

From the Desk of Superintendent Jeffrey Burt



"We create innovative thinkers for a dynamic world"

Colchester Public Schools welcomed 2019 with this new mission statement. Eight simple words provide a sharp focus for all we do together as a school district and a community for every student in our schools. The most powerful word in this statement is "we," because it embodies the notion that everyone in our community plays a role in fostering the physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being for students. This idea helps to frame our efforts, and determine how we focus our energies and our budget to maintain the integrity of our schools and the outstanding programs available to our students.

As the 2019-2020 school year budget is developed, a top priority is to continue to provide innovative teaching and personalized instruction to all of Colchester's 2,340 students. Inspired by our district theme of Innovation Nation, we acknowledge that students must be prepared for a dynamic work experience: one that requires them to solve problems, work collaboratively, communicate effectively, and continuously develop the skills required for a variety of tasks. Fostering an atmosphere of innovative problem-solving provides students with strategies to transfer their knowledge and skills to new experiences outside the classroom, in a global context. This is innovative thinking.

A key component to innovative thinking is engaging our community, which is at the heart of our new mission statement. Colchester Public Schools embraces partnerships with parents, caregivers, and community members to support learning while fostering pride and excitement for the well-being of all students. Colchester's measurements of success are designed to go beyond state assessments, and are directed to the need for authentic learning and problem-solving in the real world.

To this end, the proposed 2019-2020 budget will reflect the priority to enhance instruction with district facilities and technologies that support an innovative 21st century digital learning environment. Long-range planning is factored into the budget for the following priorities:

- *Facilities.* We intend to budget for maintenance in a way that honors the commitment the town has made through providing new and renovated buildings.
- *Technology.* We strive to employ technology and infrastructure that supports our mission to provide outstanding instruction and support for all students.
- *Security.* Making upgrades to security reinforces that safety is always our top priority.

I am proud to work with a group of educators that are known as innovative leaders, in Connecticut and nationally, for distinguished practices as well as for creating a caring, collaborative educational family. While seeking efficiencies in the budget, Colchester Public Schools is committed to continual development of high quality curriculum and specialized programming to provide the best possible educational opportunities for our students. Working together, we can and will create innovative thinkers for a dynamic world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jeff Burt".