



Colchester School District

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

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October 1, 2021

CSD Community,

Here are a couple of updates regarding school safety, COVID cases, how to get a discount on internet service, food shortages, and more.

Important Upcoming Dates and Reminders

- No school on Friday, October 8 for professional development in grades PreK-8 and family conferences in grades 6-12.
- No School on Monday, October 11 in observance of Indigenous Peoples Day.
- For the full calendar, visit www.csdvt.org/calendar.

School Safety

Working in partnership with the Colchester Police Department, the district has extensive safety plans for a wide variety of incidents that are rooted in best practice and reviewed and updated regularly. These plans are designed to prevent or minimize the effect of emergencies while protecting our students, employees, and facilities. In addition to regular training, we routinely practice fire drills and clear-the-hall drills with students and employees at each school. This helps us to apply consistent procedures during an emergency situation. After each drill or real safety event, the CSD Crisis Response Team always convenes to assess our effectiveness.

During an actual safety event, our primary focus in the early stages of the incident is to do everything in our power to protect the students and employees inside the school by securing the building. As soon as we are able to communicate with families to provide factual information about the incident, we will. If you'd like more information about the safety terms and procedures that we use in an emergency, you can review the district's [School Emergency Information Guide](#) on our website.

K-8 Social-Emotional Learning Assessment Tool

Over two decades of research has helped us understand the important role social and emotional skills play in each child's success in school, in the community, and, eventually, in higher education and the workplace. As part of the Social-Emotional Learning Initiative at Colchester School District, our teachers in grades K-8 will be using a tool called the DESSA to assess how often a student has demonstrated specific life skills in the past month. The skills we'll be looking at are all necessary to be successful students and adults and include things like demonstrating self-control, persisting at challenging tasks, making good decisions, and working well in groups. We believe that the information gathered from the DESSA will be beneficial to your child's overall success both inside and outside the classroom. If you

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Manager

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have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to the Director of Student Support Services, Carrie Lutz, at carrie.lutz@colchestersd.org.

Listening Forums

On October 13 and 21, Colchester High School and Middle School will be holding listening forums with students who self-identify as immigrant, refugee, new American, and/or BIPOC. The district is partnering with Paul Suk-Hyun Yoon and Michael Hill Jr., two individuals who have experience working with students, families, and community members in a wide variety of settings.

We believe these listening forums are a unique opportunity for our school community to listen, learn, and strengthen our bonds with this particular part of our community. Jamilah Vogel, the district’s diversity, equity, and inclusion coordinator, will work closely with Paul and Michael to learn as much as possible from the participants. These forums are part of a larger district-wide effort to ensure that all of our students feel welcome, safe, and supported in our schools. To learn more about the forums, contact jamilah.vogel@colchestersd.org.

COVID Update

Our district has had 22 cases of COVID-19 so far this school year. The breakdown by school is listed below. We want to thank our families and employees for continuing to do their part in keeping our community safe and would like to remind everyone how important it is to stay home when sick.

CSD COVID Cases				
UMS	PPS	MBS	CMS	CHS
2	0	5	6	9

A huge shout out to the CSD Weekly Testing Team. We are pleased to announce that none of 514 tests from Monday came back positive. The week before, we piloted the program with 190 employees, which also resulted in zero positive cases. Our Weekly Testing Program will occur again on Monday, October 4th. If you would like your child to be tested, you must fill out [this consent form](#) to enroll your child in the program. You can enroll at any time, but your consent form must be received by Friday to allow us time to prepare to test on the following Monday. Please be aware that the Weekly Testing Program only runs when school is in session. There is no school or testing on Monday, October 11 in observance of Indigenous Peoples Day.

During the press conference this week, Education Secretary Dan French announced that the agency is working to finalize details on an additional testing program with the goal of keeping students in school during their quarantine period. We are waiting to hear more information and will share those details as soon as we have them.

CSD Employee Vaccination Rates

The COVID-19 vaccine reduces a person's risk of contracting the virus that causes COVID-19, including the Delta Variant. In a school setting, vaccines are an important mitigation measure to limit the spread of the virus. We recently requested CSD employees voluntarily share their COVID-19 vaccination status. We're pleased to share that more than 98% of the over 418 employees who responded are fully vaccinated.

Food Shortage Affecting School Meals

Due to a nationwide food shortage and disruptions in the supply chain, the Food Service Program at CSD is facing challenging shortages of some daily menu items. Our team is trying very hard to provide students with their favorite nutritious meals, but some of the menus may change on short notice. Thank you for your understanding.

Emergency Broadband Benefit Program

The FCC's Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB Program) is a temporary program that helps households pay for internet service during the pandemic. If your family was eligible for the Free/Reduced School Meals Program during School Year 19-20, 20-21, or 21-22, you can receive up to a \$50/month discount on your broadband service and associated equipment rentals (i.e., modem). A one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, tablet, or desktop computer is available from [participating service providers](#). To sign up for the EBB Program please visit <https://getemergencybroadband.org/>. If you need a copy of your Free/Reduced approval letter, email cathy.ward@colchestersd.org or call 264-5985. Households may continue to submit a Free/Reduced application to become eligible for this benefit. Complete a [meal application](#) today!

Stay Connected

The district has active social media pages on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#). We recently posted some awesome photos of high school students on the ropes course and kindergartners in art class. Give us a follow to see which classroom we end up in next! Another way to get reminders about upcoming events from the district and the school your child(ren) attends is by signing up to receive text messages. If you'd like to receive text messages, text "yes" to 67587.

Hiring Update

Keep an eye on our social media as we kick off a campaign to fill several important positions in the district. We're going to be highlighting some of our current employees to show why Colchester Schools are such great places to work! Please spread the word if you see a post that resonates with you and check out www.csdvt.org/jobs to see all of our employment opportunities.

Be well,

Amy Minor
Superintendent of Schools