




Weekly Update | March 31, 2021

Vol. 3, Issue 5

SSCPS



Light the School Blue!

Friday, April 2nd is World Autism Day
As a show of support, SSCPS is encouraging teachers, students and families to [wear Blue on Thursday, April 1st!](#)

Why blue, you ask?
It is a color that calms and reduces stress - and we all need peace in our lives, especially those with ASD.

So please consider "lighting it up blue" to celebrate those unique, fascinating individuals that are part of our school and our lives.

A Message from Matt

The month of April is Autism Awareness month. During this month many organizations and individuals will put on autism friendly and educational activities and events to help educate, increase the understanding and acceptance of people with autism, and help foster a kinder, more inclusive world. The Autism Society first introduced Autism Awareness Month in April of 1970. When Autism Awareness month was first introduced 1 in every 2000 children were diagnosed with autism. As of 2020, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports that approximately 1 in 54 children in the United States are diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. Over the last 50 years autism has become the fastest growing developmental disability in the world.

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a large range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech, and non-verbal communication. ASD affects each person differently, because ASD is a spectrum disorder each person will present with a unique set of challenges and strengths. People with ASD may require a significant amount of support to function in everyday life whereas others may need little support and can live entirely independently. The way in which people with autism can learn, think and problem solve ranges from highly skilled to severely challenged. Autism is diagnosed in boys almost four times more frequently than girls. According to the CDC 2020 data, 1 in 34 boys was identified with

autism and 1 in 144 girls was identified with autism. Most children will be diagnosed after the age of 4 although signs can start to appear by age 2 or 3. Autism affects all ethnic and socioeconomic groups and there is no medical detection for autism.

When you hear or read about autism you often will only hear about the negatives of autism you seldom hear about the positive attributes. You will hear things like lack of skills, can't relate, significant difficulties, rock brain or inflexible.

People with autism have many amazing strengths and beautiful personality traits. No one person will present with every positive feature of autism or challenge associated with autism, neurodiversity is an amazing thing, we have individual skills and characteristics that make our personalities unique.

Dyan Robson illustrates this wonderfully in the article [*I Want To Share 10 Positives Traits That Some People With Autism Have*](#), written for CBC.CA.

Here is an excerpt from the article:

It's no wonder so many people view autism negatively when the bulk of the information paints a negative picture to the world. And it's not surprising that many people still believe common autism myths.

But neurodiversity like autism is a good thing.

And being autistic certainly has its positive sides, too. So I want to share some of the positive characteristics that autistic people have.

Now, obviously I am aware that autism is a spectrum and not every autistic person will have the following attributes or skills, but these attributes are pretty common in autism. But like I mentioned, every autistic person is unique so please keep that in mind.

Here are some of the positive traits of autism:

1. Autistic people are extremely passionate about what interests them. An attribute that translates to hyperfocusing and obsessively researching those interests until they have a deep understanding of the subject matter. They also have a wide variety of interests.

2. They are straightforward, direct and honest. They mean what they say and aren't afraid to tell you what they truly think.

3. Autistic people perceive the world differently and process information in unique ways. As a result, they are independent and creative thinkers.

4. They are detail-oriented and they pay attention to the finer details that others often miss. For example, my autistic son recently pointed out that all four seasons are six letters long: winter, spring, summer and autumn. Yeah, you didn't notice that until just now, right?

5. They love routines and will happily maintain those routines with great success.

6. People with autism have a great memory and an amazing ability to recall facts.

7. Autistic people also tend to be visual thinkers. As a result, they can visualize solutions to problems, as well as other things, better than most people can.

8. They follow their own unique set of social rules, which means they often don't bully people, judge others or get easily swayed by peer pressure. They don't feel the pressure to fit in like most people do. I bet most people wished they had these attributes!

9. Autistic people are smart. Many have above-average intelligence. Yes, even preverbal or non-verbal autistic people! This is where I insert my reminder about always presuming competence...

10. Autistic people aren't afraid to be themselves. They're unique and quirky, and don't get bothered by what other people think of them. They just continue to be the unique individual they are by embracing and sharing their passions with the world.

Light it up Blue

As the awareness of Autism Awareness month has increased over the years, the United Nations General Assembly chose April 2nd every year to be World Autism Awareness Day. This is seen by many as the kick off to a month of events to support autism awareness. Autism Speaks, the largest autism advocacy group in the United States, asks everyone to dress in blue on April 2nd to show your support.

