 weeks. We are also looking forward to celebrating our Full Circle Class of 2021 graduates and will provide additional details about Full Circle graduation plans after the April Break.

April Break Travel Advisory and Safety Reminders

We hope the coming April Break offers students, families and staff the opportunity to rest and recover, and to enjoy some outdoor time as the weather gets warmer. We recognize that people may be traveling over the break and respectfully ask that you be aware of the [state's COVID-19 Travel Advisory](#) and continue to follow all health and safety protocols to help ensure a smooth and safe return to full in-person learning for our PK-8 students after the break. We appreciate everyone's commitment to following the recommended safety practices throughout this pandemic, and ask for your continued vigilance.

COVID-19 Vaccination Information

A special thank you to Cambridge Health Alliance and the Somerville Health Department for their assistance in securing and providing Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccinations for many of our staff. The state is continuing to rapidly move forward on vaccinations. On Monday, April 19, all people age 16 and older will be eligible. Visit www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine for more information and to learn how to pre-register. For additional vaccine information, upcoming local COVID-19 events, situational updates, and answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the COVID vaccine, visit www.somervillema.gov/covidvaccine.

Use of Outdoor Spaces and Summer Planning

Finally, as the weather gets warmer, we are looking forward to utilizing our outdoor spaces as much as possible, both during the school day and after school hours. Outdoor tents are being set up at our school sites to provide additional learning spaces. We will also utilize outdoor spaces for mask breaks and lunch whenever possible. Our summer planning efforts in partnership with the City are well underway. We will send out information on summer program availability in the next week or two, as well as an application process for summer programming after the April Break.

Thank you for your support throughout this challenging year. We are so excited to have students back in our schools!

Respectfully,

Mary Skipper, Superintendent of Schools