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## Summer 2020 Weekly Update

July 17, 2020

Dear Somerville Public Schools Families,

Below is the detailed update on our planning work that we had initially hoped to provide you on Monday. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we pulled this information together, reviewed new guidance from the state, and finalized the second surveys to families and staff as well as a new Back-to-School web page ([www.somerville.k12.ma.us/back-school-2020](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/back-school-2020)). You will find results from the family Remote Learning Survey that we administered in June on this site, as well as a link to a new family survey ([https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SPS\\_Fam2](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SPS_Fam2)). Thank you for your continued input.

As you can see, there is a lot of work under way. There is also still a great deal of work to do over the next few weeks and we appreciate your continued partnership, support, feedback and input as we navigate this unprecedented challenge and prepare for what will undoubtedly be an unusual school year. We know that there are still many questions about what this coming school year might look like, and we will continue to keep you informed as we move through the planning process and receive health and educational guidance updates.

Our planning work to date includes the following:

- We have completed walk-throughs of all school buildings to determine school-specific needs for a possible re-entry to schools under the health and safety guidelines.
- We will be using a minimum of 6 feet as our threshold for any in-person instruction rather than the 3-ft. minimum the state is allowing, as a further safeguard. Masks will also be an important piece of helping to keep everyone safe. All students and staff will be required to wear masks, with the exception of students who need an accommodation because of sensory issues. Special consideration will be given and other accommodations will be made for students or staff members who may have a medical issue that would preclude them from being able to safely wear a mask.
- The city's Capital Planning Department is in the process of conducting walk-throughs in each of our buildings with ventilation experts to survey ventilation systems and ensure we meet the safety guidelines for airflow.
- This is a collaborative effort involving the work of various committees including an Environmental Health and Safety Task Force to make sure all health and cleaning protocols are in place for when students and staff return to buildings; a City/District Reopening Task Force that is meeting weekly to ensure all departments that support our schools are involved in developing a safe reopening plan; and grade span teams that are looking at and providing feedback on guiding questions around instruction, curriculum and classroom learning.
- Each school community will assemble a school reopening committee that will include staff, student, and parent representation over the next two weeks. The role of these committees will be to help operationalize school-specific plans prior to and throughout the school year. Committees are just one way in which we are gathering input from various stakeholders. We are using multiple vehicles to gather input and feedback.
- We will be conducting parent town hall meetings and hosting staff Zoom meetings in the next few weeks to hear concerns and opinions, and answer questions about the fall.

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has been ordered for all staff and students in preparation for this fall. Gloves, masks, sanitizer, gowns and other protective items will be available for use in classrooms and school buildings.
- The CTE print shop has been helping to develop signage for all schools to make sure that protocols related to safe traffic flow within the building and when entering/exiting a building is clear for students, teachers, staff and parents.
- The Food and Nutrition Services Department is developing a plan in each building to ensure that students will be able to eat in classrooms and/or have the opportunity to eat in other safe spaces on a school campus, such as hallways or outside spaces.
- Given that there will be a need for remote learning as some component of learning next year, we want every student (PK-12) to have access to their own Chromebook. We are working with our technology office to arrange an additional pickup of devices toward the beginning or middle of August. We will also be providing hotspots to any family that has lost connection over the summer or still needs it, to ensure that all students are able to access the curriculum and resources, and stay connected to their teachers.

## NEW/UPDATED INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

**Reminder –SomerCamp:** Thanks to the generous support of the [Somerville Education Foundation \(SEF\)](#), several local organizations are partnering to offer [SomerCamp](#), a FREE online summer program for Somerville youth that started this week. SomerCamp offers a rich array of fun and engaging activities – from boxing to filmmaking, and a lot of other options in between – FREE for all Somerville youth. Check it out!

**This Week's Shout-Out:** A huge shout-out to the Somerville Arts Council for a fun and creative ArtBeat 2020. You still have time to get in on the fun. The event goes through Saturday, July 18. Visit <https://somervilleartscouncil.org/artbeat/2020> for more information and a complete schedule.

**Just for Fun:** Try out the "[OLogy Page](#)" from the [American Museum of Natural History](#), where kids can explore topics like [dinosaurs](#), [archaeology](#), and [climate change](#). For more fun and interactive activities, visit [www.somerville.k12.ma.us/justforfun](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/justforfun).

## PROGRAMS, RESOURCES AND LINKS

### Programs and Resources

- **Breakfast and Lunch Grab-and-Go Meals:** Throughout the summer months, Grab-and-Go Meals will be distributed on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9-11 a.m. at ESCS, Healey, WSNS, and Winter Hill. No ID required.
- **Other food-related resources in the city,** visit [www.somerville.k12.ma.us/food-resources](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/food-resources).
- **Distribution of Diapers:** Free diapers to families with babies or young children are available for pickup on Wednesdays, 9:00-11:00a.m. at ESCS and WSNS through the end of August and while supplies last.
- **Comcast Internet Essentials:** Comcast has extended their offering of 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/>

### Curriculum and Other Online Resources

- High quality grade-level home learning resources: [www.somerville.k12.ma.us/home-learning](http://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](mailto: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.
- List of resources on “talking about racism”: [www.somerville.k12.ma.us/talking-about-racism](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/talking-about-racism)

Important Covid-19 Links & Information

- Visit [www.somervillema.gov/coronavirus](http://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](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/TalkingAboutCoronavirus).
- Basic supports for families during COVID-19: [www.somerville.k12.ma.us/relief-our-families](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/relief-our-families).

Respectfully,

Mary Skipper, Superintendent