



Mary E. Skipper, *Superintendent*

8 Bonair Street · Somerville, MA 02145-3246
mkipper@k12.somerville.ma.us · www.somerville.k12.ma.us
T 617-629-5200, x6005 · F 617-629-5611

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Dear Somerville Public Schools Families and Staff,

We hope you are doing ok as we continue to live through the challenges of the COVID-19 health crisis. Below, please find information about the upcoming April break as well as a summary of the key goals and expectations of our Remote Learning Plan (www.somerville.k12.ma.us/RemoteLearning). As a reminder, we will continue to observe all holidays and school breaks as scheduled on our district calendar. We encourage families to utilize the Home Learning (www.somerville.k12.ma.us/home-learning) and Just for Fun (www.somerville.k12.ma.us/JustforFun) resources on our website as much as you feel is appropriate for your family throughout the April break. Also, please look for information about additional activities offered by our out-of-school-time partners in Friday's update.

Our Grab-and-Go breakfast and lunch meal program, and the Diaper Distribution will continue as scheduled at all four locations during the April break.

NEW INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

April Break: 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 have internet access and are able to access the full range of remote learning resources we offer. We 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 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 and necessary.

Remote Learning Plan Primary Goals and Expectations:

- Lay a foundation conducive to learning by ensuring that student and family basic needs are being met through targeted programs (such as Grab-and-Go meals and weekend grocery bags) and connection to support services (such as virtual mental health consultations)
- Mitigate potential barriers to academic access by loaning families in need technology and helping families obtain internet connection
- Maintain a sense of community and belonging by providing students opportunities to connect with teachers and peers on a regular basis, and by developing a consistent learning schedule. We recognize that the working environment and need for support is not ideal for all families and are committed to being flexible in our assignments and commitments.
- Provide all students with **required** learning experiences that integrate and reinforce subject-area skills aligned to learning standards, with the expectation that every student will engage in about three hours of schoolwork daily, per DESE guidelines. **There is no expectation that individual assignments will be graded. The focus of the closure is on giving feedback and we will be communicating out about post May 4th grading once we have more information beyond that closure date.**

- Focus on ‘diving deeper’ into already taught standards. A good deal of attention will be given to the design of our curriculum for the fall of 2020.
- Offer instruction in multiple modalities and provide both guided instruction and independent work that students can work on each day. This can come in many forms including FaceTime, class meetings, online work, reading, writing, and other options. There is an expectation that students be provided both synchronous and asynchronous assignments, thus addressing the fact that many families are working, older students may have childcare obligations to younger family members, etc.

Just for Fun: How would you like to dream up and design your own theme park? Visit <https://disneyparks.disney.go.com/blog/2020/03/enjoy-a-one-of-a-kind-learning-experience-from-disney-imaginereers/> to get started. For more fun, interactive activities, visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us/JustforFun.

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. 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