

October 2019

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Issue #3

Principal's Newsletter

Somers High School



Dear Parents/Guardians,

How do we spell October: PSAT. Well, not exactly but tis the season for some testing. A message was sent out earlier this week regarding the PSAT test on October 16th. Please make sure you read the letter and have your child ready for the big day. Seniors need to be here by 11am (enjoy the extra sleep!).

We are hoping to have the new restroom lock system in place by the end of the month. Student ID's will be passed out when the project is completed. In subsequent years, students will use their old badges until the new ones are available.

Please remember to drop your children off in the morning using the elementary loop. We want to keep the horseshoe lane in front of SHS clear for our busses (7:00-7:30). Additionally, please remember to leave a car gap length as you unload at the teaching parking lot so that staff members can turn in and park. Review the student handbook with your child. Use the Parent Portal often, but please remember that no single assignment paints the entire picture for the quarter.

In closing, I always maintain an open-door policy and am here to assist you. Please feel free to contact me if you should have any concerns. I am looking forward to working with each of you and in helping to make our school the best it can possibly be.

Sincerely,

Gary M. Cotzin
Principal
Somers High School

SHS Math

The Math Department at SHS is looking forward to a successful school year. Teachers have worked collaboratively to design courses that will offer students a common experience at each level. A rigorous curriculum is in place, and the use of a graphing calculator is now necessary in every course, beginning with Algebra 1. If your child is currently enrolled in any level of Algebra 2 or higher, they are required to have a graphing calculator to aid in completing classwork and homework. The recommended graphing calculator model is the TI-84 Plus. Any questions can be directed to your child's current math teacher.



Lunch Account Balances

Starting this month, parent/guardians will receive an email alert should your student's lunch account balance exceed \$15.00. These alerts will continue weekly until the balance is paid in full.

Your payment options are:

1. Check payable to the Somers Lunch Program delivered to the school.
2. An electronic deposit to your student's MyPaymentsPlus (MPP) account, if your student has a MPP account set up.

If your student does not have a MPP account, you can set one up by accessing the MPP website as follows:

1. Connect to the Somers Public Schools homepage at www.somers.k12.ct.us
2. Select Popular Links
3. Under Technology click on Cafeteria POS System Information

We do offer a free and reduced lunch program for students that qualify. Please note that free/reduced lunch forms must be completed annually and are available in the school office.

For more information on the free and reduced lunch program, or if you believe the information regarding your student's lunch account balance is incorrect, please contact Cathy Smith.

Cathy.smith@somers.k12.ct.us

(860)749-2270 x6121



Emerging contemporary artists visit contemporary art museum!

On Thursday, October 17, students in Ms. Burda's Sculpture classes and Ms. Curran's Honors Portfolio and Honors/AP Art classes will spend the day at The Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (Mass MoCA) in North Adams, MA.

Mass MoCA is fast becoming one of the country's top contemporary art museums, featuring work from established modern artists such as Sol Lewitt and Louise Bourgeois to cutting edge sound and light installation art from Julianne Swartz and James Turrell.

Mass MoCA is housed in a series of former mill buildings, and as such is especially suited to large-scale work. Students will enjoy a day of mind-expanding artwork in the beautiful Berkshires! This is sure to be a memorable experience for our art students.

If you are interested in this museum, visit their web page!

<https://massmoca.org/about/>

Feeling Anxious?

According to the World Health Organization, anxiety is the #1 emotional disorder in adults, teens and children. The primary reason behind these findings relate to the uncertainty of the world that we live in today. Breathing exercises can be a powerful tool to reduce anxiety or to calm down. Give it a try with these simple techniques when you are feeling anxious and/or teach your child.

1. The Special Word exercise has 2 steps. First, pick a 2-syllable word such as relax or a short 2-word phrase such as stay calm. Then, mentally synchronize the word with your breathing. For example, while inhaling think stay and while exhaling think calm for 2 – 5 minutes. In addition to calming down, the special word becomes associated with slow breathing and can be used as a future tool. *
2. For the Breathing By Numbers technique, all you need to do is count slowly (1 second for each number) and sync your breath with it. Do this for approximately 2 minutes. It's easy to practice so you can be ready to use it whenever you are feeling anxious.*
3. One of my favorites to use with students is the "Breathe" App on my Apple watch. It only takes 1 minute and students inhale as the Cloud grows and exhale as the cloud shrinks. It works every time!

The aforementioned breathing techniques are compliments of Dr. Paul Foxman, Clinical Psychologist and author of numerous books on anxiety. *

SHS English

English classes are officially beyond summer reading and well into new units. Thematic literature units, PSAT/SAT prep, skills work, writing, vocabulary and creative projects are now the focus of the remaining school year. Some of the units that are the center of

your students' English classes include Fahrenheit 451 and Scarlet Letter for sophomores, short stories and To Kill a Mockingbird for freshmen, The Crucible and Macbeth for juniors and Oedipus for seniors. English teachers continue to prepare students for PSAT and SAT success by focusing on words in context, literature interpretation and analysis, as well as nonfiction incorporation. NewsELA and IXL have become useful learning enhancement tools for our students, and each of these allow students to self-assess his or her progress, thus facilitating an independent learning exercise. Breakout EDUs are utilized in nearly all English classes, which provides students the opportunity to problem solve, collaborate and think critically as they piece together hidden clues placed around the classroom. All grades within the English department will experience an increased focus on writing this year and years to come. Our teachers are committed to revising and enhancing our current writing curriculum and ensuring all students are prepared for post-graduation writing expectations. The ultimate goal is for students to receive vertically aligned writing instruction from grades 9-12. Increased writing instruction and tasks will come in many forms, including sentence structure, paragraph structure, evidence application, short prompts and longer essays.

