

# CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter from the Somerville Public Schools – November 22, 2019

## News & Notes

### Somerville High School Students Earn Seal of Biliteracy

Three Somerville High School Class of 2020 seniors have already taken the steps to earn the Seal of Biliteracy, an award given by a school in recognition of students who have studied and gained proficiency in English and a second language by graduation. SHS seniors **Luca Duclos-Orsello**, **Brian Marin Ruiz** and **Angie Mejia**, have already completed the necessary steps to attain this recognition. They and any other students who earn this distinction will receive their medals on Class Day and wear them at graduation. They will also have the Seal of Biliteracy affixed on their diploma. Five SHS Class of 2019 graduates earned the award last year – Helen Garcia, Erick Juarez, Sarah Monteiro Brandao de Figueiredo, Deysi Peña Figueroa, and Maklin Rodriguez. Three students earned the Seal in 2018, the pilot year.



On November 22, 2017, Massachusetts joined 28 other states that recognize the Seal of Biliteracy. This statement of nationally recognized Biliteracy can be useful for college admissions or to future employers. Students demonstrate proficiency in English by scoring Proficient or higher on MCAS or 4.2 on the ACCESS test. They demonstrate proficiency in the partner language by way of The ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) or by receiving a 4 or 5 on an AP language exam.

Students must apply for this recognition. Applications for juniors and seniors will be available in November through World Language teachers, ELE teachers and school counselors. Students must take the AAPPL in the partner language (or earn a qualifying score on an AP language exam). The deadline to apply is January 31, 2020. If you know of a junior or senior who might qualify, please encourage them to apply.



### Argenziano String Students Perform during Morning Announcements

Six middle grade string students played “America the Beautiful” for a main office full of parents, students, staff, and teachers at the Albert F. Argenziano School on Thursday morning, November 21. The performance by four violinists and two cellists was broadcast over the intercom system for the entire school to hear as part of the morning announcements. Students had been practicing the song in string class, which is taught by Somerville Public Schools District String Specialist, Andrew Blickenderfer. But it was another thing entirely to perform it in front of a live audience and first thing on a hectic morning.

After an initial false start just a few measures in, the group decided to begin the song again from the top and performed a lovely rendition to start the school day. As Mr. Blickenderfer explained afterward, the focus “is always about the process” and that needing to regroup after a misstep can feel uncomfortable, but is a necessary and important part of the performance process. He also added that it is a lesson that applies to plenty of situations well beyond live musical performance. It was no surprise to him, therefore, that the second start of “America the Beautiful” was a beautiful, clear performance that garnered a huge round of applause.

## Kennedy School Celebrates Family Cultures at Heritage Festival

The John F. Kennedy School’s Heritage Festival took place on Wednesday, November 20, and offered an opportunity for students and their families to celebrate each other’s cultures. The event was organized by Family and Community Liaison Francesca Nguyen Vo Broekman. Six activity stations, one for each inhabited continent, were set up in the gymnasium. Students and families were asked to bring items from home that represented their families’ cultures. Some items brought to school for the showcase included a stick, or *camán*, for the Irish sport of hurling and a Brazilian *pandeiro*, or drum. One first grade parent, Loretta, brought in several *calaveras*, or decorated sugar skulls she had made at home for the recent Day of the Dead holiday.

Students came to the festival in shifts to make room for everyone. Kindergarten through grade 3 classrooms had a scavenger hunt for items such as a multicolored *serape* from Saulito, Mexico and *matryoshka* dolls from Russia. For students in grades 4 through 8, there were trivia questions to answer, such as “What is the largest city in Africa?” answer: Lagos, Nigeria; and “What city is situated on two continents?” answer: Istanbul, Turkey. There were also books in several different world languages for students to examine and the opportunity to practice Chinese calligraphy using brushes and water. Her goal for the festival, Ms. Broekman explained, was to provide an opportunity for students to learn more about and respect other cultures.



## Students Embrace Recycling Challenge, Lead Efforts to Reduce-Reuse-Recycle

Thanks to a Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) grant received by the city’s Office of Sustainability & Environment (OSE), we have been able to create Sustainability Champion positions at all of our elementary schools over the last few years. Last week, school Sustainability Champions promoted National Recycling Day at each of their schools by sharing out fun facts and trivia questions throughout the week. As part of the National Recycling Day activities, students made bulletin boards and signed pledges to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Several schools collected items to donate to the SFLC Clothing Closet at the Cummings or to the [Curbside Textile Recycling Program](#) through the city. Old markers were also collected and will be returned to Crayola through their [ColorCyle](#) program to be repurposed.

