

# Colchester School District

## NEWSLETTER

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT



● December 2017 ●

## Message from Superintendent Minor: A Giving Community



This time of year, the giving spirit of CSD really shines through. As I walk through the halls of different buildings this week it's impossible not to see all the donation drives and activities happening at both the student and faculty level. The 5th graders at MBS hosted a diaper drive to collect diapers for residents at a local shelter, several building held Toys for Tots drives, UMS students donated potatoes that they grew in their garden to the neighboring Colchester Community Food Shelf, CHS students held their annual gingerbread contest and then delivered the masterpieces to local hospitals and senior living communities, the list just goes on and on!

And maybe less tangible, but certainly not less admirable, are the acts of kindness that go on every day between students, faculty, and volunteers in our buildings. I continue to be impressed by the number of parents and community members who volunteer in our schools. I share my deepest thanks and appreciations for all that you do to help us strengthen our schools and the learning experience for our students.



## New Accountability Model

Over the past two weeks, I have had the opportunity to intersect with many parents and the overwhelming theme I have heard is how fast this year as gone. This year seems to be flying by and I am thrilled we have accomplished so much already.

This fall the administrators across this district started working together to understand how the new school accountability model will work. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) ended in 2015 and it has since been replaced with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). In Vermont, our ESSA plan has been approved and you will hear your building administrators refer to it as the **Continuous Improvement Process**. The Vermont State Plan under ESSA doesn't undo state law or conflict with current state education priorities; it instead prioritizes reflecting state policy wherever possible and identifies some of the measures that will feed into local continuous improvement conversations.



So what do you need to know as a parent? The ESSA Vermont State Plan will provide support and guidelines for school systems to continuously improve their educational practices and student outcomes. In Colchester, we will need to continue to make data-informed decisions in all areas of education and include supports for our most vulnerable students. Our work in Colchester will focus on the following areas:



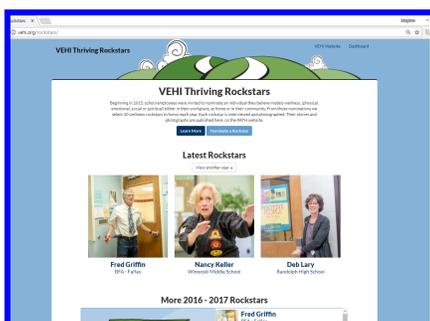
- **Academic proficiency**
- **Personalization**
- **Safe and healthy schools**
- **High quality staffing**
- **Fiscal responsibility in our investments**

Over the upcoming months, we will provide more information on how the Continuous Improvement Process will impact our schools. For now, just know that the school accountability model is changing.

## Early Release Days

Wednesday September 27, 2017	Wednesday December 6, 2017	Wednesday February 7, 2018	Wednesday April 11, 2018
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Our second early release day is officially in the books. I would like to thank our families for accommodating this dedicated professional learning time for our faculty and staff. During the first two early release days, we held trainings on student resiliency, trauma, behavior modification training, instructional strategies, Next Generation Science Standards, proficiency development, equity and gender, and much more! These trainings would not have been possible if we did not have this additional time and the feedback from our employees has been very positive. In April, we will provide a presentation to the school board on the outcomes of this work.



## Wellness Rockstar

Congratulations to Emily Desautels for being nominated as a VEHI Rockstar! The faculty over at CMS thought she was the perfect candidate for an “individual who models wellness (physical, emotional, social, or spiritual) either in their workplace, at home, or in their community”. Each year VEHI honors 30 wellness rockstars from across the state and we are incredibly proud to celebrate Emily for this accomplishment. VEHI visited CMS on December 13th to take some photos and interview Emily. Look for her story to be published on their [website](#) soon!

# Burning Budget Questions

Hard to believe we are already planning the school budget for FY'19. Along with crunching numbers, we are also in the process of developing our communication plan to inform the residents of Colchester as to what is in the budget, what it provides to our students, how our district's spending stacks up to other communities in our area, and what the tax rate change means to the average household. There has been a lot of discussion in Montpelier about education funding and we'd like to use our upcoming budget video series to answer common questions from residents. What are you hearing? What do you think our community would like to know before heading to the voting booth?



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## Stay Connected!

