



Somerville Public Schools

Education • Inspiration • Excellence

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

May 20, 2020

Dear SPS Families and Staff,

With graduation dates quickly approaching, we are continuing to fine tune high school graduation plans to ensure that we properly acknowledge and celebrate our amazing Class of 2020 graduates. Yesterday, working with Principal LaGambina, Mayor Curtatone and Jill Lathan, Director of Somerville Parks and Recreation, we were able to finalize plans for a series of “drive-up” graduation events at the Dilboy Stadium parking lot on June 10 and 11 for Somerville High School seniors. Students will have an opportunity to individually walk across the stage and pick up their diploma in a series of 3-hour events (2 each day) scheduled by House. All appropriate measures will be taken to ensure the safety of all involved. The events will be recorded, and recordings will be shared on the Somerville Cable Ed channel and through social media. Updated SHS information on graduation plans was sent to seniors and their families yesterday, and details will also be posted on the school website. We appreciate the collaborative efforts to celebrate our seniors and to honor them and the incredible work they have done over the years to reach this milestone.

Details about Full Circle graduation plans will be included in Friday’s newsletter, and look for SCALE graduation information in next week’s updates.

NEW/UPDATED INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Parent/Guardian Virtual Town Hall: Somerville parents and guardians are invited to a Parents Virtual Town Hall meeting tomorrow evening (Thursday, May 21), 7-8pm. I will be joining Mayor Curtatone and other panelists to discuss local COVID-19 impacts and our response. Visit www.somervillema.gov/virtualtownhall for details on ways to participate and links to videos from previous Virtual Town Hall meetings. Live interpretation will be available in Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole. To listen in another language, follow these instructions:

1. In your meeting/webinar controls, click Interpretation.
2. Click the language that you would like to hear. If you would like to listen in Haitian Creole, select French instead. (Zoom Webinar does not include Haitian Creole in its list of languages, but the interpreter at the other end of the line will be speaking it.)
3. (Optional) To only hear the interpreted language, click Mute Original Audio.

Somerville School Committee State-wide School Choice Public Hearing: The Somerville Public Schools will conduct a public hearing to determine participation in the School Choice program for the 2020-2021 school year. The hearing takes place Wednesday, May 27, 2020 at 6:45pm on the GoToMeeting Online Webinar Platform. To join the hearing: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1249113785733534224>. The public is cordially invited to attend.

Today’s Shout-Out: On Tuesday, Argenziano 6th graders participated in a Zoom video conference session with Krista Laforest, an intern at the Coral Reef Restoration Foundation in Florida. Physical Education teacher Kris Savage and Science teacher Jen Rodriguez, collaborated with Krista to teach their students the importance of coral reef conservation and strength training. Students were first given a hyperdoc to gain background knowledge of reefs, and participated in a “Scuba Pilates” video exercise class as a way to understand some of the physical training that goes into scuba diving. During her presentation, Krista taught students that coral reefs protect coastlines and provide habitats and shelter for many marine organisms. Not only did she explain the process for restoring coral, but she reiterated the great deal of strength and endurance necessary to be able to

hammer hardened algae, then carry and transplant crates of coral the length of a football field, all underwater while bearing a 50-lb tank of oxygen. Students and their families tuned in to learn about this important work!

Just for Fun: Now that spring is here, consider visiting the polar bear capital of the world, Churchill, Manitoba, from the warmth and comfort of your home (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vn9GjzdK1Kg>). For more fun and 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

- **Free/Reduced Lunch Application:** Qualifying for free/reduced lunch may open up additional resources for your family, such as eligibility for P-EBT benefits. If your student attends a non-CEP school in our district (a school other than SHS, Healey, NWFC, WHCIS, and ESCS) and you believe your financial situation might now make you eligible for free/reduced lunch, you can apply online [HERE](#).
- **Breakfast and Lunch Grab-and-Go Meals** Mondays-Fridays, 9-11 a.m. at ESCS, Healey, WSNS, and Winter Hill. 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 June 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.
- Basic supports for families during COVID-19: www.somerville.k12.ma.us/relief-our-families.

Respectfully,

Mary Skipper, Superintendent