

CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter from the Somerville Public Schools – February 15, 2020

News & Notes

SHS Black Student Union Performs to Packed House, with Music and Spoken Word Performances

On Wednesday, February 5, members of the Black Student Union (BSU) performed to a packed house in the Somerville High School Auditorium. Math Teacher Ms. Leila Wooten has been the BSU advisor for the past two years and brought amazing BSU performers to the stage, including Nataina Saint-Cyr, Abriella Staggs, Youdson Felix, Carolyne Evaristo, Floriesha Bastien and Paige Jackson. Ms. Wooten and a student opened the assembly by singing “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” accompanied by Music Educator Ms. Beverly Mosby on piano. Another student read a Maya Angelou poem. Most performances were of students reading their own powerful and original poetry, which reflected their diverse experiences as black Americans. Brandeis University’s Dean of Students, Jamele Adams, was a special guest. He read his poetry, and used the call and response technique to emphasize the shared roots of all people. The event closed with members of the Black Student Union inviting students to join their group on Tuesdays from 3-4pm in SHS Room 109. Learn about the BSU and other Clubs offered at Somerville High School <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/SHSClubs>.

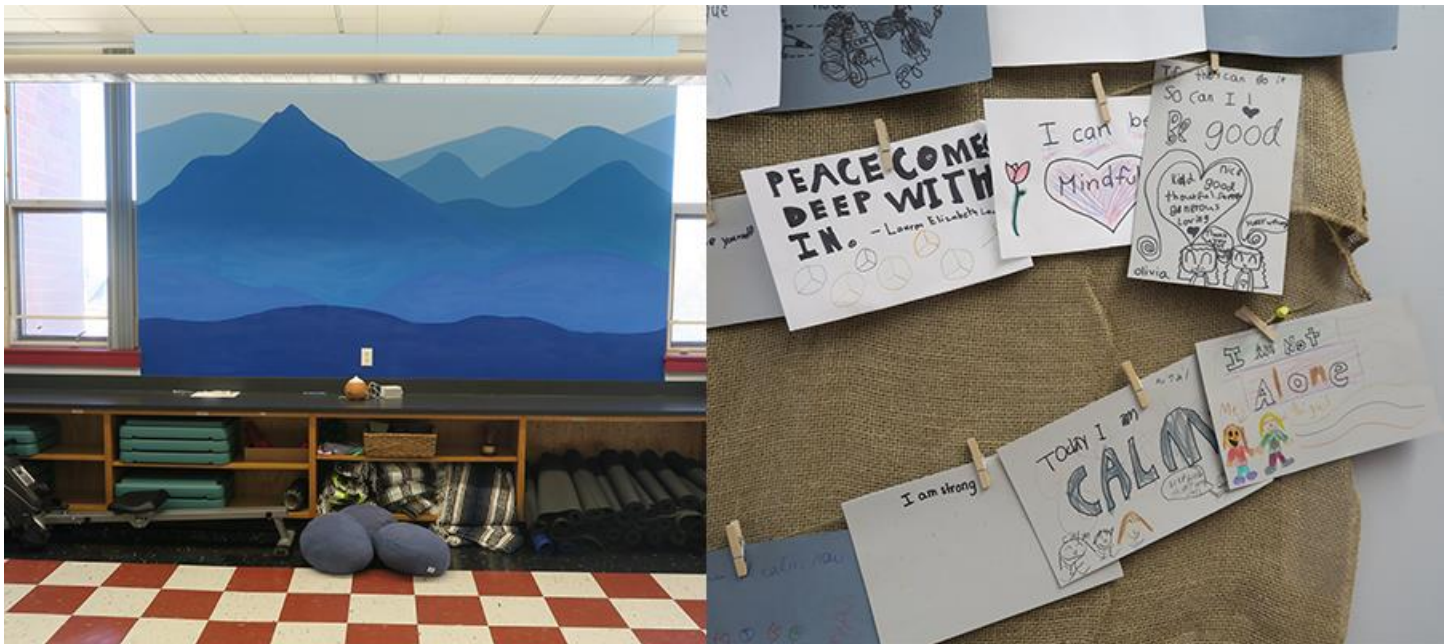


Kennedy Students, Staff Explore Mindfulness in New Wellness Room

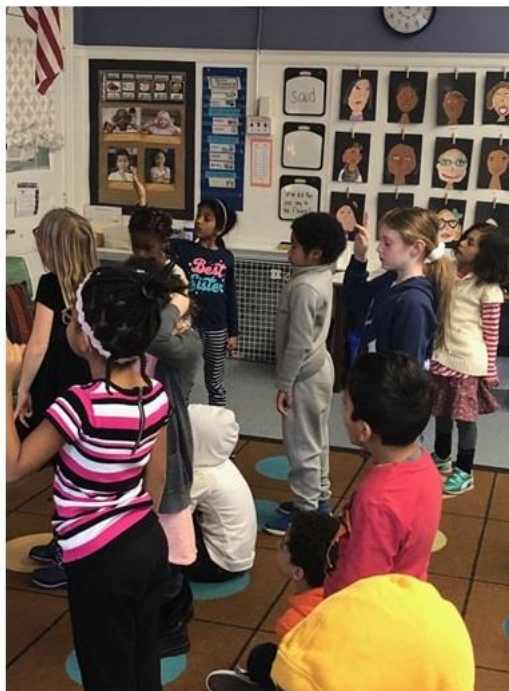
The Kennedy School set aside a room specifically as a retreat for students and staff who are searching for a quiet, contemplative space. The room contains several pieces of exercise equipment, yoga mats, meditation pillows and is painted a tranquil blue with a beautiful mural on one side. The Kennedy has a history of piloting sophisticated mindfulness programming. Read a district blog post about Kennedy Mindfulness practices in the early grades <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/blog/mindfulness-kennedy-school> or read a blog post from our Early Childhood Director

Lisa Kuh about Mindfulness and Socio-Emotional Learning

<http://somervilleearlyeducation.blogspot.com/2015/02/mindfulness-and-social-emotional.html>.



Supporting Learning through Movement and Mindfulness



