



# *Colchester Public Schools*

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Dear Colchester Families,

I sincerely hope that the Thanksgiving recess was a time to relax and enjoy quiet time with loved ones. I am grateful for the collective efforts of all in our community - teachers and staff, families, day care centers, town colleagues - to come together for the good of educating our children. Their health, safety, and emotional well-being are of critical importance.

While we know that students learn best in-person with instructors, I recognize that many of you were nervous to have students in PreK-Grade 5 return to full-time, in-person learning. I am so pleased to share the following positive news from CES and JJIS:

- At CES, we are able to have more small group and differentiated instruction because our reading and math interventionists are pushing into classrooms as opposed to supporting students in Google Meets. This has had a huge impact on learning.
- JJIS teachers report that returning to full-time, in-person learning has had a positive impact on the class culture and community, there is better support and communication with families, and overall less stress now that students have a predictable schedule.

## **COVID-19 in our School Community**

We have completed a third of the school year and we have seen only three (3) cases of in-school, person-to-person transmission. To give this some perspective, these three cases occurred while we operated schools for nearly 60 days with over 2100 students and 500 staff coming together to support our students. An analysis of Chatham Public Health contact tracing and data reflects that almost all of the COVID-19 cases in our school community resulted from out-of-school transmissions at small social gatherings. We will continue our in-person learning model as long as we have enough staff to open schools and we continue to see a low rate of in-school transmission.

## **Closing of Town Hall**

On December 4th Town Hall was closed to outside visitors to protect the staff so they are able to continue to work and provide the necessary services to our community. I have been asked why the schools remain open while Town Hall is closed. As an open public building, Town Hall is not able to operate in a cohort model or restrict visitors. However, our schools are able to have a much more controlled environment, including limiting interaction between staff and students and excluding outside visitors, and we are able to operate even when other institutions close.

## **CDC Protocol on Quarantining**

You may have heard that the CDC is considering shortening the duration of quarantine in some instances. At this time the Chatham Health Department continues to recommend a 14 day quarantine to help prevent the spread of the disease in our community. CHD will continue to work with the State Department of Public Health on any new guidelines and we will update our protocols if and when changes are made.

## **Daily Health Screen**

It is more important than ever to report symptoms as soon as possible via the Daily Health Screen. Please note the Nurse Supervisor is the only person who has access to results, and she has revised the screening tool with more specific questions.

## **School Year Calendar**

Please note that the 2020-21 school year calendar as posted on the website ([SY Calendar 2020-2021](#)) has been adjusted through January 2021 only. The Board of Education will address the schedule for the remainder of the year, including adding early release days on most Wednesdays, at their January board meeting.

## **Upcoming Week - December 7 - 11**

### **Colchester Elementary School and Jack Jackter Intermediate School**

- [CES AND JJIS ADJUSTED CALENDAR](#)
  - 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**

- [WJMS AND BACON ADJUSTED CALENDAR](#)
  - Monday & Tuesday - Group 1 in-person; Group 2 remote
  - Wednesday - All remote, shortened day
  - Thursday & Friday - Group 2 in-person; Group 1 remote

## **Have a question or concern?**

- **EMAILS**
  - General questions: [covid19@colchesterct.org](mailto:covid19@colchesterct.org)
  - Tech questions: [techhelp@colchesterct.org](mailto:techhelp@colchesterct.org)
  - BOE questions: [boardquestions@colchesterct.org](mailto:boardquestions@colchesterct.org)

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

Lastly, please enjoy this Bacon Academy Choir Concert performance: [2020 Winter Concert\(ish\)](#)

Best Regards,



Jeffrey Burt, Superintendent