SHS Science

The Science team is hard at work developing new curriculum and designing lessons that align with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) which have been adopted by the state of Connecticut. The NGSS is a framework that guides HOW students learn, rather than what they learn. The science team's goal this year is to incorporate NGSS practices that align with the frameworks. Additionally, in the lessons are designed to prepare the students for the NGSS science test they need to take in their junior year. We will also incorporate critical thinking skills into our lessons which is one of the District's goals.

The new Standards incorporate Science and Engineering practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Disciplinary Core ideas which link the various dimensions of science together, rather than thinking of them as separate topics. To achieve the Engineering practices, the science team will encourage students to make and design models of scientific concepts and phenomena. We embrace the concept of having children think critically and explore solutions to problems. By designing Authentic Learning units we are introducing lessons that allow students to explore and discuss relationships in contexts that involve real-world problems and projects that are relevant and meaningful to them. For example, a lab the students are currently designing in Biology is studying the effects of fertilizer on algae. This is an authentic activity that further explores the impact of fertilizer runoff and warming sea temperatures as they relate to algal blooms that are harmful to the environment.

Hispanic Heritage Month

In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, Mr. Mangini's Spanish 2 and Spanish 2 Honors classes celebrated by researching influential Hispanics and their contributions to today's world. Pairs of students worked together to choose a person or event that has positively shaped the world in which we live. From the information that students gathered, they then created postage stamps that represent the person or event chosen. With their new knowledge and illustrative stamp, the students became the teachers by presenting about the person or event they chose to the class. As a final product, the students' stamps are on display in the hallway to share their informative creations with the school community.



Intro to Art

Students in Intro to Art are finishing up work on Mandala paintings. These paintings are inspired by the ancient art of Tibetan sand painting, displaying radial symmetry, and attention to color mixing. Students mix all colors from the primary colors to paint their design and afterward add pattern and detail in white and black. Students pictured are also working on assembling a collaborative Mandala project. The finished project will soon be on display in the Science hallway.



College & Career Happenings

College Fair

The annual college fair will take place at Somers High School on Thurs., Oct. 24 from 10:30 – noon in the high school gym. About 115 representatives from colleges, trade schools and the military will be participating. All sophomores, juniors and seniors will be attending. Parents, we welcome your attendance as well! For more information contact the Counseling & Career Center at 749-2270 x 4201.

Dymotek Career Day

Careers in the U.S. and Connecticut manufacturing industry are growing again, and modern manufacturing plants are clean, bright and filled with robotic technology. In early October students with an interest in this growth industry visited Dymotek, an international silicone and plastic injection molding company, at their recently opened Somers, CT facility. Students received of the shop floor, talked to professionals about their jobs, learned about job training requirements and observed robots at work. The trip was sponsored by the Counseling & Career Center and the Tech Ed Department.



Recognition Comes to SHS student involved with Junior Achievement

Senior Nick Mendez participated in the JA Entrepreneurial Academy, a 15-week after-school program, that met at The Hartford Financial Services Company earlier this year. Students from area high schools, working alongside company executives, formed a company to market and sell a unique lanyard product. Nick was a member of the winning CT JA team that went on to compete at the FedEx Junior Business Challenge in Atlanta,

Georgia this summer. He and his teammates describe their winning product on the Channel 8 news link below. Well done, Nick!

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.wtnh.com/on-air/gmct-at-nine/news-8-sits-down-with-the-connecticut-winners-of-the-fedex-junior-business-challenge/amp/>

Students interested in participating in the 2020 JA Entrepreneurial Academy should see Ms. Duffy, Career Specialist, in the Counseling & Career Center for more information.

Spartan Sports

Our fall sports teams are in the final month of the regular season, except for football which plays at least until the end of November. Our soccer teams are off to a great start, with the boy's team winning their first (7) games in a row. With their last win at Rockville, the boy's soccer team has an 8-1 record with a #2 ranking in Class S. The girl's soccer team had a 5-game winning streak and extended their overall record to 6-2-1 and is currently ranked in the top 10 in Class S. Our field hockey team has played a tough stretch of road games, and is looking forward to playing their "Play Pink" game this Friday vs. Stafford prior to playing (4) consecutive games on the road. The cross country teams held their senior day meet this past Wednesday, and celebrated with the girl's team finishing the regular season undefeated at 13-0 and the boy's team finishing with a regular season record of 7-6 in league meets. Both teams are looking forward to the NCCC cross country championships being held at Bolton High School on October 17th. Both of our co-op teams are off to good starts, with our Enfield/Somers girl's swimming teams at 3-3 while our Stafford/East Windsor/Somers co-op football team is at 2-1 entering into this Friday's game at Cromwell High School.

Please follow all of our fall sports teams as we continue through the regular season into post-season on the high school sports website, which includes links to all of the CIAC schedules. We would also like to thank everyone for their support and patience through the fall construction phase of the new sports complex. Finally, please note that winter sports sign-ups will be posted on October 15th on the high school sports website.