Wellness Champions across the district recently promoted wellness week at their schools. The week included Winter Walk to School Day on Wednesday, February 5th and a movement and mindfulness break challenge throughout the week. Staff tracked the total number of movement and mindfulness breaks they took with their students, and submitted their results to their School Wellness Champion.

The totals for each school were calculated, taking the size of school and overall participation into account as well. The top 3 schools were awarded wellness

funds for their school. The Argenziano School won with more than 700 movement and mindfulness breaks over the course of the week. Brown School came in second with more than 80% of their school participating. Next Wave/Full Circle came in third and will be adding the wellness funds from this challenge to the funds they won for coming in second in the Walktober challenge in October. We are looking forward to the Screen-Free Week challenge that will take place the first week in May and will challenge individuals to take a break from their tech!

Healey School Seventh Graders Take Interdisciplinary Approach to Learning about Climate Changes



Healey School 7th grade students spent weeks conducting research on and writing about environmental issues related to climate, then developed innovative business solutions to the issues they uncovered. The interdisciplinary project culminated in a Sustainability Fair where they were able to share their work and their findings with parents, staff, and other Healey students. In a “Shark Tank” style forum, students then pitched their business solutions to a panel of potential “investors”. Learn more about this interdisciplinary project and the innovative solutions that students came up with to address complex, real-world issues: <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/blog/healey-school-seventh-graders-take-interdisciplinary-approach-learning-about-climate-change-0>

What’s Happening

SEPAC Workshop on Meeting the Needs of Children with Autism – February 24

The Somerville Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) welcomes Leslie Hughes from Massachusetts Advocates for Children for a workshop on “Meeting the Needs of Children with Autism: What Professionals Need to Know about Special Education Law and Writing Evaluation Reports.” This workshop for staff and interested parents provides an overview of legal standards, evaluation rights and procedures and special education service options for children with autism spectrum disorder. The work is Monday, February 24, 6:00-8:00pm at the West Somerville Neighborhood School Cafeteria (177 Powder House Blvd.)

