



Somerville Public Schools

Education • Inspiration • Excellence

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Dear Somerville Public Schools Families and Staff,

Despite the current challenges, we hope that the past weekend offered you an opportunity to reflect on the beliefs that you hold dear, and connect with your families in new ways. As we mentioned last week, we will continue to observe all holidays and school breaks as scheduled on our district calendar. Each family's situation is different, and navigating family schedules and responsibilities is uniquely personal. We are continuing to work to make sure that all students in our district are connected, and will be spending a portion of the upcoming April break helping families get connected, assessing our remote teaching and learning efforts and making adjustments as necessary, and continuing to provide families with the basic supports they need during this incredibly challenging time.

We also recognize the importance of self-care for families and staff as we continue to transition to a remote learning process that focuses not only on the teaching and learning piece of this process, but also on the impact to the family. We believe that providing our families and our staff (many of whom have families of their own) time to focus on family without having to monitor schoolwork or other school-related activities is important. We encourage families to utilize our Home Learning and other resources on our website throughout the April vacation week as much as you feel is appropriate for your family.

NEW INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Distribution of Technology Devices for PK-2: The distribution of Fire Tablets to families with children in PK-2 who do not have a device for their PK-2 child to use will take place later this week. We have a limited pool of devices available, and Principals will be reaching out to families in need with distribution details for their particular school. If you have not heard from your Principal by Wednesday and do not currently have a device at home for your PK-2 child to use, please reach out to them.

Online Platform Use Guidelines: As we continue to transition to remote learning, we have been developing resources to support the safe use of online teaching and learning platforms. Attached please find important information regarding the use of online learning platforms. We also invite you to visit our Parent/Guardian Resources site (<https://sites.google.com/k12.somerville.ma.us/parents/home>) for technology tips.

Just for Fun: Visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us/JustforFun for links to a variety of interactive activities.

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/>
- **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.
- **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 between May 11-22. Each subject has a different assigned date and time. This website (<https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/coronavirus-updates>) has the updated schedule, free resources for students to prepare for exams, and more details about the exams. We are asking all students to complete [this survey](#) about their ability to take AP exams this year. Please contact your student's AP teacher or Melanie Kessler at mkessler@k12.somerville.ma.us if you have 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.
- SPS Remote Learning Plan can be accessed at www.somerville.k12.ma.us/RemoteLearning

Other Important Links & Information

- **Social Distancing:** One of the most important things we can all do right now to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 is to be diligent about following social distancing measures, and ensuring that our kids are following those measures as well. We can stay connected while staying away, with a phone call, video chat, or through social media. We all can be carriers, and practicing social distancing impacts not only our own health, but the health of those around us as well. That's why it's so important that we **ALL** do our part to combat the spread of this virus by following CDC [social distancing guidelines](#). It could be the difference between life and death for someone.
- 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.

Respectfully,

Mary Skipper, Superintendent