

CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter from the Somerville Public Schools – January 17, 2020

News & Notes

Seed Identification Project Promotes Hands-on, Multidisciplinary Learning for Winter Hill 7th Graders

Winter Hill Community Innovation School's 7th grade teacher Tara Murphy created a multidisciplinary project for her students that lasts most of this school year and will continue into next fall. As part of their Seed Identification Project, students cover English language, science, and math curriculum. First, students chose a plant to study and research. They obtained the plant's seeds in several different ways. Those from bell peppers, apples, and pears came from their own school snacks. Milkweed, magnolia, and sycamore seeds were from the surrounding neighborhood. The radishes and sunflower seeds came from the Winter Hill School garden.

Students then researched the Latin taxonomy of their selected plant, chose images of their plant in full bloom, and wrote descriptions of their plant and its seeds. The students' work is presented on the board immediately outside the classroom. This is part of a multiyear project. Ms. Murphy plans to have her students plant the seeds that they harvested last fall when they return as 8th graders.



Museum Exhibit Offers Unique Learning Opportunity for SHS Students

Senior and junior students in Meaghan McDevitt's and Laurie Foley's Somerville High School Health Careers and Pharmacy programs had the opportunity to learn about the development of the human body by visiting The Museum of Science's "Body World" exhibit last month. The exhibit presents the body at every stage as it changes, grows, matures, and finally wanes. The exhibit also focused on long-term effects of both healthy and unhealthy lifestyles. Dr. Bonnie Cohen, a member of the advisory committee, funded this excellent opportunity for the students. The students enjoyed the exhibit and the ability to extend their learning beyond the classroom walls. Lisa Brukilacchio, chair for the Health Careers Program advisory committee also attended. Both Dr. Cohen and Ms. Brukilacchio enjoyed the exhibit and the opportunity to see it with the students.

Supporting Student's Overall Health and Wellness

Are you interested in finding out how you can support the overall health and wellness of Somerville students and youth?

The Wellness Policy and Procedures, which were updated last year, can be found on the district's Wellness Resource page at:

<https://somerville.k12.ma.us/wellness>. The scope of the policy has expanded over the last several years from focusing mostly on physical health to include "other school-based activities that promote student's wellness" such as social emotional learning and sustainability.

In addition to the full policy, you can find newly added "highlights" on the Wellness Resource page for families and schools along with other resources that align with the policy and procedures including the Healthy Snack List created by the Food and Nutrition Services Department.

The Somerville Public Schools strives to promote social, emotional, mental, physical, intellectual and environmental well-being through a collaborative approach across departments and through on-going community partnerships.



What's Happening

Somerville Goes Head to Head against Medford at 2020 Tufts Classic – Sunday, January 19

The Somerville High School boys and girls basketball teams will go head-to-head against the Medford Mustangs on Sunday, January 19th, at the 4th Annual Tufts Classic. The double-header takes place at the Cousens Gymnasium on the Tufts University campus. The girls' game tips off at 12:00pm, followed by the boys' game at 1:30pm. Admission to the Tufts Classic is free. Donations for Project SOUP in Somerville and Community Cupboard in Medford will be accepted. Fans are asked to bring nonperishable food items and personal household and hygiene products to support those in need in both cities. A detailed list of preferred donation items can be found on the Tufts Classic's [Facebook event page](#).

Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration – Monday, January 20

The annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration event will take place Monday, January 20, 2020 at the East Somerville Community School. Festivities for this free family event will begin at 10:00 a.m. The celebration will be emceed by Marcus Santos and will feature musical performances by El Sistema Somerville and the Somerville High School World Percussion Ensemble, as well as readings by student essayists. A keynote address will be given by Aba Taylor, a social justice educator, facilitator and organizer. Following the speaking program, the Beautiful Stuff Project will facilitate the creation of a community mosaic. This year the Somerville Human Rights Commission will hold a drive during the event, to benefit Project SOUP. Attendees are invited to bring toiletries such as shampoo, toilet paper and soap. The event is organized in cooperation with the City of Somerville's Health and Human Services Department, Somerville Public Schools, and the Somerville Human Rights Commission.