SSCPS has no school on April 2st, therefore SSCPS will be showing its support of Autism Awareness Month and World Autism Awareness Day by 'Lighting it up Blue' on Thursday, April 1st and asking staff and students to wear something blue to show their support for the many people diagnosed with autism!!

Additionally, SSCPS will be having events, activities, and learning throughout the month of April to help facilitate acceptance, awareness, and understanding of autism. We hope to celebrate the diversity these individuals bring to our inclusive school community.

Here are a few other ways that you can show support during autism awareness month:

1) Fundraisers and Walks

Many groups and organizations will choose to hold fundraisers throughout the month. If you're looking to participate in one with your child, research different options in your area to see what activities might be involved and where the money for each one goes before picking the best fit for your family. Awareness Walks are fun, low key events to show support in groups while enjoying the spring weather.

2) Hands-on Awareness Activities

Large organized group events may not always be the best fit for your family. [Stages Learning offers a wide range of free resources](#), including fun activities that can be done in small groups inside the home or classroom. Puzzle pieces are a global symbol of Autism Spectrum Disorder and [Pinterest has many puzzle themed crafts](#) you can do with your child, such as decorating bookmarks and picture frames with puzzle pieces or designs. Teachers may enjoy this [Puzzle Piece Project and Autism Awareness Toolkit](#) for using in the classroom with any grade level.

3) Books About Autism

Reading books with your child is a great way to start important discussions about support and awareness, especially if your child is still learning what it means to have autism. If you're looking for a good book to start with, check out [Catlaina Vrana's review of her book "Ella Autie."](#) "Ella Autie" follows a 4th grade student with autism through a day in her life.

4) Join the Social Media Conversation

Posting on Twitter and Facebook is an easy way to join the global dialogue. Share your support with your community and read your favorite tweets and posts with your child.

5) Link to [Autism speaks-autism friendly events](#)

Matthew Tondorf
Director of Learning Services
mtondorf@sscps.org

High School Summer College Course Information Session **April 6, 2020 at 6:00pm via [Zoom](#)**

Did you know that all students in the High School have to complete a college course before graduation? YES - that is correct! Completion of a college course is a Graduation Requirement for SSCPS. Some students may want to take the college course over the summer.

To help navigate the summer college course process, Mary Carter will be hosting an Information Session on Tuesday, April 6th. The information session is for both students and parents in the HS who are interested in taking a college course this

summer. Important changes to registration for Massasoit and Quincy College will be discussed.

Learning Model Planning Timeline

- September 2020-June 2021: K-1 Students full in-person
- March 1, 2021: Grade 2 Students full in-person
- March 3, 2021: SSCPS Board of Trustees, Executive Committee Meeting review of DESE intent to return to full in-person learning for students in grades K-5
- March 4 - 17, 2021: Building and learning spaces capacity review.
- March 5, 2021: Faculty and staff review and planning for DESE intent to return to full in-person learning
- March 8, 2021: Communication to SSCPS families for COVID-19 Pooled Testing
- March 15 - 19, 2021: Family surveys for additional data collection
- March 15, 2021: Implementation of the COVID-19 Pooled Testing Program
- March 24 - 30, 2021: Family information sessions for guidance on new learning models
- April 5, 2021: Implement in-person return for students in grades 3-5
- April 7, 2021: SSCPS Board of Trustees Executive Committee Meeting
- April 15, 2021: SSCPS Board of Trustees Meeting
- April 28, 2021: Implement in-person learning return for students in grades 6-8
- April 2021: DESE issues guidance for high school in-person learning return

Remote and In-Person Learning Survey Link

[High School Grades 9-12](#)

Due Today, March 31, 2021

Transportation Update from FCC Transportation

Due to the financial ramifications of COVID-19, the East Weymouth bus route will not be returning for the 2021-2022 school year. Families impacted by the change have been notified by email earlier today.

From Food Services

To all families:

Please be aware that all students enrolled at SSCPS qualify for Free Breakfast and Lunch for the 2020-2021 academic year. Please click on this link [FamilyID Online Registration](#) and register for meals.

If you have any questions, contact me at csalamone@sscps.org or at 781-982-4202 x156.

From the SSCPS Health Office

The Health Office is now running 2 separate COVID testing programs. Both of these tests are voluntary. In order to participate in each program you will need to sign up for them separately.

