



Mary E. Skipper, *Superintendent*

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

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Dear SPS Families and Staff,

Over the next few weeks, we look forward to sharing stories of how our students and teachers continue to lead the way despite the challenges of a global pandemic. Look for “Today’s Shout-Out” in these updates. Next week is Teacher Appreciation Week, and while it offers a distinct opportunity to recognize the tremendous efforts of our educators, it is important to remember that their commitment has a profound and lifelong impact.

We continue to be grateful for the creativity, energy, and commitment of our students, families, staff, and many partners. Thank you for all you do.

NEW/UPDATED INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Somerville Cares Fund Applications & Donations: Applications for support are now being accepted for the donation-funded Somerville Cares Fund jointly launched by Mayor Joe Curtatone, the United Way, and the Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS). The Fund will provide emergency financial assistance to individuals and families during the COVID-19 public health crisis to meet needs such as food, housing, medicine, funeral costs, and other essential services. Somerville residents, persons who work in Somerville (including those recently laid off due to the pandemic), and families with children enrolled in the Somerville Public Schools are eligible to apply. Applications will be prioritized and funded on the basis of need. Learn more and apply at: www.somervillema.gov/SomervilleCaresFunding. This fund is entirely supported by donations and the need in the community continues to grow. To donate, visit www.somervillema.gov/SomervilleCares.

Today’s Shout-Out: Healey Hawks 8th graders **Avery Cole, Ruthanna Kern** and **Lily Thompson** learned earlier this week that their National History Day project, titled *Dr. Mary Edwards Walker: A Patriot without a Petticoat*, had been selected to advance to the national History Day competition. This is the second year that Avery, Ruthanna and Lily have advanced to the national level. Historically, students selected for nationals would travel to Washington, D.C. in June to compete with students from across the country. This year, the nationals contest will be virtual, as was the state level competition.

The Healey trio took part in the virtual state level competition earlier this month, competing in the junior group performance category. This year’s contest theme is “Breaking Barriers”. While the students were unable to physically perform this year, they submitted various documents including their script (complete with images of props and costumes), annotated bibliography and a process paper. The group’s project, *Dr. Mary Edwards Walker: A Patriot without a Petticoat*, highlighted the first female surgeon in the Civil War fighting for The Union. Dr. Walker was also the first and only female recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest military award given in the United States.

Congratulations to Avery, Ruthanna, Lily, and Healey social studies teacher Dayshawn Simmons for their outstanding work!

Just for Fun: Enjoy a calming virtual walk through the [Brooklyn Botanical Garden’s Japanese Garden](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/JustforFun) in bloom. For more fun, interactive activities, visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us/JustforFun.

LIST OF RESOURCES, CONTINUING PROGRAMS AND IMPORTANT LINKS

Curriculum Resources and Tech Support Available Online

- High quality grade-level home learning resources from multiple sources: www.somerville.k12.ma.us/home-learning
- 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

Continuing Programs and Resources

- **Breakfast and Lunch Grab-and-Go Meals** 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.
- **Other food-related resources in the city**, visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us/food-resources.
- **Distribution of Diapers:** Distribution of free diapers to families with babies or young children will continue on **Wednesdays 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/>

Other Important Links & Information

- Visit www.somervillema.gov/coronavirus for the most current information on COVID-19 and resources available in our community.
- Talking to your kids about COVID-19: www.somerville.k12.ma.us/TalkingAboutCoronavirus.

Respectfully,

Mary Skipper, Superintendent