

# Superintendent Newsletter

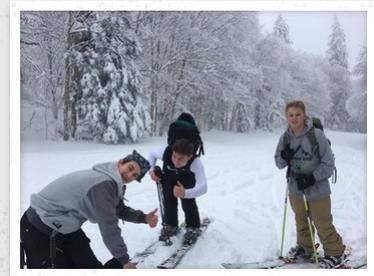
Colchester School District: December 2018

## Winter Wonderland

### Delayed starts and early dismissals

Winter did not trickle in this year, it made a grand and EARLY entrance. Although, now I'm not sure if we need snow shovels or raincoats! We already have our first snow day in the books which means our earliest possible closing date is June 13th.

However, since we average about three snow days a year, there's a good chance we'll still be in session the following week of June. (*The district updates the [school year calendar](#) after every snow day so you'll always know when our last day is. No more counting on your toes!*)



A couple of years ago I wrote [a letter detailing how a snow day is decided](#).

To summarize, our team doesn't take it lightly and we know that no matter what we decide, not everyone will be happy. One approach not addressed in that letter is a delayed start. More and more, it seems the heaviest snow is falling between the 6 am and 8 am; just in time for the morning commute. A 2-hour delayed start would mean all buses would pick up students 2-hours later than normal and all schools would start exactly 2 hours later than normal. Among the many advantages, the delay gives the town a chance to get their plows and salt on the roads. This will allow us to keep school open while ensuring a safer commute for students. A delay would be announced the same way a closure would, you'd get a phone call, email, text if opt-ed in, and it would be up on our social media and website as well as airing on local tv and radio.





On the flip side, if the weather were to deteriorate quickly once school is already in session, the district may also call for an unscheduled early release. In this instance, all schools would close 2 hours early, just as they do for a scheduled early release. Buses will deliver students home via their normal routes, just 2 hours earlier. We would notify you using all methods.

## Review by VT Agency of Education

### What to expect on January 24th

On January 24th, Colchester School District will host a team of educators from neighboring school systems, along with staff from the Vermont Agency of Education, as part of our triennial Integrated Field Review (IFR). The IFR is a review designed to reveal common practices in a school district through classroom observation, examination of documents, and interviews with students, parents, and staff. This is a collaborative and reciprocal process, and staff members from our district will visit and review neighboring school systems in the weeks that follow.



This Integrated Field Review process leads to a written report, featuring school system-level commendations and recommendations in the five domains of Vermont's Education Quality Standards: Academic Proficiency, Personalization, Safe Healthy Schools, High Quality Staffing, and Investment Priorities. The IFR process is flexible and is not evaluative; the results of a school system's IFR can be used at their discretion, be it to support continuous improvement planning, create networking opportunities with neighboring districts, or guide future professional development.

You or your student may be asked by your school principal to participate in this process as an interviewee. Please know that this is entirely voluntary. The Colchester School District is excited to welcome the IFR team into our schools.

## School Safety

### The importance of debriefing after an incident

As with any incident which invokes district safety protocols, we have debriefed and taken consideration of concerns raised regarding last month's lockdown at CHS. Debriefings are an



important way for administrators and police to share what went well, any issues that arose, and what we could work to improve upon. We believe making the time to collectively assess our response through different lenses is critical to maintaining our safety guidelines. The CHS Administrative Team, Central Office Administrators, and Colchester Police Department were all in attendance at our most recent debriefing.



In the instance that occurred last month, the Colchester Police Department directly received a third-party report of a concerning nature about actions at CHS. In situations like this, we err on the side of caution and at the recommendation of the Colchester Police Department, we chose to go into lock-down. Now that the investigation has concluded, I can tell you that in this particular incident there was no “direct verbal threat” and no “weapon” on campus. It is important that our community understand there is a wide range of reasons why a lockdown may be the prudent course of action. We understand that it is easy to allow our minds to go to the worst case scenario. We would only ask that you keep this information in mind should we ever need to take this step again in the future.

One topic discussed at length at the recent debriefing was our communication both during the incident and afterward. We know that families want in-the-moment communication about the details occurring during an incident. We know this because all those in attendance at the debrief are also parents. However, during an incident, our first priority is keeping our students and employees safe. We understand that students with cell phones may communicate with their families before the district can. In the critical moments during a lockdown, the administrative team is executing security protocol, gathering information, working with emergency services, and making decisions in rapid succession. We ask that you allow us to put the school first to secure the safety of students and trust that we WILL contact you with

the most accurate information that we have as soon as it is appropriate for us to do so. Safety will remain our priority while responding to an incident.

You can find more information about CSD safety terms and procedures, as well as the role parents play during an incident in the [CSD School Emergency Information Guide](#) on our website.

## Last But Not Least...



### School Board Corner

The Colchester School Board has started discussions about the FY'20 budget. At the most recent meeting, Superintendent Minor and the rest of the Central Office Administrators presented their recommendations for what to include in addition to carrying over the baseline budget. The board will continue discussions at the next meeting held on Tuesday, January 8th at 7:00 pm in the CHS Library. You can also stream it live on [LCATV](#).



### Communication Survey

We recently sent out a survey to all families in the district asking for feedback on how we communicate general information and announcements. If you haven't filled it out yet, we'd love to hear from you! [Click here to participate](#).



### Food Service Offering Smoothies

Students are loving the newest way to get a serving of fruit with their lunch. The district has partnered with Whirz by Barfresh Smoothies at MBS, CMS, and CHS to provide real fruit, gluten-free smoothies with no sugar added.

# HAVE A WONDERFUL WINTER BREAK!

## See you back in school on January 2, 2019



## Contact the Superintendent's Office

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