



2018





**Voting Day is
Tuesday, March 6 at
Colchester High School.
7:00 AM - 7:00 PM**



There is no deadline to register to vote.

You can register on any day up to and including the day of the election.



Early Voting is easy and convenient!

Pick up an absentee ballot at the Colchester Town Clerk's Office or request one online at www.mvp.sec.state.vt.us. Turn it in by the end of business hours on Monday, March 5, 2018.





“The investment this community continues to make toward education prepares our youth for college, trade school, and the workforce.”

COLCHESTER IS ONE OF THE MOST DESIRABLE TOWNS IN VERMONT because of our commitment to work together. As the town’s public school system, we take our job of educating, guiding, and supporting the children of this wonderful town very seriously. The investment this community continues to make toward education prepares our youth for college, trade school, and the workforce. Colchester is proud to welcome many graduates back as they settle down to start families, sending the next generation of students through our hallways once again.

Education costs have undoubtedly risen over the years as more requirements are set by state and federal government. With the intricacies of the education funding formula, school quality standards, Flexible Pathways Initiative, and the Every Student Succeeds Act, schools are asked to do more with less on an annual basis.

In Vermont, the adoption of the Common Core Standards makes what students know, understand, and are expected to do much more rigorous than just ten years ago. Another challenge Vermont schools face is the intensified needs of the student population. Across the state, schools are seeing more and more children entering the public school system that need extra support. While many students come to school well prepared, ready to learn and with a full belly after a restful night’s sleep, many do not. We have a duty to support all students and increase achievement

across the board. This means pushing our top students to expand their knowledge, while also putting systems in place to ensure we provide equitable learning opportunities for all.

Even while surmounting these challenges, our district continues to be a low-spending district. We push our faculty to find cost-creative ways to offer strong academic experiences, opportunities, achievement, and support to all students. Over time, Colchester School District has demonstrated a commitment to fiscal responsibility, and we will continue to strategically invest our resources to achieve our district goals while spending less per pupil than the vast majority of districts in Chittenden County.

We have a responsibility to educate each and every student in Colchester and we couldn’t do it as well as we do without the support of our incredible community. Thank you for believing in us and believing in our students.

Amy Minor

AMY MINOR
Superintendent
of Schools





INVESTMENTS *and* INNOVATION



TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES AROUND OUR SCHOOLS

Building Community Relationships

We believe that learning does not stop when our students leave the classroom. As the old African proverb says, “It takes a village to raise a child”. We value our partnerships with local businesses and community groups through the TIPS internship program, our continued collaboration with our school families, the teamwork we share with the town through the ACE Afterschool Program and other hosted events with parks and recreation, plus the many opportunities our students have to volunteer in the community through events like Thanksgiving baskets, regular nursing home and senior center visits, and local donation drives for items like toys, books, and food.



Making Wise Investments

Maintaining Our Facilities

School facilities can have a tremendous impact on outcomes for both students and faculty. With this in mind, we have a management plan which spans several years to ensure our buildings and facilities remain safe, functional, and continue to provide a strong learning environment. Some recent updates include new playground equipment at MBS; a new boiler and converted classroom at PPS; the creation of new and modern STEM room and the addition of a breakfast cart at CMS; a renovated locker room at CHS; and we retiled six classrooms at UMS.

Focusing on Technology and Innovation

In Colchester, we continue to prioritize integrating technology into the curriculum throughout all grade levels. Our experienced faculty uses creative ways to lift our students to a level that suits all 21st-century learners.

In December, employees from our IT Department joined our elementary classrooms to share how they use computers and technology in their jobs. In all of our elementary grades students learn the basics of coding, which grows their mastery of skills and concepts in mathematics like sequencing, directionality, addition, and subtraction.

Looking to the Future

We partner with area childcare sites to provide special education and consultation services to our community’s young children. In addition, we provide five high quality, half-day public preschool sessions and host one full-day Head Start classroom at MBS, serving nearly 90 young children. The benefits of early education are well documented in the research. Through our partnerships and direct service, we are able to reach a large percentage of Colchester families with young children prior to kindergarten entry, providing them with support and allowing the district to plan for the future.

We have a management plan which spans several years to ensure our buildings and facilities remain safe, functional, and continue to provide a strong learning environment.

- **Union Memorial and Porters Point Schools:** Students as early as kindergarten are using coding apps like Lightbot and Scratch Jr. PPS recently started a robotics club.
- **Malletts Bay School:** All students are exposed to iSTEAM curriculum through hands-on activities and projects. iSTEAM stands for innovation, science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. There is also a community-sponsored competitive robotics team.
- **Colchester Middle School:** Current 7th and 8th graders take at least one STEM class (science, technology, engineering, and math). The FY19 budget plans to expand this opportunity to 6th graders.
- **Colchester High School:** The administration at CHS is developing a cost-effective way to introduce a coding class to interested students.



ALUMNI NOTES

Jessica Guter CLASS OF 2008

“I’ve been fascinated by science for as long as I can remember. Looking back on my education, I know that I was extremely fortunate to have gone to Colchester schools, where I can single out three incredible science teachers – one each in elementary, middle, and high school – who truly nourished and inspired my curiosity for the natural world. The passion with which my high school biology teacher, Mr. Warren, taught his subject was infectious and inspired me to pursue a degree in molecular biology and biochemistry at Middlebury College. My education at CHS laid the groundwork that I would need to thrive at Middlebury and beyond. I am excited to have the opportunity to further my education as I begin dental school this Fall.”

