

THE SPARTAN SPECTATOR

Principal's Newsletter



Dear SHS Spartan Families,

As we enter spring, we are delighted to be back into full operation. It is great to see the hallways and the classrooms filled with students. Yes, closer quarters may mean more quarantining but the restrictions seem to be lessening as we move forward. Each week, we do our best to keep you updated on the latest news via the Parent Reminder. Although many upcoming events may need to be modified due to COVID, the fact that we can have them puts us in a much better place than we were one year ago.

I would now like to devote some time to discuss a few initiatives we have been working on to help support our students who have struggled with the academic and social-emotional challenges that COVID has brought about.

After School Teacher Assistance/Learning Centers

After school assistance is still available from our wonderful staff. Students just need to coordinate with the teacher to find out when they are available. Students can also get assistance during "Learning Centers". Throughout the day, staff is available to help students during their study hall times. The teacher may not be your student's primary instructor but can still assist them with the concepts. Student's study hall proctors will be able to provide learning center availability if needed.

Tutoring Assistance

Starting Monday, March 29th, peer tutoring will be available in the LMC. Our peer tutors are students from National Honor Society and/or Beta Club. Our tutors will be working mainly with 9th and 10th graders. If your student needs assistance, please have them talk with their teacher or counselor.

Edmentum

This is an online program that allows students to complete work that may assist them in their academic program. Students are identified as needing this resource and placed in the program accordingly.

Summer School (Free Enrollment)

Somers High School offers summer school at SHS through the use of an online platform called Edmentum. Students will have their own virtual classroom wherein they will complete the required lessons and assessments under the supervision of our summer school instructor.

Skills Blast Assistance (Free Enrollment)

This program will be offered over the summer for those students who may have successfully passed their coursework but could use additional assistance on English and/or Math skills that will make them even better prepared for the fall. More information will be forthcoming on this program.

...continued on next page

Social Emotional Learning

As we navigate the COVID experience with our students, our staff has centered their professional learning on social emotional learning and how to implement SEL best-practices in their classrooms. In an effort to partner with parents in supporting the social emotional well-being of our students, the district has created a [Social and Emotional Learning website](#) with a multitude of resources for families. We hope you will find these resources beneficial.

SCHEDULE INFORMATION

Students may also access their daily schedules through the PowerSchool app for their mobile devices.

With the 7-period rotating schedule, the last two periods, periods 7 & 8, will remain stable every day and periods 1 through 6 will rotate through the first 5 blocks of the day. One period will drop from the rotation each day. The schedule will run as follows:

	S	T	R	I	V	E
7:40 - 8:27	1	6	5	4	3	2
8:31 - 9:21	2	1	6	5	4	3
9:25 - 10:12	3	2	1	6	5	4
10:16 - 11:03	4	3	2	1	6	5
11:07 - 12:40 <i>A 11:07 - 11:28</i> <i>B 11:31 - 11:52</i> <i>C 11:55 - 12:16</i> <i>D 12:19 - 12:40</i>	5	4	3	2	1	6
12:44 - 1:26	7	7	7	7	7	7
1:30 - 2:12	8	8	8	8	8	8
	<i>No Pd</i> 6	<i>No Pd</i> 5	<i>No Pd</i> 4	<i>No Pd</i> 3	<i>No Pd</i> 2	<i>No Pd</i> 1

With some minor adjustments due to COVID, this reflects the schedule that we typically run under normal circumstances. We have decided to shift back to this type of schedule to allow for one more lunch wave, which in turn will reduce congestion in the cafeteria.

Arrival/Dismissal

The arrival time and process at SHS will remain the same. Parents dropping off students by car should follow the high school drop-off route signs posted at the elementary school entrance. Doors will open at 7:20 a.m. We ask that students do not arrive early. Upon arrival at school, students should report directly to their first class.

Drivers should enter through the student parking lot doors. All others should be using the main entrance. New dismissal times in order to aid the flow of traffic on Vision Blvd.

Drivers 2:10; Students driving younger siblings will need to wait for the 2:15 bell.

Students being picked up 2:13

Students riding the bus 2:15

IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS

End of Quarter Date

The 3rd quarter ended on Thursday, April 1st. Report cards will be available electronically after the spring break.

