



# Colchester School District

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April 17, 2020

Dear Colchester School Community,

We've made it to April Vacation. You did it! Today also marks one month since the doors closed at our schools and learning moved online. In that time, we have made some major shifts in the way we think and do "school". We've overhauled our curriculum to adapt to remote learning platforms, modified our student support methods, distributed devices to students who didn't have one at home, delivered approximately 19,550 meal bags to students (that's 39,100 meals!), created new systems for meeting, collaborating, grading, attendance, and student check-ins, and so much more.

Every day we are adapting and learning how to best support our students, families, and employees. This week, we asked our families to complete a survey to provide us with some feedback on our remote learning programming so far. The data and responses gathered from these surveys will guide us as we continue to regularly assess our plans throughout this school closure. Thank you for taking the time to complete these surveys, we cannot stress how important it is for us to know what is and isn't working. For our preschool families, the guidance specific to preschool has been shifting daily. We anticipate getting a survey out to preschool the week after break.

Here are a few updates and reminders for families:

- **Meals During April Vacation:** We are continuing to deliver meals during April vacation. I want to share my sincere gratitude to the bus drivers, food service workers, custodians, and support staff food runners on the buses who have agreed to work through the vacation to ensure our students have access to meals.
- **Learning and Engagement Options Over Vacation:** The Vermont Agency of Education put together a document for families who may want to access some additional resources to keep their students engaged over the break. While, completely optional, this document is a great collection of vetted links to resources for wellness/mindfulness, physical education, and core subject areas. [Learning and Engagement Support for Families During Spring Break](#)
- **Spring Sports:** The Vermont Principal's Association (VPA) is scheduled to make a formal announcement regarding spring sports on Thursday, April 30. Once we hear what they've decided, we will share what that means for our Colchester athletes.
- **End-of-Year Events:** We have not made any decisions regarding end-of-year school events such as celebrations and graduation. We anticipate the Governor will provide further guidance on large scale gatherings on May 8th. Once we hear that guidance, whatever it may be, our schools will be able to put more concrete plans in place and will share those details with you as soon as they're finalized.
- **K-5 Device:** If you have a student in grades K-5 that needs a device, [please fill out this form](#).
- **Technology Support:** If you need support please email [helpdesk@colchestersd.org](mailto:helpdesk@colchestersd.org) with a brief explanation of the issue. This creates a formal ticket in our system and a specialist will contact you as soon as possible. We request that you include a phone number so we can call you back. The other option is to call the helpdesk directly at (802) 264-5727.

- **Attendance:** We are hopeful that your student will be engaged in their learning and connected to their school. Our teachers, specialists, and support staff are providing lessons and opportunities for your child to check-in, ask questions, and get any additional help when needed. If a student does not check in with their classes, we will reach out to their families to offer support and a plan for future connections.

Please take some time next week to take care of yourself and your family. I encourage you to savor this well-deserved break from school work in the hope that we can all come back prepared to do our best for the final stretch of the year. As you plan some non-school adventures, we want to ask families to continue to skip playdates and gatherings. Earlier today, the Governor and his team continued to stress the importance of reducing contact to contain the spread of the virus. We are proud of what our community as a whole has achieved so far. Let's keep up the good work.

We understand that no two families are the same. Each family is burdened with different challenges and hurdles. If you feel overwhelmed by remote learning and could benefit from some help, please reach out to your child's teacher(s), their guidance counselor, or your building's principal. We want the best for your student, not just academically but from a whole health perspective. We are better together, and I truly believe that when we resurface from this pandemic, it will be the simple things in life that we will appreciate more and it will be our connections to each other that will remain unforgotten.

Be well and do the best you can.

Amy Minor

Superintendent of Schools