



Somerville Public Schools

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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 SPS Families and Staff,

September 1st is on the horizon and we are excited and ready to welcome our students and staff back to our school buildings! We have spent much of the summer helping students get ready for the school year through a variety of summer programs, getting our schools physically ready for students and staff, ensuring that adequate COVID safety protocols are in place, and continuing to evaluate our practices to ensure equitable access and opportunities for all students. Our equity work is ongoing and we look forward to your continued partnership in this work. We are also actively putting together a list of out-of-school offerings to start in late September and early October, and will be communicating those in our updates. Below is a reminder of our school opening timeline ([2021-22 School Year Calendar](#)) and a reminder of COVID safety protocols for the coming school year.

School Year 2021-22 Opening Timeline

- Monday, August 30: First day of staff professional development for teachers
- Tuesday, August 31: Staff professional development day for all school staff
- Start of weekly COVID pooled testing for all staff
 - Monday, 8/30, Staff Testing Only 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.: Brown, Capuano, Healey, West Somerville, Winter Hill
 - Tuesday, 8/31, Staff Testing Only 8 a.m. -12 p.m.: Argenziano, East Somerville, Kennedy, Next Wave/Full Circle, Somerville High School
- Start of weekly COVID pooled testing for students in grades 1-12
 - Wednesday, 9/1, Student Testing 8 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.: Brown, Winter Hill, Healey, West Somerville
 - Thursday, 9/2, Student Testing 8 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.: SHS, NW/FC, Kennedy, Argenziano, East Somerville
- Wednesday, September 1: First day of school for grades 1-12 (half day for students - noon dismissal)
- Wednesday, September 1: First day of Community Schools after school programming for students in grades 1 and up enrolled in the program (12:00 to 5:30 p.m.)
- Thursday, September 2: First full day of school for grades 1-12
- Thursday, September 2: Community Schools after school programming for students in grades 1 and up enrolled in the program (2:35 to 5:30 p.m.)
- Friday, September 3: No School (all schools closed; district offices open)
- Monday, September 6: Labor Day Holiday (all schools and district offices closed)
- Thursday, September 9: First day of school for PreK and Kindergarten students (early dismissal for PreK students - 11:00 a.m.; regular dismissal for Kindergarten students - 2:35 p.m.)
- Thursday, September 9: First day of Community Schools after school programming for PreK and Kindergarten students
 - PreK - 11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
 - Kindergarten - 2:35 to 5:30 p.m.
- Friday, September 10: Second day of school for PreK and Kindergarten students (early dismissal for PreK students - 11:00 a.m.; regular dismissal for Kindergarten students - 2:35 p.m.)
- Friday, September 10: Community Schools after school programming continues for PreK and Kindergarten students
 - PreK - 11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
 - Kindergarten - 2:35 to 5:30 p.m.

- Monday, September 13: Full day of school for all PreK-12 students; Community Schools after school programming through 5:30 p.m. for all registered students in grades PreK and up.

COVID Safety Protocols

As a reminder, the following COVID safety protocols will be in place this school year until further notice. Visit our [Back to School Fall 2021](#) website for additional information.

- Vaccination is the most effective prevention strategy available for allowing schools to resume and sustain full in-person instruction. COVID-19 vaccines are available to all people age 12 and older. SPS will continue to [promote vaccinations](#) for eligible students, teachers, staff, and families through school-based and community vaccination opportunities. We will be working closely with Somerville's Health and Human Services Department to coordinate and announce new vaccination opportunities over the coming weeks.
- Proof of Vaccination: As noted in last week's update, the Somerville School Committee will be [meeting on Monday, August 30th](#) at 7:00 p.m. for the second reading on the district's vaccination policies for students and staff. The School Committee will be voting on a measure that requires all SPS educators and staff to provide proof of full COVID-19 vaccination. Any district staff member or service provider who does not provide proof of vaccination must submit to routine COVID-19 testing provided by the district and wear a KN95 or high-grade surgical mask which will be provided by the district, inside school buildings. School Committee will also be voting on a measure requiring all educators, staff, and vaccine-eligible students (12 years and older) participating in SPS non-academic extracurricular activities, including SPS Athletics, to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination. If the measures are approved by the School Committee on Monday, we will send information on how to provide vaccination status next week.
- Students and staff are asked to conduct [daily wellness checks](#) and to **stay home if they are displaying any symptoms of COVID or if someone in their household has COVID.**
- All students and staff will be pool tested weekly, regardless of vaccination status. **Parents are reminded to please complete the [CIC Health COVID-19 Testing Consent Form](#) for each of your students before Tuesday, August 31.**
- Increased rapid, symptomatic testing for students and staff as part of our testing protocols.
- To minimize disruption to student learning, we intend to adopt the state's recommended approach of "[Test and Stay](#)" diagnostic testing. In the event of a classroom exposure, parents will have the option of keeping their student in school to receive a rapid antigen test for at least 5 consecutive days rather than quarantining. Parents who wish may still quarantine their student at home following an in-school exposure.
- All students and staff are required to wear masks indoors at all times, except during breakfast and lunch. Masks are available at all schools for any SPS employees and students who prefer not to use their own surgical or washable, cloth masks. All SPS-provided masks achieve excellent filtration. More information on [proper mask wearing](#) can be found on the CDC's website. Masks are not required outdoors.
- We will maintain physical distancing of at least 3' whenever possible, indoors. When outside, unmasked adults should maintain distance if they are not vaccinated.
- At least for the first quarter of the school year, we will maintain the same parent/visitor policy that we had last year. Parents and other visitors will not be allowed into the school buildings, except by appointment only. Students should be dropped off and picked up at the school entrance.
- Enhanced HVAC and/or HEPA filters in all SPS buildings for improved ventilation.

Have a wonderful weekend. We look forward to welcoming our staff and students in grades 1-12 back to our schools on September 1st, and our youngest learners (PreK and Kindergarten) on September 9th!

Respectfully,

Mary Skipper, Superintendent