The Sustainability Champions sent out a video they made about recycling in classrooms, along with a video introduction from Superintendent Skipper. The video as well as posters about what can be recycled in the classroom can be found on the [SPS wellness resource page](#) under Wellness Policy & Procedures. Information about residential recycling can be found on the OSE website including the [Waste Wizard](#), which allows you to type in an item and find out if it is recyclable in Somerville and the [Electronic Waste Recycling Program](#). In addition to recycling week, many of the Sustainability

Champions also lead Green Clubs at their schools and will be working with students to continue to promote and support reducing, reusing and recycling at their schools throughout the year.



## What's Happening

### **"In the Heights" Musical Performances this Weekend at SHS Auditorium**

Purchase your tickets now for a musical performance by the Highlander Theatre Company of "In the Heights" this weekend at the Somerville High School Auditorium. "In the Heights" is a universal story of a vibrant community in New York's Washington Heights neighborhood – a place where the coffee from the corner bodega is light and sweet, the windows are always open and the breeze carries the rhythm of three generations of music. It is a community on the brink of change, full of hopes, dreams and pressures, where the biggest struggles can be deciding which traditions you take with you, and which ones you leave behind. Winner of the 2008 Tony Awards for Best Musical, Best Score, Best Choreography and Best Orchestrations, "In the Heights" is presented through special arrangement with R & H

Theatricals: [www.rnh.com](http://www.rnh.com). Read all about this wonderful student production in this recent article:

<https://somerville.wickedlocal.com/news/20191108/somerville-students-sing-about-gentrification-and-immigration-in-heights>. Purchase tickets at [www.highlandertheatre.org](http://www.highlandertheatre.org). The following performances are coming up:

- Friday, Nov. 22 @ 7PM
- Saturday, Nov. 23 @ 2PM and 7PM

### **Don't miss the annual Turkey Day Backyard Rivalry with Cambridge**

The Somerville High School Highlanders battle the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School Falcons in the annual Backyard Football Rivalry. Cambridge hosts the game this year at 10:00am on Thursday, November 28<sup>th</sup> at Russell Field. Tickets are \$7 on game day. Don't miss the chance to support our team. The game location is subway accessible by taking the Red Line to Alewife Station. For directions to Russell Field visit their webpage:

<http://cpsdcrls.ss5.sharpschool.com/cms/One.aspx?portalId=3045383&pageId=3623029>

### **Next Wave/Full Circle Holiday Wreath Fundraiser**

You still have time to purchase a beautiful holiday wreath and support Next Wave/Full Circle students! Next Wave/Full Circle is holding its annual Holiday Wreath fundraiser. The purchase of a beautiful 14" balsam wreath with a red velvet bow for \$18.00 apiece will not only brighten up your décor, but will also help fund student activities, field trips, and incentives for the school's reward system. Wreaths will be delivered to schools the first week in December. Contact Agnes Gallant at [agallant@k12.somerville.ma.us](mailto:agallant@k12.somerville.ma.us) to place an order.

### **Visit our PK/K-8 Schools December 3-5 during Open House Week**

Community members, parents, guardians and residents are all welcome to visit our PreK-8 schools December 3-5, 2019 from 8:30am to 1:30pm. No appointment is necessary. Drop in at any time for a tour of the facilities and classrooms, and

to meet students, staff and other parents. There will also be Coffee Hours from 9:00am – 10:00am at the Enrollment Office, 42 Prescott Street where you can meet other parents going through the school choice process and talk to knowledgeable enrollment staff.

- Learn more about the PreK-8 Open Houses: [www.somerville.k12.ma.us/openhouses](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/openhouses)
- Visit the Enrollment Office website to learn more about the registration process: [www.somerville.k12.ma.us/enrollment](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/enrollment)
- Find the websites for each of our PK/K-8 Schools: [www.somerville.k12.ma.us/schools](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/schools)
- Find tips for approaching the Open Houses as a parent or guardian in our blog post: [www.somerville.k12.ma.us/blog/open-house-week](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/blog/open-house-week)

## **Families Together Somerville (FTS) Volunteer Informational Meeting – December 4, 6:00pm**

Families Together Somerville is a family-to-family mentoring program, which pairs first generation college-going juniors' families with another Somerville family that has direct experience with the college application process. Through a structured program of family-matching and support, the college-experienced parents/guardians will serve as guides and mentors to the selected juniors and their families as they work through the many phases of the college application process. The program is committed to the idea of empowering the students and families being mentored, and will match them with families who can work in that spirit.