Dates to Know (Deadlines)

April 21st Last opportunity to change learning models. Form will be sent to you after the spring break. (If you decide to change, it will take place as of April 26th)

Testing

Next Generation Science Assessment (NGSS) - May 12th. Once again, only juniors will be in the building. Like with the SAT, all other students will do asynchronous learning.

AP Testing (Regular day for non-testing students)

Class	Date/Type
English	Wed. May 5th, paper
Calc	Monday, May 24th, paper
Chem	Tuesday, May 25th, Paper
Bio	Thursday, May 27th, Digital
Physics	Monday, May 24th, Paper
US	Wednesday, June 2nd, Digital
World	Thursday, May 20th, Digital
Psychology	Tuesday May 11th, Paper

Senior Activities (all are subject to change due to new and/or modified COVID restrictions)

Prom June 3rd

No outside students

No close dancing

Priority to seniors

Currently booked for The Riverview in Simsbury on Thursday 6/3 at 5pm

Potentially have at the school (pending state protocol changes)

Outing June 1st

No student driving. Bus transportation only.

Outdoor event scheduled at Brownstone in Portland, CT.

Senior Banquet (Planning for the 2nd week in June)

Outdoor BBQ style at school.

Would likely be done Periods 7 and 8.

Graduation June 16th at SHS

Utilizing the new field.

Issuing tickets to each graduate

Backup plan due to weather: GYM; Possible Rain Dates. Details are being developed.

Our continued ability to return to normalcy will largely depend on our students following the safety protocols we have put in place. As a final reminder, the following guidelines must be observed for the safety of all of our staff and students:

- Wear masks at all times, except when at lunch or on a mask break outside. No gaiters!
Masks must cover the nose and mouth.
- Follow the directional marking patterns throughout the building.
- Do not loiter. Report directly to class upon arrival. Doors open at 7:20 a.m.
- Try to remain socially distant to the best extent possible.
- Use the plexi partitions at lunch.

We want to thank all parents and students for their cooperation throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Gary M. Cotzin

Principal

Somers High School

Assistant Principal's Corner

Cheryl Gustafson

We are happy to welcome students back to school 5 days per week. After a whole year, we are returning to a sense of normalcy. It has been wonderful to see our students reunite with their friends from the opposite cohort.

Spartan Code Winners for March

Congratulations to our Spartan Code winners for the month of March Celia Bruel and Sarah Finnegan! They were selected out of many students nominated by their teachers for going above and beyond.

Seeking Spartan Crew Members

Are you a student who is looking to get involved in leadership activities at school? We are looking for students to help plan school events such as a welcoming event for our students who are new to the district and the Spartan Code kickoff pep rally. Students who are interested in participating, should sign up by [clicking on this link](#).

Our meetings will take place at lunch time on April 9th, April 22nd, May 6th, May 20th and June 10th.

Attendance Reminders

Parents, please be sure to call in to the main office attendance line if your child is marked absent for daily attendance. If you receive a robocall about attendance, please be sure to contact the school in order to have your child's absence excused. This is important because per state statute, students who have 4 unexcused absences absences in a month or 10 unexcused absences in a year are considered truant. A parent may excuse the first 9 absences with a simple call to the main office attendance line. After the 9th absence, a doctor's note, documentation from a legal engagement is required to establish that an absence is excused.



Tails of Joy

We are very excited to announce that we will be hosting trained therapy dogs through the Tails of Joy organization beginning in April!

Tails of Joy has been providing animal-assisted therapy for over 26 years and safety is their top priority. Their teams are registered with either Intermountain Therapy Animals or Pet Partners - two of the largest, most recognized national registering organizations.

In addition, Tails of Joy re-evaluates every two years to make sure they hone their skills and have best practices that they adhere to for every visit. The teams are insured both through our policy as well as through their registering organization. The handlers are specifically trained in psychological first aid. Tails of Joy is currently in school systems such as West Hartford, Simsbury, Avon, Newington, Hartford, Coventry, and the University of Hartford providing their services regularly as a way to de-stress their students and faculty.

*George and friends
are coming to visit!*

Our rationale can be summarized directly from the TherapyDogs.com website. "Dogs have earned the title of man's best friend for a number of reasons over the centuries. Their pleasing and loving nature and predisposition to cuddling make them well positioned" to help our students during these trying times.

