



Somerville Public Schools

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Somerville Launches Week-Long Exploration into Computer Science and Coding with 2016 Hour of Code Kickoff on December 5th

2016 event includes special activities that allow students to dig deeper into STEM world

Somerville, MA – What do Star Wars, Minecraft, Moana, MatLab, Kodable and Vidcode have in common? They're all part of an expanded list of more than 200 [tutorials and lesson plans](#) that Somerville Public Schools (SPS) students will be able to explore during the 2016 week-long [Hour of Code](#) event next week. On Monday morning, December 5th, Somerville students, teachers and more than 100 volunteers will join millions around the world for a global movement that spans more than 180 countries. The [2016 Somerville Hour of Code](#) event will offer every student in the district the opportunity to log at least one hour of computer coding during the school day, joining tens of millions of students world-wide on this annual coding adventure.

“Hour of Code is such an important event not only because of the educational value it offers students, but also because it allows students to experience first-hand the impact that computer science and coding have on their everyday lives, and to do it in a way that is fun and relevant to them,” stated Somerville Superintendent of Schools Mary Skipper. “I’m looking forward to exploring alongside our students next week, and to learning from them as they discover the opportunities that computer science can open, and the roles that they can play in shaping their world.”

Somerville launches this year’s district-wide Hour of Code with a special kick-off event at the Kennedy School Library on Monday, December 5th at 9:00 a.m. More than 109,000 HOC events will be taking place around the world next week as part of the Hour of Code movement, which is held during Computer Science Education Week. In Massachusetts alone, nearly 700 Hour of Code events have been registered to date. While the event provides students with a basic introduction of computer science programming in one hour of coding activity during a week-long period, Hour of Code is designed to help students develop problem-solving and logic skills through a creative, interactive, and engaging activity that will inspire a lifelong interest in computer science.

“Our students deserve every opportunity to help them learn, grow, and thrive in a 21st century learning environment, preparing them for a 21st century career, and I am thankful to be the Mayor of a City where community partners, businesses, and organizations continue to come together to support this kind of educational opportunity,” said Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone. “These students will shape the world that we live in, and Hour of Code provides youth with a tremendous opportunity to broaden their horizons and increase computer science literacy. We are incredibly thankful for the many partners who help make this experience an exceptional one for our students.”

This year, Somerville students will also have an opportunity to dig deeper through a variety of special events that will be offered throughout the district, most of which will take place after school hours. Special activities will include working on a Minecraft Designer App at Somerville High School, Virtual Reality Workshops at the Brown and Kennedy Schools, a Family/Student STEM Challenge at the West Somerville Neighborhood School, a Robots activity at the Winter Hill Community Innovation School, the 1:1 Chromebook Experience at the Healey School, a Mini Maker Space at the East Somerville Community School, and more. Visit the Somerville HOC website to learn more about special activities that will be offered during Somerville Hour of Code week. (<http://somervillehoc2016.weebly.com/special-events.html>).



Community and business volunteers representing a range of industries will work with students and alongside teachers and library/media specialists throughout Hour of Code week, providing guidance as students delve into computer programming using a range of self-directed programs. Pegasystems, Winter Wyman, Hubspot, Microsoft, and Mass Technology Council are among the key organizations whose support and leadership have helped the Somerville Hour of Code event flourish over the last three years. Volunteers from these organizations will join other community volunteers in schools throughout the district next week to help students hone their computer programming skills through drag and drop programming using programs such as [Minecraft](#), [Moana](#), [Kodable](#), and many others. Representatives from Lesley University will lend their expertise at the Kennedy School Makerspace/Innovation Lab. In libraries, classrooms, and labs across the district, students will get a first-hand look at the role that computer science plays in helping shape the world around us. Library/media instructors will continue working with students throughout the school year, using Hour of Code resources to help students continue building on their computer programming knowledge and skills.

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