## **“Share the Warmth” Winter Coat Drive**

Throughout November and December, the Clothing Closet of the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC) will be collecting donations of new and gently used winter clothing. With the colder weather, there is an urgent need for winter coats, snow pants, gloves, warm socks, and winter boots. Donations of children’s garments 5T-16 and boots sizes 5-13, and adult garments S-XXL and boots sizes 6-12 would be most appreciated. Drop-off locations are at all SPS schools during regular school hours and at the SFLC Center located at 42 Prescott Street. Please contact Francia Reyes at (617) 625-6600, x6994 or [freyes@k12.somerville.ma.us](mailto:freyes@k12.somerville.ma.us) with any questions.

## **Upcoming School & District Events:**

Visit [www.somerville.k12.ma.us](http://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.

- **Friday, November 22, 7:00-10:00pm: Highlander Theatre Company Musical Production of “In the Heights”** at the Somerville High School Auditorium (81 Highland Ave.)
- **Saturday, November 23, 2:00-5:00pm: Highlander Theatre Company Musical Production of “In the Heights”** at the Somerville High School Auditorium (81 Highland Ave.)
- **Saturday, November 23, 7:00-10:00pm: Highlander Theatre Company Musical Production of “In the Heights”** at the Somerville High School Auditorium (81 Highland Ave.)
- **Tuesday, November 26: Picture Absent/Retake Day** at the Kennedy School (5 Cherry St.)
- **Wednesday, November 27: Half Day for all students** – Start of Thanksgiving Break. 11:30am dismissal for PK students; noon dismissal for K-12 students
- **Wednesday, November 27, 10:00am: SHS Football Pep Rally** at the Somerville High School Auditorium (81 Highland Ave.)
- **Wednesday, November 27: WSNS PTA-Sponsored Spirit Day – Mustache Day** at the West Somerville Neighborhood School (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Wednesday, November 27, 8:45-9:30am: WSNS 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Foundations Party** at the West Somerville Neighborhood School (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Thursday and Friday, November 28 & 29: Thanksgiving Break** – All schools and district offices CLOSED
- **Tuesday, December 3: Picture Retake Day** at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School (115 Sycamore St.)
- **Tuesday, December 3, 8:30am-1:30pm: School Open Houses** at all SPS PK/K-8 schools (Argenziano, Brown, ESCS, Healey, Kennedy, WSNS, WHCIS, Capuano)
- **Wednesday, December 4: WSNS School Picture Re-Take Day** at the West Somerville Neighborhood School (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Wednesday, December 4, 8:30am-1:30pm: School Open Houses** at all SPS PK/K-8 schools (Argenziano, Brown, ESCS, Healey, Kennedy, WSNS, WHCIS, Capuano)

- **Wednesday, December 4, 1:00-2:00pm: WSNS K and SMILE trip** to Wheelock Family Theatre
- **Wednesday, December 4, 6:00pm: Families Together Somerville (FTS) Volunteer Informational Meeting** at the Somerville High School modular building (81 Highland Ave.)
- **Thursday, December 5, 8:30am-1:30pm: School Open Houses** at all SPS PK/K-8 schools (Argenziano, Brown, ESCS, Healey, Kennedy, WSNS, WHCIS, Capuano)
- **Thursday, December 5, 5:00-7:30pm: Brown School Parent-Teacher Conferences** (201 Willow Ave.)
- **Thursday, December 5, 5:45-7:30pm: Kennedy Literacy Maker Night, Grades K-3** at the Kennedy School (5 Cherry St.)
- **Friday, December 6, 6:30-8:30pm: PTA Holiday Craft Fair** at the Argenziano School (290 Washington 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](http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/school-committee).

- **Monday, December 2, 6:00-7:00pm: Educational Programs and Instruction Subcommittee Meeting** at the City Council Chambers, City Hall (93 Highland Ave.)
- **Monday, December 2, 7:00-8:30pm: Regular School Committee Meeting** at the City Council Chambers, City Hall (93 Highland Ave.)
- **Monday, December 16, 6:00-7:00pm: Finance and Facilities Subcommittee Meeting** at the Central Office 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Conference Room (8 Bonair St.)
- **Monday, December 16, 6:00-7:00pm: Rules Management Subcommittee Meeting** at the City Council Chambers, City Hall (93 Highland Ave.)
- **Monday, December 16, 7:00-8:30pm: 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](http://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 Playgroups – Session 1, October 7-December 13, 2019.** Somerville parents and caregivers with infants, toddlers and preschool children meet and play in age and language-based groups that gather weekly at the SFLC Center (42 Prescott St.) and the Capuano (150 Glen St.). Drop-in groups are available.
- **IMPACT: Arts and Conversation Group.** IMPACT (Immigrant Multilingual Parents Art and Conversation Together) is a weekly arts and conversation group for immigrant families with children in the Somerville Public Schools looking to connect with other families in the community. IMPACT meets every Friday, 9:00-11:00am at the SFLC Center (42 Prescott St.). The group is offered in partnership with the Beautiful Stuff Project and with support from Cambridge Health Alliance.
- **Share the Warmth Winter Coat Drive.** With the arrival of winter, the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative Clothing Closet is accepting donations of new or gently used winter clothing to support families in need. Please check the "What's Happening" section of this newsletter for details. Thank you for your support of this effort.

