



Colchester Public Schools

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Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Happy New Year! I hope you were able to rest and spend meaningful time together over Winter Break. Before I share this week's updates, I would like to acknowledge that Colchester Public Schools prepared our teachers, counselors, and staff to support our students in age-appropriate ways to help them process the troubling events that occurred in Washington D.C. and in the Capitol Building. As educators, we teach our children respect for and understanding of the democratic process in our country. Public education is an essential pillar of this democracy, and we welcome our educational responsibility to support students in their understanding.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to CPS employees for their commitment to protect our community while on Winter Break. By choosing to forgo travelling, seeing family, and socializing with friends, we were able to return to work with very few staff in quarantine or isolation. I deeply appreciate their adherence to safety protocols for the greater good of our educational community and the community of Colchester. Seeing the tremendous efforts and determination from our staff during this challenging time makes me optimistic for 2021.

New CDC Guidelines in Length of Quarantine

The CDC and the CT-DPH have recently sent out modified requirements for self-quarantining of close contacts from 14 to 10 days. Effective Monday, January 11th, with the guidance of Chatham Public Health, CPS will shift to 10-day quarantine periods provided we do not see an uptick in in-school transmissions. We will re-evaluate the 10-day quarantine recommendation if we see an increase in transmissions within our schools. For interim guidance from the CT Department of Public Health, see [Addendum 5: Interim Guidance for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios in Connecticut School Districts](#). Students or staff who are currently quarantining should contact their school nurse to determine if a different return date is possible.

COVID Cases Update

Since we returned to school on Monday, January 4th, we have had 24 documented positive cases of COVID-19. While this is a significant increase to our weekly average as compared to the first part of the year, it is important to note that only two of the 24 cases required in-school contact tracing and no classes at any level have had to quarantine. We will continue to monitor cases to determine if in-school transmission increases and any additional mitigating measures are necessary.

Instructional Model

The District will continue in our current instructional model of full, in-person instruction at the elementary level and the hybrid model of instruction at the secondary level for the next four weeks, at which time we will review the current data and any available information on the vaccine rollout. We do not anticipate any change to this model unless either wide-spread, in-school transmission is evident and

greater restrictions are necessary, or we are advised that vaccination levels are adequate for full, in-person instruction at all levels.

New Website

We are very excited to present our new website! A team of staff, students, parents, and BOE members worked for a year on the content and layout to have a website that serves us all well. The site address remains the same: www.colchesterct.org. Please review the [New Website Information](#) document that provides parents with information on how to access frequently visited pages (e.g., Digital Backpack, school calendars, lunch menus, etc.)

Helping Children Learn at Home

From the CDC: “There are many ways you can help children learn at home. The following strategies are meant to help you get the support you need to facilitate at-home learning while staying connected and engaged with your school community. Remember – there is no “right” way for your child to learn at home. Do what works for you and your family.” The guide is here: [Helping Children Learn at Home](#)

Upcoming Week: January 11 - 15

Colchester Elementary School and Jack Jackter Intermediate School

- Monday & Tuesday: CES/JJIS full in-person learning
- Wednesday: CES/JJIS in-person, shortened day
- Thursday & Friday: CES/JJIS full in-person learning

William J. Johnston Middle School and Bacon Academy

- Monday & Tuesday: Group 1 in-person
- Wednesday: All remote, shortened day
- Thursday & Friday: Group 2 in-person

Monday, January 18th: NO SCHOOL in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Have a question or concern?

- **EMAILS**

General questions: covid19@colchesterct.org

Tech questions: techhelp@colchesterct.org

BOE questions: boardquestions@colchesterct.org

Frequently asked questions: [CPS Parent FAQ](#). For the most current update on COVID-19, please visit ct.gov/coronavirus. Information on the impact of COVID-19 in our community can be found here: [CT COVID-19-Data-Tracker](#).

Best Regards,



Jeffrey Burt, Superintendent