



Colchester Public Schools

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Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Last week, the Board of Education made the decision to move the first day of school for students to September 8th to allow for additional planning on the part of the District, and also to allow families to plan accordingly for their needs.

New School Year 2020-2021 Calendar

The adjusted 2020-2021 school year calendar is linked here: [Calendars- School Year and School Arrival and Dismissal](#). There are still 177 days of instruction for students, as mandated by the State of CT Department of Education.

Plan Questions

Our [Q&A document](#) on our reopening is now available and will be updated weekly.

Safety and Risk Mitigation

As we approach reopening, safety and risk mitigation is our first priority. The Reopening Task Force has reviewed the guidance and mandates from federal, state, and local health officials, and has made every effort possible to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission for both students and staff. Strategies for risk mitigation include:

- instructing students in cohorts
- the requirement for all students and staff to wear masks
- one-way hall and directional signs
- social distancing protocols within and outside of classrooms
- increased cleaning regimens and extra cleaning protocols
- a schedule of frequent hand washing
- training for students and staff in transmission prevention.

We ask that all of our families join us in our effort to keep our learning community safe by assisting their student(s) understand and practice these risk mitigation strategies. It is very important for our younger students to practice wearing masks for extended

periods of time and we ask families to start practicing now. We also acknowledge that our schools are only as safe as our community, and so we also ask that our families and staff join us in the defense against transmission by taking appropriate safety measures outside of school. Measures include limiting exposure to large crowds, wearing masks in public, self-quarantining when in contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, and recognizing the symptoms of COVID-19 and staying home if they appear. Please review these CDC guidelines: [How to Protect Yourself & Others](#).

Instruction

Whereas our mission will always be to educate students, we will begin the upcoming academic year with a focus on developing an environment that is safe and supportive of students' social and emotional wellbeing. Students are living through a world-wide pandemic. By September, students will have been out of school for nearly 6 months. Some students have experienced trauma brought on by the disease itself or the economic or social impact the disease has had on their family. A team of support staff and teachers at each building have designed professional development that will be provided to all instructional staff that will support them with strategies to build a community of learners. Our mission is to support each student transition comfortably back to school so that they can focus on learning.

Voluntary At-Home Learning Program

For a description of this educational model, please visit: [Voluntary At-Home Learning Program Description.pdf](#). In addition, Dr. Hewes, Director of Teaching and Learning, has created this video to answer many of your questions on the At-Home option. Please view [this video](#) prior to asking additional questions. Finally, a separate At-Home Q&A document will be published this week answering even more of your questions.

Hybrid Learning Calendar for Distance Learning Days

Here is a calendar through December that shows Group 1, Group 2, and Distance Learning Days:

[Hybrid Learning Calendar for Distance Learning Days.pdf](#).

Masks Update

CPS requires students to wear masks (not gaiters) unless on designated "mask breaks." On August 14, 2020, Connecticut issued Executive Order 7NNN which updates and supersedes Executive Order 7BB by requiring written medical documentation in order for an individual to claim an exemption from the requirement to wear a mask or face covering in school. The new list of exemptions includes only children under the age of 2 years, which means that Preschoolers are now required to wear masks.

Technology

Parents should use this [Securranty link](#) to purchase device insurance. The link listed in the letters that recently went home were incorrect. If Securranty is asking whether your device is new or used, please reference the table below. If you are having trouble accessing your PowerSchool account **and** have already created a parent portal account, please contact your student's school to have them reset your password.

| PreK-1 | Grades 2-4 | Grade 5 | Grade 6 | Grades 7-12 |
|-----------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Used iPad | New Chromebook | Used Chromebook | New Chromebook | Used Chromebook |

Pupil Services and Special Education Update

Here is an update from the office of Pupil Services and Special Education: [COVID-19 August 21 Parent Letter.docx.pdf](#)

Data on COVID-19 in Connecticut

The following link provides access to data on the key metrics developed by the Connecticut Department of Health (DPH) and the Department of Education (CSDE) to support local district decision-making on the level of in-person, hybrid (blended), and remote learning model for Pre K-12 education: [CT School Reopening | Connecticut Data](#)

Child Care Through Parks and Recreation

Colchester Public Schools is exploring the possibility of providing school day care options in the District for students in Grades K-5. Students would participate in the same cohort (Mon/Tues or Thurs/Fri) as they are in while in-person learning. Care would be provided by Parks and Recreation staff at a cost of \$25/day per student. At this time, we are assessing initial interest from families. If you are interested, please email parksandrec@colchesterct.gov before the end of day on Tuesday, August 26th.

Meals Pick-up

There is a possibility for meals pick-up Monday through Friday for students registered in the District. Meals will be charged to the students' meal account accordingly (full price, reduced, free). If you are certain you would participate, please email Leanne Ranheim, District Nutrition Program Coordinator, at lrnheim@colchesterct.org.

Connecticut Interscholastic Athletics Conference Update on Fall Sports

In alignment with positive discussions with the Connecticut Department of Public Health, the CIAC Board of Control voted at its Sunday meeting to restart conditioning for all fall sports. The status of Fall sports is still under determination. For the latest CIAC update, visit their website: [The Connecticut Interscholastic Conference 2020-2021 Fall Sports Plan](#)

Travel In/Out of Connecticut and Quarantine Process

Pursuant to Governor Lamont's [Executive Order No. 7III](#), anyone traveling into Connecticut from a state that has a new daily positive test rate higher than 10 per 100,000 residents or a state with a 10% or higher positivity rate over a 7-day rolling average is directed to self-quarantine for a 14-day period from the time of last contact within the identified state. For more information, see the State's website: [Travel in or Out of CT](#).

Bus Information

More information about busing (routes, safety protocol) is forthcoming, but there will be assigned seating on all buses.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey Burt", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeffrey Burt
Superintendent