

March 27, 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Thank you for your continued support and patience as we navigate the challenges associated with COVID-19. Last week, Governor Lamont closed all schools until at least April 20th and has indicated that districts and families should plan for a longer closure. Since that announcement, we have trained 250 teachers in virtual platforms and began Phase II: Interim Learning Opportunities. Our extremely dedicated faculty will continue to engage students in meaningful educational opportunities via Google Classroom for as long as necessary in these uncertain times. Here is this week's summary:

Are you receiving our emails/notifications?

Our SchoolMessenger notification reports are showing several blocked email addresses. If you are not receiving our emails, please complete this survey: [Email Survey](#)

Budget

As of now our budget process will be delayed and the original presentation to the BOF will not take place on Tuesday, March 31st. Both the Town and the BOE budget process can be delayed by 30 days, so we will send out updates once we have a clear timeline and process.

A Message from the School Nurses

On behalf of the Colchester school nurses, we hope this reaches you well. We miss working with the students and want you to know we are thinking of them. The school nurses are available for questions or concerns from parents and students through our email. We do not have access to our voicemail. How can we help? We can accept physicals and immunizations, doctor's notes, and medication authorizations digitally (pdf, scans, pictures, etc) for school sports, school entry or enrollments, and updates. Medications can be collected from schools by contacting covid19@colchesterct.org. Nurse responses will be provided weekdays from 8am-3p. Please reach out to their emails below:

CES: Tina Kessing- ckessing@colchesterct.org

JJIS: Heidi Litwin- hlitwin@colchesterct.org

WJMS: Cindy Noniewicz- cnoniewicz@colchesterct.org

Bacon: Tammy VanLanen- tvanlanen@colchesterct.org

Paula Beaudoin- pbeaudoin@colchesterct.org

Teaching & Learning

Yesterday was our "second, first day" of the school year, and we were so excited to greet your students to online school! The faculty have worked very hard to learn a number of digital tools in a very short time, and have risen to the challenge. They have already engaged students in digital conferences, built YouTube instructional channels, and encouraged students to share their quarantine experiences via Screencastify. This is just a small sample of the innovative work our faculty are exploring, and what we hope to continue to support students learn. Friday will be another day for our faculty to connect with your student and assist him or her acclimate to an online learning environment, then Monday we will ease back into a focus on learning.

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](#). The feedback will be used to help us make the student/parent experience even better!

Technology

Tuesday will mark the eighth and final day of Chromebook distribution to families in need of a device. Our goal has been to provide all students in need with access to a device to support online learning, and it is critical to reserve our remaining Chromebooks to support students whose district-issued devices fail. The last day for chromebook distribution will be Tuesday, March 31st at 3pm. Please email techhelp@colchesterct.org to request a device. From Tuesday forward we will only be providing repairs for district-issued devices by appointment.

Attendance

If your child is absent from school, please continue to dial the school absence line for each day they are absent.

Social and Emotional Well-Being

In this time of social distancing and isolation, teachers are using this as a guide to building developmental relationships with their students: [Developmental Relationships Checklist](#). Many tips are quite helpful for families as well. The Centers for Disease Control has this comprehensive guide for staying healthy and being informed: [How to Prepare | CDC](#)

Talking to Children About COVID-19 (Coronavirus) - A Parent Resource: [Talking to Children About COVID-19](#)

Food Security Plan

Our outstanding Food Services team has been distributing approximately 100 meals per day during this period of school closure. Meals are “grab-and-go” at Bacon Academy daily from 9:00-11:00AM. Meal exchange is performed with social distancing precautions. More information is on our website: [Meals Information](#)

Virtual Access to Board of Education Meetings

Board of Education meetings will be accessed virtually via Zoom meetings. All directions for public access will be included on our website’s BOE page here: [BOARD OF EDUCATION WEBSITE](#). Upcoming BOE meetings: April 1, 2020 at 4:00PM (Special Meeting); April 7, 2020 Regular Meeting (time forthcoming). Any questions should be directed to covid19@colchesterct.org.

Phone Calls

Office staff are checking voicemail and returning calls. Please note our return calls may come from “unknown caller” or something similar.

Other Items

We are still awaiting guidance from the State on the following items:

- Recording grades during the closure, especially at the secondary level
- How to record attendance for State reporting purposes; we will take daily attendance as best as possible
- The impact of the closure on high school credits and graduation requirements
- Whether or not summer school will take place
- Whether or not the extended school year program will take place

I continue to be proud of and inspired by our school community. Together, we are taking care of our students and staff in an effort to provide critical connections in this highly unusual era. With so much uncertainty, one thing is clear: our top priority is - and will continue to be - the safety, health, and emotional well-being of our community.

The next regular update will be Friday, April 3, 2020. Please be safe and be well.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Burt, Superintendent