Auditions for SPS Grades 6-8 All-City Musical, The Lion King – February 26 & February 28

Auditions for the 2020 SPS All-City Musical, The Lion King, will be held from 3:30-5:30pm on Wednesday, February 26th and Friday, February 28th, at the Somerville High School Auditorium (81 Highland Ave.). All students in grades 6-8 are invited to audition; students interested in being part of the non-performance technical crew can learn more at a meeting during rehearsals. Rehearsals will begin on March 4th and run on Wednesdays and Fridays from 3:30-5:30pm. Rehearsals will run every day on “tech week” which will begin on June 1st. Performances will be on Friday, June 5th at 7pm and Saturday, June 6th at 2pm in the SHS Auditorium. Please email Miss Bee (Lauren Barkhouse) with any questions at lbarkhouse@k12.somerville.ma.us. Disney’s The Lion King Jr. is presented with special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.MTIshows.com.

Somerville Partnership for Young Children (SPYC) Offers Tuition Assistance

The Somerville Partnership for Young Children (SPYC) is accepting applications for 2020-2021 Preschool Tuition Assistance for 3 and 4 year olds through January 31, 2020. Income-eligible Somerville residents with a child who will be 3 years old by August 31, 2020 can apply for tuition assistance for preschool programs at partner centers. The goal of SPYC, a collaboration between Somerville Public Schools, Head Start, and participating child care and preschool partners, is to expand access to high quality early education for Somerville children and families. To find out if you’re eligible for tuition assistance for one of the partner centers and to apply, visit <https://somervillechildren.org/tuition-assistance/>. Explore www.somervillechildren.org to learn more about SPYC. Developed with the support of the Early Education and Care’s CPPI grant, SPYC is part of Somerville’s commitment to developing a coordinated early education system through a mixed delivery model that expands access to high quality programs for all children.

Upcoming School & District Events:

Visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us and click on the "calendar" link at the top of the page for a list of upcoming activities in our schools and in our District this month.

- **Monday-Friday, February 17-21: February Vacation** – All Schools closed; District offices closed on Monday, February 17th only

Upcoming School Committee Meetings:

Find the complete School Committee schedule, agendas and meeting minutes (as approved) online at www.somerville.k12.ma.us/school-committee.

- **Monday, February 24, 6:00-7:00pm: Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee Meeting** at the Central Office Main Conference Room (8 Bonair St., 2nd floor)
- **Monday, February 24, 7:00-9:30pm: Regular School Committee Meeting** at the Central Office Main Conference Room (8 Bonair St., 2nd floor)
- **Wednesday, February 26, 6:00-7:00pm: Finance and Facilities Meeting of the Whole** at the Central Office Main Conference Room (8 Bonair St., 2nd floor)

Somerville Family Learning Collaborative Workshops, Events, and Resources:

Find a complete list of SFLC events and workshops at www.somerville.k12.ma.us/families.

The Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC) enhances the capacity of families and schools to support children's learning and well-being by collaborating with community partners and promoting welcoming, responsive schools and programs. Take a look at the work and impact of the SFLC "by the numbers" in this [2018-2019 report](#).

- **SFLC Parent/Guardian English Classes.** Parents/guardians of Somerville students can practice and strengthen their English language skills while learning about and becoming more involved with their child's education. The SFLC works in collaboration with The Welcome Project to provide classes held in the morning and evening. The spring session runs from January 28 to May 14, 2020. Registration is ongoing. Parents/guardians can register by contacting Jennifer Ochoa, the SFLC/East Somerville Community School's Family and Community Liaison at jochoa@k12.somerville.ma.us or at (617) 625-6600, ext. 3706.
- **SSEPAC Workshop: Meeting the Needs of Children with Autism.** On Monday, February 24, the Somerville Special Education Parent Advisory Council welcomes Leslie Hughes from Massachusetts Advocates for Children for a workshop on "Meeting the Needs of Children with Autism: What Professionals Need to Know About Special Education Law and Writing Evaluation Reports." This workshop for staff and interested parents provides an overview of legal standards, evaluation rights and procedures and special education service options for children with autism spectrum disorder. 6:30-8:00pm, West Somerville Neighborhood School (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Legal Services Clinic.** Meet representatives from SomerViva for information and resources, and make an appointment for a free legal consultation with representatives from Greater Boston Legal Services and the Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinical Program (HIRC). Call Irma Flores at (617) 625-6600, x2122 or email iflores@somervillema.gov for a legal consultation appointment. Thursday, February 27, 5:00-7:00pm at the SomerViva Office of Immigrant Affairs (42 Cross St.)
- **In This Together: A Support Group.** Somerville Public Schools and City of Somerville employees who have young children are invited to this free support group. Join other working parents, fellow school and city employees, to share ideas, frustrations, resources, and more. This group is facilitated by Amy Bamforth, LICSW and will meet one Friday a month from 3:00-4:00pm: February 28, March 27, April 17, and May 22 at the SFLC Center in the Cummings School Building (42 Prescott St.)

