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Summer 2020 Weekly Update

August 21, 2020

Dear Somerville Public Schools Families and Staff,

Last Monday evening, the Somerville School Committee approved our District Reopening Plan for the 2020-21 school year. You can find the approved plan, including a link to a website version that can be translated using the Google Translate feature on our website, at www.somerville.k12.ma.us/back-school-2020. Thank you for your continuous input and feedback as we worked on developing this plan. We know this has been an incredibly challenging time for students, families and staff, and we value and appreciate your role in this important process. As noted in the plan, this is a living document that will continue to evolve and we will keep you informed of any updates and changes.

Our Reopening Plan includes a Full Remote Learning Model using a state-approved Learning Management System (LMS) that will be licensed through the District. We recommend this option only for those families who have indicated that they would like to have their student work independently and on their own schedule with very limited SPS support, and who have their own academic support structure. The attached application for the Full Remote Learning Model using the LMS includes additional details about that Model. Please note that the Full Remote Learning Model (LMS) is different from the remote learning that will be provided by SPS educators during our all-remote period at the start of the school year and during remote learning as part of our Phased Hybrid Model. As a reminder, all students will be enrolled in our hybrid model to start and all families will have the choice to remain remote once it is safe to begin in-person learning with our SPS teachers.

We continue to work closely with our teachers union and are making good progress on our remote learning schedule for the start of the school year. Once the remote learning schedule is finalized, we will make class assignments. We anticipate sending that information out by the end of the week of September 3rd. We are also continuing to finalize details about new Somerville Parks & Recreation Department and Community Schools program offerings to provide students with opportunities for safe, outdoor social engagement. Please see additional information below under New Information.

Our annual re-registration process through PowerSchool is kicking off a few days later than we had anticipated. We will be launching this re-registration process starting Monday, August 24th. All families who are currently registered in our District for the 2020-2021 school year, including newly registered Pre-K and Kindergarten students, will be receiving an email directly from PowerSchool with a code and instructions on how to log in and confirm or update your information.

We are looking forward to re-engaging with our students and staff in a new teaching and learning environment. Thank you for all you continue to do to support students during this unprecedented time. Please check these updates regularly as important information will be coming out over the next several weeks.

NEW INFORMATION

New Community Schools and Somerville Parks & Recreation Programming: We are continuing to finalize details on new program offerings from Community Schools and Somerville Parks & Recreation, designed to provide students with safe outdoor social enrichment opportunities during remote periods of learning. We

appreciate your continued patience as we finalize all the logistical details. Please note that these new enrichment programs are separate from the Community Schools Afterschool Program, which already has an estimated 670 students in grades PK-6 registered and will be running on an adjusted schedule that aligns with our hybrid cohort A/B model. Families registered in the Community Schools Afterschool Program will be receiving information about the adjusted schedule and rate fees within the next week.

The following details apply to the NEW Community Schools and Somerville Parks & Recreation program offerings:

- These programs are free and will be outdoors and weather permitting
- Students will be divided into 2 Cohorts (Cohorts A and B) that align with our Phased Hybrid Model, which allows us the opportunity to serve more students. Assigning students to cohorts now will also facilitate a smooth transition for when we are able to gradually start moving into some form of in-person instruction as part of our Hybrid Model. Students in Cohort A will be able to register for the Thursday/Friday programming and students in Cohort B would be able to register for the Monday/Tuesday programming.
- Somerville Food & Nutrition Services will provide lunch for the 12:30 program, and snacks for other programs
- Registration will open the week of August 31st, once classroom assignments have been made.
- Community Schools will offer a 2-hour program (12:30-2:30 p.m.) for Pre-K and K students at tented outdoor sites at all SPS elementary schools. Registration for this program will be through Community Schools.
- Parks & Recreation will offer outdoor programs as follows. Registration for Parks & Recreation programs will be through Parks & Recreation.
 - Grades 1-2: 2:30-3:45 p.m.
 - Grades 3-5: 4:00-5:15 p.m.
 - Grades 6-8: 5:30-6:45 p.m.
- Parks & Recreation programming will take place in tented areas at the following sites:
 - Dilboy – for Brown School and West Somerville Neighborhood School students
 - Lincoln Park – for Argenziano School and Kennedy School students
 - Healey – for Healey School students
 - East Somerville Community School Field – for ESCS students
 - Winter Hill Community Innovation School Field – for WHCIS students
- We are continuing to work on possible Wednesday virtual and/or in-person outdoor programming opportunities for students after school hours, and will share further details as they are finalized.

HIGHLIGHTS

This Week's Shout-Out: Reminder that Somerville Wicked Local is highlighting a young Activist of the Week! Visit <https://somerville.wickedlocal.com> to learn more about how young Somerville activists are making an impact in our community. Email jtaliesin@wickedlocal.com if there's someone you would like to nominate.

Just for Fun: Try a STEM activity, watch a daily live stream, or check out a virtual exhibit with [Museum of Science at Home](#). For more fun and interactive activities, visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us/justforfun.

ONGOING PROGRAMS, RESOURCES AND LINKS

Programs and Basic Needs Resources

- ***Breakfast and Lunch Grab-and-Go Meals:*** 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:** www.somerville.k12.ma.us/food-resources.
- **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
- 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.
- List of resources on “talking about racism”: www.somerville.k12.ma.us/talking-about-racism

Important Links & Information

- Back to School Plan: www.somerville.k12.ma.us/back-school-2020
- 2020-21 School Year Calendar: www.somerville.k12.ma.us/district-school-year-calendar-2020-2021
- 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