Highlanders to Compete at Andrew Lawon Foundation Basketball Invitational on January 25

On Saturday, January 25th, the Somerville High School Boys Basketball team will participate in the **Andrew Lawon Foundation Basketball Invitational** at TD Garden. Somerville will take on Algonquin in the Garden at 3:30pm. Tickets are \$18.00 per person and includes admission to seven other marquee high school games. Head Coach Mark Antonelli and the Highlanders invite all Somerville students, faculty, alumni, and community members to come out, wear their red and blue, and rock the Garden in support of the Highlanders. Tickets are available through the Friends of Somerville Basketball Booster organization and can be purchased with cash, checks (made out to Friends of Somerville Basketball)

or via Venmo @FriendsofSomervilleBasketball. Contact Head Coach Mark Antonelli at mantonelli@k12.somerville.ma.us or 617-584-7321 for ticket information.

Road to the Future Transition Fair – Thursday, February 6, 2020

Families of middle and high school age students with disabilities are invited to come and learn about: agencies and services that may be helpful to your college or workforce bound child; educational, employment, and independent living options and opportunities; and networking and family support possibilities. The [Road to the Future Transition Fair](#) will take place in the main cafeteria of Cambridge Rindge & Latin School (459 Broadway, Cambridge). This event is hosted by Cambridge Public Schools OSS Transition Services in collaboration with Somerville Public Schools. RSVP to Brittany Courier, bcourier@k12.somerville.ma.us (617-625-6600 x6201) or Sandra Copman, scopman@k12.somerville.ma.us (617-625-6600 x6855).

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. Visit <https://somervillechildren.org/tuition-assistance/> to find out if you're eligible and to apply for tuition assistance to one of the SPYC partner centers. To learn more about SPYC, explore their new website: www.somervillechildren.org. SPYC was developed with the support of the Early Education and Care's Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) grant, and 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, January 20: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day** – All Schools and District Offices CLOSED
- **Monday, January 20, 11:00am-3:00pm: Brown School PTA Open Skate** event at the Veterans Memorial Rink (570 Somerville Ave.) Brown School skaters only 11:00am-noon; public skate noon-3:00pm
- **Tuesday, January 21, 3:00-4:00pm: Capuano School Improvement Council Meeting** at the Capuano Conference Room (150 Glen St.)
- **Tuesday, January 21, 6:00-7:30pm: WHCIS Governing Board Meeting** (115 Sycamore St.)
- **Wednesday, January 22: Half-Day Wednesday for PK-8** (PK dismissed at 11:30am; K-8 dismissed at noon)
- **Wednesday, January 22: Spirit Day (Equation Day)** at the West Somerville Neighborhood School (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Wednesday, January 22, 5:00-6:30pm: WSNS School Council Meeting** in Room 205 at the West Somerville Neighborhood School (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Wednesday, January 22, 6:30pm: Brown School Winter Concert** at the Somerville High School Auditorium (81 Highland Ave.)
- **Thursday, January 23, 2:40-3:30pm: WHCIS Grades PK-1 Beautiful Stuff Family Maker Project** at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School Library (115 Sycamore St.)
- **Friday, January 24, 8:45-10:15am: WSNS Winter Music Concert** at the West Somerville Neighborhood School (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Friday, January 24, 1:30pm: Brown School Superintendent Awards** (201 Willow Ave.)
- **Friday, January 24, 5:30-7:00pm: ESCS Maker Night** at the East Somerville Community School (50 Cross St.)

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.

- **Wednesday, January 22, 6:00-7:00pm: Rules Management Subcommittee Meeting** at the Central Office Main Conference Room (8 Bonair St., 2nd floor)

- **Monday, January 27, 6:00-7:00pm: Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee Meeting** at the City Council Chambers, City Hall (93 Highland Ave.)
- **Monday, January 27, 7:00-9:30pm: Regular School Committee Meeting** at the City Council Chambers, City Hall (93 Highland Ave.)