Looking Ahead:

- **Monday, February 24, 6:00-8:00pm: Somerville SEPAC Workshop on Meeting the Needs of Children with Autism,** at the West Somerville Neighborhood School Cafeteria (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Tuesday, February 25, 10:30am: ESCS Grade 6 Second Quarter Awards** at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium (50 Cross St.)
- **Tuesday, February 25, 11:00am: ESCS Grade 5 Second Quarter Awards** at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium (50 Cross St.)

- **Tuesday, February 25, 1:30pm: ESCS Grades 7 & 8 Second Quarter Awards** at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium (50 Cross St.)
- **Wednesday, February 26, 9:30am: ESCS Grade 1 Second Quarter Awards** at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium (50 Cross St.)
- **Wednesday, February 26, 10:00am: ESCS Grade 2 Second Quarter Awards** at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium (50 Cross St.)
- **Wednesday, February 26, 1:30pm: ESCS Grade 3 Second Quarter Awards** at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium (50 Cross St.)
- **Wednesday, February 26, 2:00pm: ESCS Grade 4 Second Quarter Awards** at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium (50 Cross St.)
- **Wednesday, February 26: Winter Hill AIM Grades 3-5 Field Trip** – Waypoint Adventures Rock Climbing
- **Wednesday, February 26, 4:00-6:00pm: SHS School Improvement Council Meeting** at Somerville High School, Room 230 (81 Highland Ave.)
- **Wednesday, February 26, 4:00-6:30pm: West Somerville Neighborhood School Parent / Teacher Conferences** (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Wednesday, February 26, 5:30-7:00pm: WSNS PTA-Sponsored Books for Bingo and Business Meeting**, at the West Somerville Neighborhood School (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Thursday, February 27, 2:40-3:10pm: WHCIS PreK-1 Beautiful Stuff Family Maker Project** in the Winter Hill Community Innovation School Library (115 Sycamore St.)
- **Thursday, February 27, 3:00-4:30pm: Capuano Parent / Teacher Conferences** (150 Glen St.)
- **Thursday, February 27, 5:00-7:00pm: Capuano Parent / Teacher Conferences** (150 Glen St.)
- **Thursday, February 27, 7:00-8:00pm: Healey Families Community Meeting** at the Healey School Library (5 Meacham St.)
- **Friday, February 28, 8:30-9:30am: WHCIS Principal Coffee Hour** at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School Conference Room (115 Sycamore St.)
- **Friday, February 28, 3:00-4:00pm: SFLC “In This Together” Parent Support Group for SPS and City of Somerville Employees**, at the SFLC Center, Cummings School Building (42 Prescott St.)

Community News & Events

Debate Spaces. Somerville middle schoolers (grades 6-8) are invited again this year to participate in workshops to help them become powerful public speakers and debaters. Hosted by Debate Spaces, an award-winning, Harvard-affiliated non-profit, workshops will take place on **February 29th, March 14th, and April 11th, 10-2:30 p.m. at Suffolk University**. Past workshops have included students from the Argenziano and East Somerville Community School. Students will participate in skill-building games, a debate round, and community activism projects. Most students attend all three sessions though it is possible to attend only one or two. Scholarships available. No prior public speaking or debate experience is necessary. For more information, visit www.debatespaces.org, or email info@debatespaces.org.

The Growing Center. The Friends of the Community Growing Center’s volunteers have been busy tapping local sugar maple trees and collecting their sap across the Tufts University campus. Join them on Saturday, March 7, 10am-12pm for the Boil Down – a FREE event for all – and experience the process of boiling sap into maple syrup! Taste fresh local syrup, learn how to make your own, and connect with other folks in the community! The Boil Down will take place at the Somerville Community Growing Center, located at 22 Vinal Ave., just outside Union Square. (Rain date is March 14, 10am-12pm). Learn more about The Growing Center at www.thegrowingcenter.org.