The BinaxNow Rapid Test is for students/staff that develop COVID-like symptoms while at school. This test can be administered at school and results are available in fifteen (15) minutes. Students/staff will still be required to leave school, even with a negative test result. Students may return to in person school once they have a negative PCR test. Positive results are presumed positives and students will be required to isolate.

Register your student for Symptomatic Rapid COVID testing with the following link:

<https://app.beacontesting.com/register/with-code?code=EKMBEX>

Pool Testing is a weekly COVID test for students and staff. Students will be tested on the weeks they are in person learning. This program is not available to remote students. Pool testing is when a number (usually 5-10) swabs are put in the same tube and a PCR test is done on the batch/pool.

If the pool comes back negative, it is presumed all individuals in this pool are negative.

If the pool comes back positive, each student is individually tested using the BinaxNow Rapid test done at school. Any positive students will be sent home to isolate and contact tracing will be done. If all students come back negative with the rapid testing, each student will then have an individual PCR test to be sent out from school. All students will be asked to quarantine until the PCR results come back.

When you sign consent for pool testing, you are consenting for all 3 types of testing to be done at school (pool testing, rapid antigen and individual PCR testing).

Register your student for weekly pool testing with the following link:

<https://app.beacontesting.com/register/with-code?code=WPWCQJ>

Please see the [Health Office](#) page on the SSCPS website for more information on rapid and pooled testing, along with other COVID-19 information.

Dear SSCPS Families,

We were excited to launch our next round of pool testing. The first round of pool testing went smoothly, the students and staff were extremely cooperative and did a great job. This week the High School was added to our weekly pool testing. If you have not signed up but are interested in having your student participate please follow the below link to register them. You can register at any time, you should register by Thursday if you want to be included in the following weeks pool testing.

<https://app.beacontesting.com/register/with-code?code=WPWCQJ>

Please review the pool testing procedure. You will only be called if your student is in a positive pool batch.

If your student is in a pool that comes back positive, we will then test the participants in the positive pool with the BinaxNOW Rapid Antigen test at school. If all the rapid tests come back negative, then an individual PCR test will be done at school on all students in the positive pool batch. Students will need to quarantine until the results of the individual PCR test come back.

If the students are in school when the results come in, they will be removed from class and brought to a designated area for the additional testing. If the student's rapid test comes back positive they will need to be picked up and will need to isolate.

If positive pool results are received after hours the on call nurse will contact you and the students will need to report to school the next morning for the rapid testing. Parents will need to remain at the school until the results of the rapid test come back.

If you have any additional questions or need any additional information please do not hesitate to reach out to the nursing staff.

K - 8: 781-982-4202 x 104

High School: 781-982-4202 x 182

Darcie Edwards, RN

Susan Dupras, RN

Jaime Kjelgaard, RN

Barbara Folan, RN

Travel Advisory

We would like to remind families of the health and safety guidelines put forward by Governor Baker and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health in the recently updated [COVID-19 Travel Advisory](#). The South Shore Charter Public School has enacted a strict travel protocol which requires that students who return from traveling to high risk states or countries, or students who have been on a plane, must quarantine for ten (10) days. Students in grades 2-12 are expected to learn remotely during the 10-day quarantine period. Students in grades K-1 are expected to utilize their learning bins.

Our school policy regarding voluntary travel is stricter than the Massachusetts Travel Advisory. There is no exemption from quarantine if your child tests negative **prior** to returning to Massachusetts. Because of the nature of COVID-19 transmission, and the chance of exposure within the 72-hour period prior to returning to Massachusetts, the school does not consider the described testing measure to be adequately preventative. A 10-day quarantine is required by our school's [Health Office](#).

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Housing Help

Paying rent or a mortgage can be especially challenging during a pandemic. The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development has centralized information about resources for families struggling to make rent or mortgage payments due to COVID-19. If you or another family you know needs assistance, please go to www.mass.gov/covidhousinghelp for more information.

WiFi Assistance

Please use the buttons below for information regarding low cost internet services in your area.

[Low Cost Internet Services](#)

[NDIA Free and Low Cost Internet Plans](#)

[Lifeline Cell Phone Service Provider](#)

FROM THE YEARBOOK COMMITTEE

The 2021 yearbook is now in progress and all the memories of the 2021 school year will be published forever in print.

To order online go to www.coffeepond.com, to login use school password: bluejaguar.