Another unique attribute of dogs is that they show a natural inclination toward helping people. For many years, humans have been using dogs to assist in therapeutic settings because of their inherent ability to cheer up humans. Scientifically speaking, dogs have been proven to show empathy and sympathy for their human counterparts. These characteristics reveal themselves especially when someone is in emotional distress (like in a pandemic). Dogs nuzzle or whine at a person who is displaying signs of sadness.



The trained dogs will be coming in once a week and will be housed in the media center, the school psychologists office and/or the school social worker's office under the care and direction of their certified handler. Their exact locations will be determined based on the schedules of those individuals in their respective locations. We have chosen these locations based on a variety of factors that include usable and safe space for distancing, the availability of the school psychologist and social worker, and the probability of student's discussing their experiences with Covid and the pandemic.

We would like to thank Mr. Macaluso for organizing this endeavor. His efforts are greatly appreciated!

ENGLISH NEWS

by Mindy Lajeunesse

COLLEGE ESSAYS

During quarter 4, teachers of juniors will be assisting students in the very initial stages of college essay writing, particularly by discussing expectations and helping students brainstorm topics. The college essay draft is something that is prepared by the student predominantly on his or her own time. While the college essay is the sole responsibility of the student, teachers do craft mini-lessons and workshops to guide students during this process. Students are highly encouraged to begin drafting their college essays over the summer. [The Common App website](#) is an excellent resource to help students get started in this process.

VOCABULARY

Grades 9 and 10 English classes will be reverting back to consumable vocabulary books for the 2021-2022 school year. Students and teachers found the digital platform of vocabulary to be less effective than the traditional workbook for many reasons, so we are excited to revisit this mode of learning vocabulary.

SUMMER READING

The English Team is still devising the summer reading program for grades 9-12. We are aware of skills gaps that exist as a result of the pandemic, and we want to strategically make summer work as beneficial for the students as possible. It is important to us that students recover lost skills over the summer while also growing on current skills that will prepare them for their next school year. The official summer reading program release date is to be determined but will likely be early May.



The Social Studies Department, through a grant from the SEF, has compiled a collection of artifacts from throughout history to be used in our classrooms.

These artifacts allow us to provide a hands-on learning experience for our students.

Artifacts range from the early 19th century through the modern day. Such items include campaign pins, Cold War items, military uniforms, propaganda images and a variety of pop culture artifacts. The students are excited to interact with these historical artifacts to gain a better understanding of their respective time period. Due to the circumstances brought on by COVID, the students have not been able to physically hold the items this year, but hopefully next year they will be able to do so.

History



SCIENCE DEPARTMENT NEWS

by Sue Cormier

Mrs. Cormier's Chemistry class constructed a Periodic Table of the Elements earlier this semester which is on display in the hallway. For this project each student was assigned three elements that they had to research information about. That information included how, when, and where the element was discovered, its chemical and physical properties, and how that element is used in our world. They also researched the history of the element's name and what its chemical symbol means. Did you know the chemical symbol for lead is Pb, and it is derived from the Latin word plumbum? And did you know that the chemical symbol for Mercury is Hg which comes from hydrargyrum, which means "water-silver" since Mercury is a silvery liquid metal. The element was then named after the Roman god Mercury, known for his speed and mobility.

After researching their elements, the students then presented their information to the class. They then crafted index cards to construct the bulletin board of the elements. This year the students chose the theme of 'space' so they decorated their element cards in a space theme and also researched some way that their element is used in the space industry. If there were no space applications for their element, some of the students got very creative!



Physical Education + Health

-Written by Eric Henne & Amanda Welch

We are proud to announce that our Health and Physical Education department website is done! We are currently working on providing access to parents. Be on the lookout in the near future for a link to gain access to our website. We will continue to update it as needed.

As the weather continues to get warmer, we will start going outside for several PE units. Our first unit outside will be street hockey, which is another new unit being introduced this year. It is a very inclusive unit; students are able to play the positions they are most comfortable with and everybody is on an equal playing field because we do not allow rollerblading/skating. When hockey has concluded we will finish the year with two excellent “lifetime” sports: tennis and disc golf!



