



# Colchester School District

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September 18, 2020

CSD Community,

Our first full week is in the books and the district is doing a great job of adapting to the new habits, routines, and systems that come with schooling during a pandemic. Whether your children are learning in a fully virtual classroom or a hybrid classroom, it feels good to be connecting again. Thank you for your continued understanding, support, and flexibility as we fine-tune our procedures.

As a district, we are continuing to evaluate, assess, and revise our systems and procedures throughout our reopening. In meeting with other regional superintendents, we are all optimistically looking towards the future and starting to plan for the possibility of returning our K-5 students to school for more than two days per week. While all of the local school districts decided jointly to reopen in a hybrid learning model, moving forward, each district is unique with differing sizes of buildings, staffing levels, and class size, and with that, you will begin to see districts differ in how and when they decide to bring back more students.

**In Colchester, we have not set a date to bring more students back to school.** While we are actively planning for different scenarios in which we would bring elementary students back, ultimately, this decision will be rooted in data as we watch the next few weeks unfold. We will also take into consideration our staffing levels and the confidence that we have in our students' ability to continue following hygiene, mask-wearing, and distancing routines. Any move that brings additional students into the buildings will be very intentional and only after careful consideration and planning.

With that, we are continuing to ask for our community's help. **We need to stay safe to stay open.** The ability to bring our youngest learners back into the classroom, where they truly need to be, will be dependant on how well our community does at continuing to follow the recommendations of our health experts. While in school, we will continue to work on educating our students on the importance of physical distancing and verbally reminding them to "keep their distance." Anything that you can do at home to reinforce the need for physical distancing and mask-wearing would be appreciated.

Three more quick updates for this week:

**Bus Safety** - We've had several reports this week of drivers going by our buses when their yellow or red lights are on. We're asking all of our community members to join forces to keep our kids safe by paying extra attention while driving in town. Additionally, we're reminding folks to be mindful of sidewalks, bike paths, and crosswalks. With the beautiful fall weather, many of our students are walking or biking to

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school. We posted this reminder on our social media pages ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#)) and Front Porch Forum and appreciate anything you can do to get the message out to stay alert and drive with caution when approaching a school bus or child pedestrian.

**Annual Ski & Board Sale** - Sadly, this highly anticipated event is taking a break this year. Organizers hope to bring it back in full force next year. There are some similar events to still happening in our area for those interested.

**Free Lunch Applications** - As everyone knows, meals are free for the next few months while there is still federal funding available. However, because of this, we've seen a decline in [Free & Reduced Meal applications](#). This is concerning for two reasons. First, universal free meals will eventually run out and that will leave families who may not be able to afford to pay for meals in a tight spot. If you apply now, as soon as that universal funding runs out, your free or reduced meal status will immediately begin with no gap. Secondly, the number of families in our district who qualify for free or reduced lunch has a direct impact on programs for our students that are funded through federal grant money. If fewer families take advantage of the free & reduced meal option, we will see a decrease in funding for important academic support programs. The application process is quick, easy, and completely online. Fill one out today here: [www.myschoolapps.com/Application](http://www.myschoolapps.com/Application)

Be Well,

Amy Minor  
Superintendent of Schools