Parents may submit a special personalized page that will appear in the back of the book for their senior at these rates: Full page \$150, 1/2 pg. \$75, 1/4 pg. \$50. Due date is March 30, 2021. Please email Christine at chodnar@sscps.org with any questions.

From the Parents Association



Let's Raise Funds!

Online Pampered Chef Fundraiser for SSCEF - Happening Now!

Facebook party: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2610933485870540>

Website: www.pamperedchef.com/party/sscps0322

From South Shore Charter Educational Foundation



February 2021

Dear Friends and Families of SSCPS.

We hope this letter finds you well. As we kick off 2021, we want to extend our well wishes to you and your family during these unprecedented times. We thank you for your unwavering support of our faculty and staff as we strive to inspire every student to excel in academics, service, and life in a safe and supportive environment.

Clearly the challenges of COVID- 19 have significantly impacted our community and we've had to adapt. Who knew we would expend so many resources on cleaning products, plexi-glass dividers, tents, Chromebooks, and so much more? Since the start of the pandemic last March, our community has worked together to ensure our kids receive the highest level of academics possible in these unprecedented times. While many schools were not prepared for the sudden shift to remote learning, SSCPS "hit the ground running" on March 16th and we continue to pursue all viable options for high level learning. We are proud to say we remain consistent with the quality education we deliver to all of our students. Unfortunately, many of the changes required to provide the hybrid model we offer are expensive. We are grateful to many of you who have generously donated to the SSCEF Annual Fund, but we need contributions now more than ever.

As someone who has been at Charter for 13 years and a part of the fraternity of 13, I have learned to embrace Charter life. There is a huge sense of community at the school which is developed from a young age through our service projects and sports. Charter helps prepare young kids for life through the internships we do with our amazing guidance counselors. The EOMs we start in kindergarten have been a huge asset to me in life as learning public speaking at such a young age has proven invaluable in my adult life.

-Delaney Alden, Class of 2021

The cost of COVID - 19 was clearly unexpected and like everything else has impacted our fundraising abilities as well.

I have been a student at SSCPS since kindergarten and I will be in the fraternity of 13 when I graduate in June 2021. One thing I love about our school is that I have been on the cross country and track and field teams since I was in 6th grade. I have had the same coach and have been teammates with the same group of athletes. We have encouraged and watched each other progress over the years.

-Caroline Boyle, Class of 2021

In support of our community, we hope you will consider giving a minimum of \$10 per year for each year your family has been enrolled with us, but we appreciate whatever donation you can make. We hope you will check with your employer to see if they will match your donation. When giving you can write your check to SSCEF, or you may go online at www.sscps.org/giving. Thank you for your continued support and we look forward to better days when we can all gather as one community again.

[CLICK HERE](#) to make your gift online. Or please mail a check to SSCEF, P.O. Box 512, Accord, MA 02018.

Warm and healthy wishes.

Laurie Dannison and Leslie Alden
Development Officer Trustee

I have had many positive experiences in my thirteen years at SSCPS. I have never felt like I have not been able to reach out to a teacher for help. I know that when I was struggling last year with my AP Chemistry class my teacher would let me stay after or during FIT time to help me. In a bigger town school, that type of thing would not be possible and I am able to get the help I need in my classes in order to succeed.

-Ryan Benjamin, Class of 2021

Wednesday	03/31	Advanced Placement Information Meeting via Zoom	2:00pm
Friday	04/02	Good Friday– No School	
Monday	04/05	Grades K-5 – In- Person Grades 6-12 Team A In-Person; Team B Remote	
Tuesday	04/06	3 rd Quarter Ends for Grades 5-12	
Tuesday	04/06	High School Summer College Course Meeting via Zoom	6:00pm
Wednesday	04/07	Executive Committee Meeting via Zoom	8:00am
Thursday	04/08	School Council via Zoom	4:15pm
Friday	04/09	Professional Development Early Release	12:00pm

Important Links

Weekly Updates are emailed and posted to our website www.sscps.org every Wednesday.

- [Food Service](#)
- [Health Office](#)
- [Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance](#)
- **Visit the [Parents Association Website](#)**
- **Visit our new online option to [purchase](#) SSCPS apparel**

School Documents

[2020-21 School Calendar](#)

[2021-22 School Calendar](#)

[Student and Family Handbook](#)

[SSCPS By-Laws](#)

Here are links to upcoming events and other items of interest. Please contact Pam Algera at palgera@sscps.org to submit SSCPS items for publication.



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www.sscps.org

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