Speaking of tennis, Mr. Henne will be in charge of the [Somers Parks and Recreation tennis & pickleball](#) lessons starting shortly. The SHS Health & PE department is all about being active outside of school and this is a perfect opportunity to participate in an organized sport during the summer months. With the weather getting warmer, we love to see our students outside being active and Mr. Henne would love to see you on the courts at some point!



Mr. Henne and Mrs. Welch would like to remind this year's junior class that if they're interested in becoming a PE Aide next year they need to sign up with the CCC as soon as possible. We have had a wonderful experience with our PE Aides this year and look forward to continuing that trend for next year!

EMC update

What happens when 200 googly eyes mysteriously appear in your mailbox? You are obligated to

decorate the school with them, which is exactly what English teacher, Ms. Collins, did! Ms. Stoltz is a big believer that a little competition makes everything more fun, so the Googly Eye Challenge was created. As students came back full time to SHS they were greeted with over 40 sets of googly eyes placed around the building. If they could identify the location of 20, they could come to the media center to claim a small prize and be entered into the grand prize drawing for an Amazon gift card. When the participants came in to choose their item they were asked two questions- Did this make you smile? Did you have fun? The answer was a resounding YES! It was a fun, positive way to welcome everyone back.



SHS Reads book club also just held its second “Breakfast with the Books”.

Twenty-six teachers and students read *Dread Nation* by Justina Ireland. A book about an alternate history-zombie uprising-post Civil War America, it's safe to say none of us had read a similar style novel before, but we all really enjoyed the book. As Ireland says, “A book about zombies is never just a book about zombies.” We had an interesting discussion about race, sexism, and zombies as a metaphor for life. Our next book club selection is *Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree* by Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani. Based on interviews from the Boko Haram kidnapping victims, this book tells the story of one girl's escape and harrowing story of survival.



Notes from the Nurse



As we get used to having everyone back in school please encourage your child to continue to keep up the good work with mask wearing, hand hygiene, and distancing. Increased classroom numbers could mean if we have a positive covid case in school there would be more close contacts identified. Best efforts will be made to maintain as much space as possible between desks and mitigate the spread of infection with the use of plexi-glass in some cases, but as always there is a possibility your child will be seated less than 6 feet from someone during a class and could have to quarantine if found to be a close contact. We will continue to follow the current CDC and DPH guidelines for identifying close contacts (which is anyone within 6 feet for 15 cumulative minutes or more.)

Freshman Boys are due for scoliosis screenings this year. I recently sent home waivers to those of you who have a child who I do not have a physical exam within the past year for. You can opt out of the in school screening and have your own pediatrician screen if you would prefer. If I do not receive a deferral form, or have a current physical on file I will conduct screenings sometime in April.

Parents of 10th grade students: CT state law requires a physical examination to be submitted this year. Please fill out the front sheet of the Health Assessment record (aka the “blue form”) and have the Doctor fill out the rest. [Click here for a copy](#), or go to the school website under the health section, under forms. You can send it to school or have it faxed to me at 860-749-3376. This must be submitted before they begin the 11th grade.

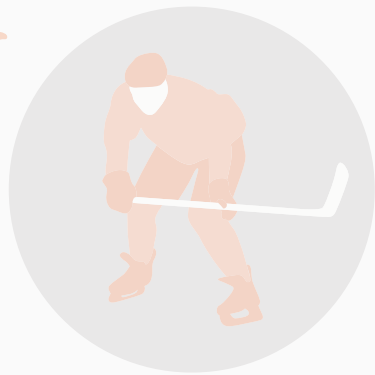
One last thing! Please continue to keep your child home if they are not feeling well, and report their symptoms when you call them out absent for the day. Thank you all for your continued efforts in keeping our students safe and in school!

SPARTAN SPORTS

The boys and girls basketball teams finished up their winter seasons on March 24th, with both teams winning their last home games in the NCCC consolation bracket. The boy's varsity team finished with a record of 9-5, with the JV and freshman teams completing their entire seasons. The girl's varsity basketball team finished their season with a 7-6 record, while the JV and freshman teams were able to complete most of their scheduled games vs. their NCCC East competition.

