

Beyond
the
Classroom

Authentic
Learning

Digital
Learning

Student
Choice

Success
after
graduation

Achievement

Partners

Values

The community of Colchester expressed a strong desire for an educational experience where learning extends beyond the classroom while meeting student needs through personalized learning plans, innovative and relevant curricula, and a focus on both college and career readiness.

Strategic Plan
Executive
Summary

2015

Colchester
Public
Schools

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COLCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Colchester Public Schools embarked on a revision of its strategic plan in the fall of 2014. The vision of the school system was to update its plan based on current voices from all sectors of the community. This new plan was developed with the assistance of LEARN, a Regional Education Service Center. The process included the creation of a multi-stakeholder steering committee and 17 focus groups throughout the community. LEARN served as an impartial facilitator of the focus groups and gathered all the community input. The steering committee, acting as designers, reviewed the over 1100 specifications gathered from the community and developed aggressive goals through an iterative design process. The school administrators developed the action items to support the goals. This strategic plan and the subsequent goals and action should be considered a 3 to 5 year plan with annual iterative reviews to assure connection to the current context of Colchester.

Colchester has a shifting demographic with a decline in school-age population; additionally, Connecticut has increased the range of options for school choice. To address these changes, Colchester is continuing its commitment to enhancing its programs and adding innovative course opportunities for all students. One will see evidence of this commitment in the development of authentic learning opportunities, 21st century skills, integration of the arts, and project-based learning reflected in the district goals. Throughout the process, Colchester's pride in its school system and support of student well-being was evident. The feedback showed Colchester citizens have a long-standing history of appreciation for the educational system. One will see this reflected in the plan's goals, choice, flexibility, and theme-based opportunities for students.

It is important that families and community are both involved and supportive of the educational process from Pre-K through graduation. The results will be students who are ready for life after graduation with career and college readiness and who express pride in their educational system.

Just as an architect would base a building design on the preferences and specifications of the owner, the steering committee based its design and work on the points of agreement that were gathered from the community at large and the school system members. The points of agreement correlated with categories of *Learners, Community and Partners, and Operations* of the district.

The community of Colchester expressed a strong desire for an educational experience where learning extends beyond the classroom to meet student needs through personalized learning plans, **innovative and relevant curricula** and a focus on both **college and career readiness**. Of importance to the community is the need to measure achievements by setting goals beyond the state-mandated assessments. The community feedback indicates a desire for a school system where students and professionals are **responsible digital citizens**. Further, the community indicates a desire for students to embrace personal responsibility, have an **appreciation for diversity**, and graduate with a strong sense of self. Teachers and staff have pride in their careers and in providing **high-quality instruction and support** for their students.

*Learners * Community and Partners * Operations*

Goals

- ✚ **Student learning** is supported by a personally relevant curriculum where problem solving, communication, and critical thinking extend beyond the classroom.
- ✚ **Students** use academic, technical, social, and creative skills to innovate and solve personally meaningful real-world problems in a global context.
- ✚ **Educators are known as leaders** in Connecticut and nationally, for distinguished practices and for being committed to creating a caring, collaborative educational family, while fostering innovation.
- ✚ **Colchester School District** enhances innovative instruction with a 21st century digital learning environment.
- ✚ **Colchester School District embraces partnerships with parents and caregivers, and community members** to support learning while fostering pride and excitement for the well-being of all students.
- ✚ **Colchester School District will enhance its facilities and technologies** supporting innovative teaching and learning.