



# Colchester School District

Administrative Offices, 125 Laker Lane, PO Box 27, Colchester, Vermont 05446

Phone: (802) 264-5999 ● [www.csdvt.org](http://www.csdvt.org) ● Fax: (802) 863-4774

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July 22, 2020

Dear Colchester Community,

I am writing to provide you with an update on our plans to reopen our school buildings. To start the school year, Colchester School District, along with all 16 school districts covering Addison, Chittenden, Franklin, and Grand Isle Counties who are members of the Champlain Valley Superintendents Association (CVSA), will implement a hybrid instruction model that will include both in-person and remote learning. This plan to return to school is student-centered, focused on social-emotional needs, and designed to keep our students learning at a high level. Most importantly, a hybrid model affords the ability to offer in-person learning in the safest environment possible while adhering to the best practices of the [guidance issued by the Vermont Agency of Education \(AOE\)](#). Here's how the hybrid model will work.

- Students will be divided into two groups.
- Groups will attend school in-person two days a week and learn remotely three days a week.
  - Students and staff attending in person will wear masks and practice physical distancing.
  - Groups will be thoughtfully created so they best support families, including grouping family members together whenever possible.
  - We are working on scheduling and will have that information to families as soon as possible.
- Students will be learning remotely on Wednesdays. We will use this day to deep clean our buildings, provide individualized support to students, and allow our faculty and staff to engage in professional planning and learning as needed.

While we all agree that nothing compares to the benefits that students receive from in-person instruction, after extensively reviewing the AOE's guidance and evaluating how to operationally implement those requirements and recommendations in our schools, reviewing survey submissions from our families and staff, and consulting with our reopening committee, we feel the hybrid model will best address the health and safety of our students and staff given the current health data available.

Having fewer students in the building at a time will help reduce contact with others and allow for better physical distancing. The smaller groups will also allow teachers and staff more time to assess the academic progress and needs of our students. With fewer students in the building, we can help them adjust to new expectations while fostering healthy routines throughout the

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**Amy Minor**  
Superintendent  
of Schools

**George Trieb**  
Business & Operations  
Manager

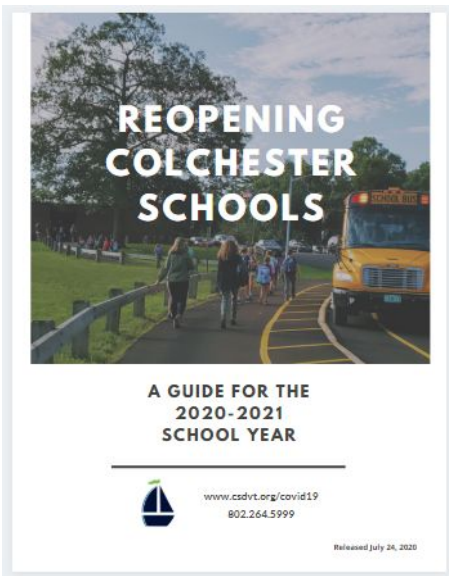
**Carrie Lutz**  
Director of Student  
Support Services

**Gwendolyn Carmolli**  
Director of Curriculum  
& Instruction

day, such as regular hand washing. In these pandemic conditions, it is also imperative that we continue to improve our remote systems so that we can be ready to adapt if health data requires a shift to full remote learning again.

We acknowledge the hardships that hybrid and full remote models may place on families, including our own faculty and staff. Although it will be a challenge, the overwhelming majority of families and staff surveyed preferred opening schools in a hybrid learning environment. By working together, openly communicating, and being creative and flexible, we can overcome these challenges together. That said, please understand there are many moving pieces to these plans, and we will need to adapt as the situation surrounding COVID-19 evolves and we receive further guidance from the AOE and the Department of Health.

We are also preparing to offer a remote-only/virtual learning option for families. We want to make sure that our families are able to make an informed decision about the type of instruction their child(ren) will receive this school year. In the next few days, we will be releasing a document called **Reopening Colchester Schools: A Guide for the 2020-2021 School Year**. This guide will outline the details of our hybrid in-person instruction and our full-time remote/virtual learning options.



Soon after that, we will need to know which instructional option you've chosen for your child(ren). We have added that question to our annual online registration/verification form that families fill out each year. So, in addition to updating your child's contact information, emergency contacts, medical needs, and transportation plans, **this year you'll also be asked to select if your child will be attending our schools for hybrid in-person learning or accessing full-time virtual learning**. The online registration/verification form will be open soon, most likely next week. We will email you with a direct link when it is ready.

Finally, in addition to academic work, I want to assure you that our teams will work tirelessly to support your child's social and emotional needs through this transition. School is going to look and feel different this year, and we know all of our students will need support. We are here for your children and for your family.

Sincerely,

Amy Minor  
Superintendent of Colchester Schools