



Colchester School District

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December 22, 2022

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Gratitude from Superintendent Amy Minor

As we prepare to put 2021 in the past, I want to say thank you for all you have done to support our schools. Whether you're an employee, a student, or a parent/guardian, we should *all* be proud of what we have accomplished together over the last year. I think everyone thought this school year would be different, maybe even easier than last year, and it has been difficult to accept that in many ways, this year is actually harder. During the upcoming time off, I hope our students, families and employees take time to recharge, read, rest, enjoy time with loved ones, and reflect on how far we have all come as a community, despite the difficulties. And don't forget my favorite winter activity - get outside and enjoy the snow! See you in 2022!

Amy Minor

Superintendent of Schools

Facility Changes: CAP and Central Office

The Colchester Alternative Program (CAP) is a critical program offered to Colchester High School students as an alternative pathway to graduation. CAP is currently located in a leased space on Blakely Road, and for the third time in six years, the property is currently up for sale. If the sale is successful, we don't know if the new owners would allow the program to continue operating out of the space. Given that uncertainty, district officials have been looking into other locations for the program and ultimately made a recommendation to the school board to move the program into the current Central Office building on Laker Lane. Not only will this location provide closer proximity to CHS, but since the district already owns the building, it will provide a stable and permanent home to meet the unique needs of the program. In addition to participating in the CAP program, this change will also enable enrolled students to more readily access classes and other important opportunities at CHS. To make room for CAP, the

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Superintendent
of Schools

George Trieb
Business & Operations
Manager

Carrie Lutz
Director of Student
Support Services

Gwendolyn Carmolli
Director of Curriculum
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personnel from Central Office will be relocating to a leased office building that is off-campus. There will need to be renovations to the current Central Office to transform it from an office setting to a learning environment but in the end, we are confident and excited to be able to provide a permanent home to one of our very important programs. We are still working on the timeline but expect Central Office to vacate the Laker Lane building in early spring. This will allow renovations to begin so that the CAP program can start the next school year in their new location. We will keep the community updated as the transition progresses.

Contact Tracing Over Winter Break

At yesterday's press conference, Education Secretary Dan French stated that the Health Department will not advise schools of positive cases over the upcoming school vacation and will not expect districts to conduct any contact tracing. While our contact-tracing team would welcome a break, we have decided to continue efforts to contact trace over the school vacation. In the event that we are notified of a positive individual that was at school while infectious, we will notify impacted families of their student's exposure by email. The Health Department encourages students and families to seek testing options (either PCR or over-the-counter rapid/antigen) before and after gathering with family and to get their students vaccinated and/or boosted, if not already.

Free At-home Rapid Tests Available

In advance of the holidays, Governor Phil Scott announced that 10,000 rapid [LAMP](#) tests and 60,000 at-home rapid antigen tests will be distributed through a combination of testing sites and community organizations starting tomorrow. [Click here for more information and to view a list of sites that will offer free take-home antigen tests on a first come, first served basis.](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine Available to Ages 5+ and Boosters Open to 16+

The COVID-19 vaccine is now available for children ages 5 years and older at state-run clinics, many health care providers and some pharmacies. Additionally, 16 and 17-year-olds are now able to receive a booster shot once six months after their second dose. Learn more, review FAQs, and make an appointment through the [Vermont Department of Health's vaccine website](#).

Vermont Food Programs

No one should be worried about having enough food. Hunger Free Vermont wants families to know that there are many food resources available to you and your neighbors. [Check out this flyer for more information.](#)

Next Year's School Budget

Discussions are underway for next year's school budget. Administrators have been collaborating and considering the needs of the district and presented several overarching recommendations for the FY'23 budget. The school board has heard those recommendations and is waiting to learn what the tax implications will be from the state before putting forward a proposed budget to the Colchester community. There will be more budget discussions at upcoming [school board meetings](#) in January and you can expect to see our Your Vote Matters video series on our social media pages and the printed CSD Annual Report in your mailbox in February.

January Virtual Family Support Nights

The district's first Virtual Family Support Night is coming up after the break. These events are free, held via Zoom, and open to anyone.

Virtually Family Support Nights: Your Questions Answered

Talking to Kids About LGBTQIA+ Topics

Tuesday, January 11, 2022 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

[Zoom Link](#)

Gain the tools and confidence to talk to kids about what it means to be gay, transgender, and gender nonconforming. Learn tips from queer, nonbinary writer and advocate, Amber Leventry, on ways to answer kids' questions, start conversations about sexuality and gender, and foster a love of diversity. Hear the significance of accepting and affirming our kids' LGBTQIA+ identity.

Important Upcoming Districtwide Dates and Reminders

- Monday, January 3 - First Day Back to School
- Tuesday, January 11 - Virtual Family Support Night - Your Questions Answered: Talking to Kids About LGBTQIA+ Topics
- Monday, January 17 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day - No School
- For the full calendar, visit www.csdvt.org/calendar.