



# Colchester Public Schools

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April 9, 2020

Dear Colchester Families,

First and foremost, I hope you and your loved ones are safe and healthy. As the unprecedented COVID-19 impact to our personal and professional lives continues to evolve, a top priority for Colchester Public Schools is to connect to students and families in this period of social isolation. While we are diligent in continuing our efforts to provide high-quality instruction, we are just as concerned for student emotional health and family harmony. We encourage you to strike a balance in your family that keeps stress in check. With that, I am resharing this helpful guide from the CDC: [Mental Health and Coping during COVID-19](#).

## **School Closure Update**

***By order of the Governor as of April 9, 2020 we are officially closed until May 20, 2020.*** Please note that this change does not indicate that we will be in school starting on May 21, 2020, only that the additional closure time will give the State more time to determine future actions. The district will continue to refine our interim learning program and will make decisions on grading within the next two weeks. For regular updates please see our [School closure update webpage](#).

## **Food Security and Meals Schedule Update**

There will be no meal service on Friday, April 10, 2020, but there will be meal service next week, April 13-17. Colchester Public Schools was recently approved to serve community-wide meals to “eligible” children, which is now defined as *any child 18 years old and younger*. If you are 18 years old or younger, and live in Connecticut, you are eligible to receive breakfast and lunch from our school district. If you intend to participate in this food security program for breakfast and lunch, Monday through Friday (except Friday, April 10th) from 9am to 11am at Bacon Academy, please complete this survey so we may plan accordingly: [Food program survey](#). Details and safety protocol used in the meals program are included in the survey and on the district website, [CPS Coronavirus webpage](#).

For more information on food security programs, please visit the [Connecticut State Department of Education](#) website and click on the yellow banner for lists of towns where

meals are being served. If you have any questions, please email Leanne Ranheim District Nutrition Program Coordinator/Cafeteria Manager at [lrnheim@colchesterct.org](mailto:lrnheim@colchesterct.org).

### **Bacon Academy Graduation**

On April 7, 2020 the Board of Education voted unanimously to set Bacon Academy's graduation for June 15, 2020. Principal Peel and Bacon Academy are committed to honoring as many end-of-year events and celebrations as possible. However, what the continued impact of COVID-19 may be at that time is unknown.

**Spring Sports Update from the CIAC:** From the CIAC April 2, 2020 meeting: The CIAC Board of Control maintained its position that spring sports are indefinitely suspended. The CIAC has intentionally not issued the constraint of deadline date to make any decision. CIAC will explore every possibility for providing student-athletes a spring sports experience, if it is safe. For more information visit <http://ciacsports.com/site/>

### **Teaching and Learning**

Tomorrow will mark the eleventh day of interim learning opportunities provided online in Colchester. We have received a significant amount of positive feedback and support from students and families about how diligently our faculty have worked to support the continuation of learning. Our success through this transition couldn't be possible without the support of you, our families, who are working so hard to balance the shifts demanded by this pandemic. We recognize how challenging this transition has been for some, and are listening very closely to individual needs. We know the isolation requires an adjustment for students from a more social school atmosphere, that the time spent in front of screens is different from the time spent in the classroom, and that the assigned work has a very different look and feel from that which is normally required at home. A digital learning environment does place a significant amount of responsibility on the student to own the learning, and at some levels, shifts some of that responsibility to the parent. Although we want every child to have the opportunity to continue his or her learning during this time, we do not want this to cause a level of stress beyond the capacity of your family. We will be making shifts over the next few days based upon your feedback and the feedback from our students to increasingly strike the balance between your family needs and maintaining the high quality of instruction you expect from our faculty.

### **Student/Parent Feedback Request**

Please talk to your student about his or her experience online, then complete the following anonymous survey: [Student/Parent Feedback Form](#). This survey has been very helpful and we are currently working on reviewing the workload expectations for all grade levels and will have appropriate adjustments for after the April break.

### **Attendance**

The District will be introducing a new method to track participation in distance learning beginning April 20, 2020. If your child is absent, please call the building absent number and report the absence as you would if school was in session. Additionally, a survey will be sent to students/families each day, and responses will be used to track participation. Please read the attached letters from each school that describe attendance requirements.

### **Technology**

The IT department will be postponing distribution of Chromebooks for the period of vacation in order to focus on the repair of devices, maintenance of our systems, and to update the District inventory.

### **Budget Meeting**

On Wednesday, April 15th at 6:30PM, the Board of Education budget will be presented to the Board of Finance in a virtual meeting that will be accessible to the public. For more information and details on how to access the meeting, please visit the [Town of Colchester website](#).

### **Virtual Access to Board of Education Meetings**

Board of Education meetings will be accessible to the public via virtual meeting platforms. All directions for public access will be included here: [Board of Education Meetings webpage](#). Any questions pertaining to agenda items should be directed to [boardquestions@colchesterct.org](mailto:boardquestions@colchesterct.org). To have your question read during the Public Comment section of the agenda, all questions must be submitted at least one hour prior to the start of the meeting.

I will make myself personally available to any student or family who has concerns or questions. Please email [covid19@colchesterct.org](mailto:covid19@colchesterct.org). While the upcoming April break is not what any of us imagined, I hope you will still enjoy a well-deserved break for fresh air (while social distancing), unwinding, reading a book, and otherwise engaging in enjoyable activities. I remain grateful for all in our community who have risen to this challenge, cared for each other, and maintained a focus on the value of education.

### **Resources for Families**

Cragin Library has posted this registration form for e-library cards that can be used with any online books from any library in the state:  
<https://www.colchesterct.gov/cragin-memorial-library>

The next update will be sent on Friday, April 24.

Take good care and stay healthy.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Burt  
Superintendent