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 January Drop-in Playgroups.** Drop-in *Discover & Learn* playgroups for families with children ages birth-5 years old: Wednesdays, 9:00-10:30am: January 8, 15, 22, 29; Thursdays, 3:00-4:30pm: January 9, 16, 23, 30. Session 2 playgroup registration begins January 7 and 8 and is ongoing until all groups are full. Register online at www.somerville.k12.ma.us/playgroups or call (617) 625-6600, ext. 6990.
- **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.
- **Course Planning Night for 8th Grade Families.** SPS 8th grade families are invited to learn about the high school course selection process and to meet their students' future high school counselors. The event is Thursday, January 30, 6:00-7:00pm at the Somerville High School Auditorium. Interpretation available. Please visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us/schools/somerville-high-school/welcome-somerville-high-school for more information about the transition from grade 8 to high school timeline and for answers to some of your SHS questions.

Looking Ahead:

- **Monday, January 27, 8:30am: Winter Hill Community Innovation School PTA Student of the Month Awards** (115 Sycamore St.)
- **Wednesday, January 29, 4:00-6:00pm: SHS School Improvement Council Meeting** in Room 230 at Somerville High School (81 Highland Ave.)
- **Thursday, January 30, 3:15-6:15pm: Kennedy School Parent/Teacher Conferences** (5 Cherry St.)
- **Thursday, January 30, 6:00-7:00pm: SHS Introduction to Course Selection Night for 8th Grade Students and Families**, in the Somerville High School Auditorium (81 Highland Ave.)
- **Friday, January 31, 9:15-10:30am: Argenziano School's Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration** (290 Washington St.)
- **Saturday, March 1: Somerville High School [Spring Sport Registration](#) opens;** Season starts March 16, 2020
- **Monday, February 3, 5:00-7:00pm: Kennedy School Parent/Teacher Conferences** (5 Cherry St.)

Community News & Events

Somerville Media Center. Bored? Out of school early? Want to make cool media projects with your friends? Sign up for SMC's Media Exploration Adventures! Media Exploration Adventures are a brand new workshop series for youth in Somerville on Half Day Wednesdays. Each session includes targeted, hands-on, collaborative media production activities where youth develop their media skills in a fun, safe, supportive environment. The class also includes snack and a brief parent showcase with a light dinner from 5:30-6:00pm. Sign up for one or all of them! Program held at the Somerville Media Center (90 Union Square). Fees vary; scholarships available. Youth eligible for free or reduced lunch can attend for free. Visit www.somervillemedia.org/youth-media-2/media-exploration-workshops/?mc_cid=324a737c00&mc_eid=eb2a28602b for dates and to register. To learn more about Somerville Media Center and other great SMC programs, visit www.somervillemedia.org/.

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#/)

Girls Who Code Club at the Somerville Public Library. Calling all middle school girls! The winter session of the Somerville Public Library's Girls Who Code club gets underway January 28. Facilitated by volunteers from the tech community, girls join a sisterhood of supportive peers as they learn coding to create a project they care about. The Club meets every Tuesday from 6:30-8pm for 10 weeks at the Central Library (79 Highland Ave). For more information and to register, contact Karen Stevens at kstevens@minlib.net.

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. How about a field trip to a fun location in and around the Boston area? A full list of classes, clinics, events, youth and adult league sports, and activities, as well as pricing 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.

Somerville Prevention's annual Community Game Show & Discussion event to review the results from the 2018-2019 Middle School Student Health Survey (YRBS) will take place on **Thursday, January 30, 5:30p to 7:30p at Connexion.** Food & refreshments will be served!

City & District Employment Opportunities

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

- [Public Space Planner](#), OSPCD – Public Space and Urban Forestry, City of Somerville
- [Heavy Motor Equipment Operators](#), DPW – Buildings and Grounds, City of Somerville
- [Program Coordinator](#), Parks & Recreation Dept., City of Somerville
- [Accounting Analyst](#), Auditing Dept., City of Somerville

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

- [Intermittent Lunch Attendant](#), Food and Nutrition Services Dept., Somerville Public Schools
- [FT Lead Teacher, Community Schools Afterschool Program](#), Brown School, Somerville Public Schools
- [Early Childhood Intern – Somerville Partnership for Young Children](#), Early Education Department, Somerville Public Schools
- [Girls Freshmen Softball Coach](#), Athletics Dept., 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."