



Colchester Public Schools

127 Norwich Avenue, Suite 202
Colchester, CT 06415

Jeffrey E. Burt
Superintendent of Schools

Phone (860) 537-7208
Fax (860) 537-1252
jburt@colchesterct.org

May 1, 2020

Dear Colchester Families,

Here is the weekly update on our response to ongoing school closure due to COVID-19. Any timely or significant changes will be communicated in a separate email.

I'd like to begin with acknowledging the Colchester Public Schools teams being recognized this month for their tireless work during this most challenging time: our incredible Teachers, Administrative Assistants and Office Professionals, Principals, and School Nutrition professionals. Every single member of our school community shifted everything they do into a new method of teaching, supporting, and providing for our students and parents. Please join me in extending heartfelt gratitude to these dedicated members of our school community:

- **Teacher Appreciation Week:** Next week is Teacher Appreciation Week. Colchester Public Schools' teachers have faced an unprecedented challenge and risen to the task with passion, caring, and commitment. I am continually grateful for their flexibility and professionalism as we begin Phase III: New Learning. Teachers are the very heart of our District, and I am proud to work alongside such a dedicated group of individuals. If you would like, please reach out to your student's teacher to let them know your thoughts and copy covid19@colchesterct.org.
- **May 1st is National Principals Day:** Principals are the educational leaders who are committed to ensuring the success of students and staff alike. Our Principals foster environments where students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. They lay the foundation for teachers and staff to do their very best work. I am proud of these consummate, caring professionals who go above and beyond every single day.
- **National Administrative Professionals Day:** We also honor all the Administrative and Office Professionals who have gracefully risen to the challenge of keeping absolutely everything in the District virtually running for administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and students. The benefits we all reap from this talented group are immeasurable.

- **May 1st is Lunch Heroes Day:** On May 1st, we recognize School Lunch Heroes Day. Our Food Services staff are serving on average 125 each of breakfast and lunch per day. Since school closure, these incredible heroes have served the students in our community nearly 7,000 meals. Their unwavering commitment to meet the needs of our students is the true meaning of community.

Bacon Academy Update on 4th Quarter Grades and End of Year Grades

Please see this video: [Bacon Academy Grading Update](#). An important note from Bacon Academy administration: We identified a technical issue with PowerSchool that may have caused students' grades to change or be inaccurate. We have identified a solution and it will be fixed before the end of the day. This will not have an effect on 3rd quarter grades or any grades moving forward. When you log in to PowerSchool on Monday, all grades should be accurate. Thank you for your patience as we fix this issue.

State Survey on the Reopening of Schools

There has been no change to the Governor's order that schools remain closed until **May 20, 2020**. Your participation and feedback in this survey from the Commissioner of Education are essential to the process and necessary for our State leaders to consider as decisions are made about reopening our schools. I encourage everyone to use the link below to share your thoughts and help evaluate the critical issues. This confidential and anonymous online tool will be used to make the gathering of feedback more efficient and to reflect all the different regions and constituent groups across the state. Survey Link: [Thought Exchange](#).

Parent Resources and Social/Emotional Health

As always, if you need help, please reach out to your student's teacher or administrator to provide resources and support. You may reach me as well at covid19@colchesterct.org.

- Here are some great resources for families, compiled by a School Counselor: [Parent Resources & Articles](#).
- **Message from UCFS Healthcare Regarding Health Insurance:** If you or someone you know has recently lost a job, contact UCS Healthcare's Access to Care Team at 860.822.4798.
- **New Tax Relief Program** for anyone who has been financially impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. For information on this program and eligibility guidelines, see the following documents: [Have You Been Financially Affected by COVID-19?](#) and [COVID-19 Form](#). Please contact the Tax Collector's Office no later than **July 1, 2020** at 860-537-7210 or by email at taxcollector@colchesterct.gov.
- **Food Bank:** Colchester Youth Services wants families to know that the Food Bank is available to help during these unprecedented times. If you are struggling to feed your family, please reach out: (860) 537-7255 or email socialservices@colchesterct.gov to schedule a time to pick up food.

Phase III: New Learning

Director of Teaching and Learning Dr. Charles Hewes sent an update to families on April 29th regarding Phase III: New Learning. His update can also be found on our website, here: [Phase III: New Learning](#)

2020-2021 Budget Process Update

On April 27th and April 29th, the BOE held Special Meetings to discuss potential reductions to the proposed education budget for 2020-2021. At the April 29th meeting the BOE discussed what a revision to the proposed 2020-21 budget from a 1.43% increase to a 0.76% would involve and suggested reductions were presented. At the April 30th meeting of the Board of Finance the suggested reductions were presented, but the BOF did not take any action. As of today, the BOE budget still stands at 1.43% increase over the current budget. We expect the Board of Finance to vote on our budget within the next two weeks. All documents related to the budget discussions, including the list of proposed reductions, can be found on our [website](#).

For public access to virtual BOE meetings, visit the [Board of Education Website](#). Any questions pertaining to agenda items should be directed to boardquestions@colchesterct.org. Questions must be submitted at least one hour prior to the start of the meeting. Please see the [Town's Budget Page](#) for updates on meeting dates and the process.

Have a question or concern?

- Visit our Frequently Asked Questions and Answers: [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

- **EMAILS**

General questions: covid19@colchesterct.org

Tech questions: techhelp@colchesterct.org

BOE questions: boardquestions@colchesterct.org

Despite the uncertainties in the time of COVID-19, one thing is clear: we all miss our students. I hope these uplifting videos from CES and JJIS bring a smile to you today: [CES Pass it On Video](#) and [A Video Message from JJIS Staff](#).

The next update will be sent on Friday, May 8th. Please be safe and take care of each other.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Burt
Superintendent