Silent No More. The Adi and Jerry Greenberg Foundation and CICA presents a No Limits Production of Silent No More on Saturday, March 7th, 7:30pm at the Regent Theater (7 Medford St. in Arlington, MA). The production features a collection of inspiring life stories by individuals with hearing loss. Tickets are \$25. For seat reservation for ASL Interpreters and Captioning, please email rsvp@nolimitsfordeafchildren.org. For more information, visit http://regenttheatre.com/details/no_limits_presents..._silent_no_more.

The Duhamel Star. Is there someone in the Somerville Public Schools that you would like to celebrate? The Duhamel Education Initiative (DEI) invites you to recognize them with a Duhamel Star – a certificate of appreciation given as a donation to DEI in the honoree’s name. You can express your gratitude with a personal message and grow student

engagement in SPS through your donation to DEI's grant fund. Duhamel Stars can be purchased at any time. For more information and to order a Duhamel Star, visit [www.duhamelsomerville.org/duhamel-star.html#/.](http://www.duhamelsomerville.org/duhamel-star.html#/)

Somerville Parks & Recreation. Check out the Somerville Parks and Recreation Department website (www.somervillerec.com) for information about their February Vacation Floor Hockey program, and other programs and events available this winter. A full list of classes, clinics, events, youth and adult league sports, and activities, as well as cost for each is available at <http://www.somervillerec.com/info/activities/default.aspx?type=activities>.

Middle Grades Writer's Den. Writer's Den is a free weekly evening creative writing workshop open to all Somerville students in grades 4-8. Creative weekly activities and fun writing prompts, storytelling, script writing and more keep students eager to write and share their writing. Publishing opportunities and snacks. Co-Directors Alan Ball, Cara Feinberg, and Allyson Sherlock invite all students in grades 4-8 to join the fun. Parent/guardian permission required. Writer's Den takes place Wednesdays and some Mondays (except vacation weeks or if schools close due to inclement weather). Visit the district website (www.somerville.k12.ma.us/events/calendar) for Writer's Den meeting dates for the rest of the school year. The workshops take place at the Healey School Library, 5 Meacham St.

Maya School Vacation Week Activities. The Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology (11 Divinity Ave., Cambridge) invites you to meet museum volunteers or staff in the Latin America gallery for a special School Vacation Week activity featuring ancient Maya civilization. Activities are glyph-rubbing or an augmented reality experience to explore fine details and unexpected views of a Maya vessel on display in the gallery. Visit <https://www.peabody.harvard.edu/> to learn more about this exhibit.

Dig into Dinner. A special event for children ages 4-8. Explore the new [Resetting the Table](#) exhibition at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology (11 Divinity Ave., Cambridge), starting at the dinner table set for a party. Family-friendly activities about what we eat will be set up throughout the gallery: drop in for smell stations, Play-Doh® desserts, games with prizes, and a raffle of dinner for two at a Harvard Square restaurant. Saturday, February 29, 1:00-4:00pm. Regular museum admission rates apply. www.peabody.harvard.edu/dig-into-dinner

City & District Employment Opportunities

Consider joining a winning team! Current city and district opportunities include:

- [Crossing Guard](#), Police Department, City of Somerville
- [Public Space Planner](#), OSPCD – Public Space and Urban Forestry, City of Somerville
- [School Nurse Floater](#), Health and Human Services Dept., City of Somerville

Visit <https://www.somervillema.gov/jobs> for a complete listing of current open positions in the City of Somerville.

- [Middle School Cross Country Coach](#), Athletics Department, Somerville Public Schools
- [Temporary Long-Term Substitute Teacher - Reading](#), West Somerville Neighborhood School, Somerville Public Schools
- [PT Assistant Teacher – Somerville Community School Afterschool Program](#), John F. Kennedy School, Somerville Public Schools

Visit <https://www.schoolspring.com/jobs/?employer=16902> for a complete listing of current open positions in the Somerville Public Schools.

Our Commitment to the Whole Child

VISION: "We believe in developing the whole child — the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical potential of all students — by providing students with the skills, opportunities, and resources that will nurture innovative ideas, foster pride in diversity, inspire students to become lifelong learners and empower them to enrich their communities."