### Looking Ahead:

- **Monday, December 9: WSNS Book Fair** at the West Somerville Neighborhood School (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Tuesday, December 10, 9:00-10:00am: Kennedy School K-3 Winter Concert** at the Kennedy School Cafetorium (5 Cherry St.)
- **Tuesday, December 10, 5:30-7:00pm: ESCS School Council Meeting** at the East Somerville Community School Library (50 Cross St.)
- **Tuesday, December 10, 6:00-7:30pm: WHCIS Governing Board Meeting** at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School (115 Sycamore St.)
- **Wednesday, December 11: Half-Day Wednesday for PK-8** (pre-K dismissed at 11:30am; K-8 dismissed at noon)

- **Wednesday, December 11, 9:00-10:30am: Kennedy School 4-8 Winter Concert** at the Kennedy School Cafetorium (5 Cherry St.)
- **Wednesday, December 11, 5:00-6:30pm: WSNS School Council Meeting** in Room 205 at the West Somerville Neighborhood School (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Thursday, December 12, 9:00-11:00am: WHCIS Winter Concert** at the Somerville High School Auditorium (81 Highland Ave.)
- **Thursday, December 12, 6:00-8:00pm: Somerville SEPAC Business Meeting and Officer Nominations** at the West Somerville Neighborhood School Cafeteria (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Thursday, December 12, 6:30-8:00pm: All-City Middle School Winter Concert** at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium (50 Cross St.)
- **Thursday, December 12, 7:00-8:30pm: Sharing Our Stories Support Group** at the SFLC Center, Cummings School Building (42 Prescott St., Room 14)
- **Friday, December 13, 8:15-9:00am: WSNS PTA-Sponsored Coffee Hour** in Room 222 at the West Somerville Neighborhood School (177 Powder House Blvd.)
- **Wednesday, December 18, 6:00-8:00pm: SHS School Improvement Council Meeting** at Somerville High School, Room 230 (81 Highland Ave.)
- **Thursday, December 19, 6:30-8:30pm: SHS Winter Concert** at the Somerville High School Auditorium (81 Highland Ave.)

## Community News & Events

**Somerville Parks & Recreation.** Whether you're interested in figure skating lessons, learning about the movements and music of Capoeira Angola (an Afro Brazilian martial art disguised as a dance), a fitness or sports program or clinic, or finding out about swim programs and times, Somerville Parks & Recreation has you covered. Register and learn more about the many Somerville Parks & Recreation programs at: [www.somervillerec.com](http://www.somervillerec.com).

**Debate Spaces**, a local non-profit that teaches students public speaking and debate skills while helping them build their leadership potential, will be running a debate academy again for middle schoolers (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders) on Saturday, November 23rd from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., at Suffolk University. Some SPS students attended their last academy in October. Attend and you'll find out what debate is all about through fun and interactive activities. The Academy is taught by the former #1 debater in the U.S. Pizza is included. Students will have fun and get to know kids from all over the Boston area. To enroll, sign up at <https://www.debatespaces.org>. The Academy is \$20/day, though scholarships are available. Have questions? Email: [debatespacesboston@gmail.com](mailto:debatespacesboston@gmail.com)

## City & District Employment Opportunities

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

- [Planner](#), Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD), City of Somerville
  - [Community Engagement Specialist/Social Media Manager](#), Communications and Community Engagement Dept., City of Somerville
  - [2020 Census Complete Count Coord.](#), Communications and Community Engagement Dept., City of Somerville
- Visit <https://www.somervillema.gov/jobs> for a complete listing of current open positions in the City of Somerville.
- [Special Education ECIP Autism Paraprofessional](#), Capuano Early Childhood Center, Somerville Public Schools
  - [Special Education Lead Teacher](#), Community Schools Afterschool Program, WSNS, SPS
  - [Full-time Lead Teacher, Community Schools Afterschool Program](#), Winter Hill Community Innovation 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."