The Tri-Town hockey team was only able to complete (9) games out of their originally scheduled CCC regular season, but was able to advance to the CCC Championship game vs. the Newington co-op team. Our indoor track athletes were able to condition with the Ellington High School indoor track team during the approved winter season dates, as well as to have one outdoor meet at the end of the season.

Unfortunately, our wrestling team did not compete this winter season. Please refer to the Somers High School sports website for information regarding winter sports awards.



All of our spring sports teams are now in session, with the spring season officially starting on April 10th in anticipation of a full spring season. Please refer to the [high school sports website](#) for complete schedules, as well as any updates from the NCCC and CIAC regarding spring sports.

SPARTAN SPORTS CONTINUED



Olivia signs her letter of intent for Sacred Heart.



Dominic hopes to continue playing football next year.

Congratulations to Dominic Zuccalo and Olivia Suter for being selected as the CIAC Scholar Athletes for the 2020-21 school year. The Scholar-Athlete

Program annually recognizes two high school seniors from each member high school whose academic and athletic careers have been exemplary, whose personal standards and achievements are a model to others, and who possess high levels of integrity, self-discipline and courage. Dominic hopes to continue his football career in college while pursuing a degree in Nursing. Olivia will run Division 1 Track at Sacred

Heart University, where she will be studying education. Congrats to both of them on this amazing achievement! The Somers High School community is very proud!

Clubs & Activities

BETA CLUB



Beta Club is excited to announce the induction of over 40 new members for the 2020-2021 school year. Students were invited to join the club for maintaining a good academic standing and for having received 6 consecutive terms of honor roll. Students who have accepted the invitation will take part in the induction ceremony, which will be hosted by our club officers via Zoom. Once our new members have been inducted, they will have many opportunities to volunteer and give back to their school and town communities.

GSA BUTTERBRAID FUNDRAISER

The GSA made over \$500 on the recent Butterbraid fundraiser. We will be donating \$200 of our profits to the Triangle Community Center in Norwalk to aid in their efforts to support the LGBTQ community here in Connecticut. We also have plans to use portions of our profits to fund guest speakers and workshops for the 2021/2022 school year. Thank you to staff, students, and community members who purchased Butterbraids and made this such a success!



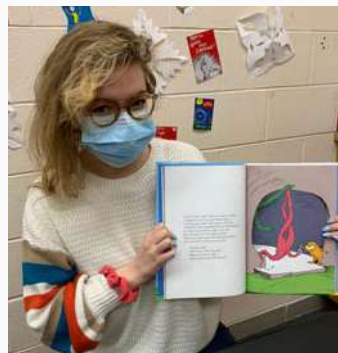
Clubs & Activities continued

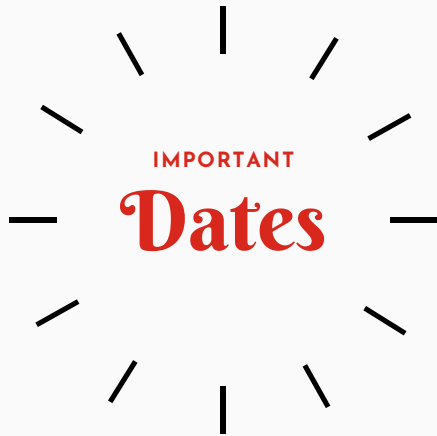
National Honor Society

On Thursday afternoon, March 25th, a few of the NHS students gathered to clean up the Somers Elementary School courtyard. They spent the time raking leaves and picking up trash and sticks. Their hard work resulted in over 20 bags of leaves and some ideas for future rehabilitation of the courtyard as memories of the bamboo and butterfly garden resurfaced as they cleaned. The NHS members hope to get some flowers donated so that the area can be as beautiful as they all remember when they attended that school. This is just a start to fixing the courtyard, but the students were more than happy to give back to their elementary school.



Members of the Spartan Chapter of National Honor Society also participated in a virtual Read Across America Day on March 2nd. Originally started as a national day of reading to coincide with Dr. Seuss's birthday, the day encourages the creation and celebration of a nation of diverse readers. The NHS students and SES teachers chose books that were then shared and read with great enthusiasm to the young ones.





***Vacation* 4/12-4/16**

Early Release PD (11:00)- 4/28

SAT Makeup Date- 4/28

USEFUL

Contact Information

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