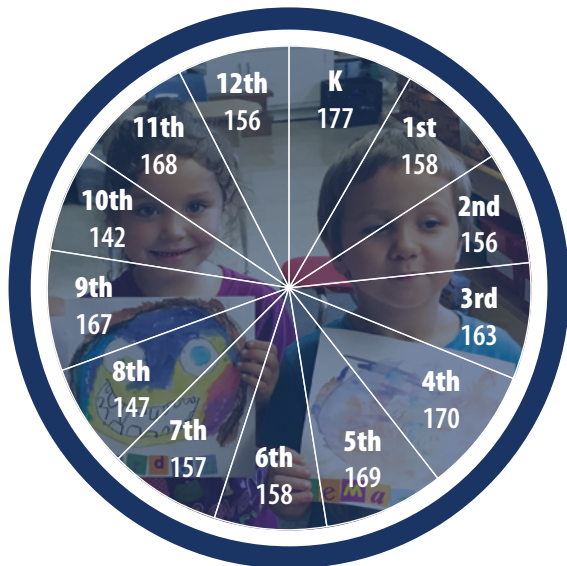
FACTS *and* FIGURES

Holding Steady with Enrollment

Across the state, many districts are struggling with declining enrollment. That is not the case in Colchester. Our student enrollment is steady. In fact, this year we enrolled one of the largest kindergarten classes in recent years. A study by McKibben Demographics projects Colchester School District enrollment to remain steady through the next nine years.



Total CSD Enrollment by Grade Level



% Students Scoring At or Above the Vermont Standard


Grade	SBAC English Language Arts (Spring 2017)		SBAC Math (Spring 2017)		NECAP Science (Spring 2017)	
	CSD	VT	CSD	VT	CSD	VT
3	61%	49%	65%	52%	—	—
4	63%	49%	60%	47%	48%	46%
5	66%	55%	67%	42%	—	—
6	53%	52%	43%	38%	—	—
7	42%	55%	37%	43%	—	—
8	51%	54%	38%	41%	27%	25%
11	77%	58%	54%	36%	52%	33%

📍 CHS scored 2nd in the region and 4th in the state in SBAC English Language Arts and Math assessments.



Approximately 60% of 2017 CHS graduates are in college.


40% are in trade school, the military, traveling, or at work.

31%  of K-12 students receive free or reduced lunch.



The Food Service Program saw a 64% increase in students eating breakfast after adding a mid-morning breakfast cart at CMS.

 **700** parent and community volunteers work with our students each year.

 All three elementary schools have implemented Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS).



ALUMNI NOTES

Puru Niroula CLASS OF 2013

"I feel really proud to be part of the Lakers because they welcomed me with open arms when I was new to this country. I will always be grateful to Colchester and the teachers who helped me become who I am today. At CHS I learned to help the community, and I will always be looking forward to helping no matter where I go. I am studying electromechanical engineering at VTC because of the education I received at CHS. My parents were sad to leave Nepal when we first came to America, but now they are happy and proud of me. I hope to keep them proud in the future."

THE BUDGET: *Colchester School District*

On January 22nd, the Colchester School Board approved a budget of \$40,569,927 for fiscal year 2019. This represents an increase of 3.67% over the current year spending plan. When calculated in the state formula, this translates to a 2.99% increase in per pupil spending. This approval, which correlates with our district initiatives, permits the school board and administrators to advance academic planning, properly staff the district to support student needs, and maintain our facilities. Although the district budget increase is in line with years past, the overall estimated tax increase will be higher than normal at 10.1%. This increase is a result of two major components within the state's education funding formula which are negatively impacting the final rate; the dollar yield and the common level of appraisal. Both of these numbers are set by the state and have a sizeable impact within the formula that determines the estimated tax rate.

Investing in Student Transportation

For the last 19 years, Colchester School District has contracted Mountain Transit to provide transportation for our students. Mountain Transit experienced a significant driver shortage and, as a result, they increased their wages to fill and retain those positions.



The additional cost for Mountain Transit has been passed on to CSD through an annual 10% increase to the contract for the next four years. Knowing the upfront costs that are associated

with developing and maintaining an internal transportation system, CSD approved a 5-year contract with Mountain Transit last summer.

Improving Outcomes at CMS

While Colchester's academic data shows strong overall performance, we need to focus resources and attention on grades 6-8. Our data indicates several years of decreases in student performance on state assessments in these grades. One factor



affecting performance may be our class sizes. The current classes are already at the top of the Vermont Education Quality Standards (EQS). Looking to the future, our current 4th and 5th grades are two of the largest in the district. As these students enter CMS, we could see class sizes as high as 28 students per classroom. To comply with EQS and improve student outcomes, the FY19 budget includes adding additional resources at the middle school. Vermont's Education Quality Standards state that middle school class size should not exceed 24 students per class.

Ensuring Special Education Services

Our special education budget accounts for 21% of the FY19 general budget. It may seem like a lot, but Colchester isn't alone. This percentage is on par with other districts in the region. Not only does CSD remain below the statewide spending average, in 2017 we were ranked 42nd lowest out of 58 total districts when comparing special education spending.

How Does Income Sensitivity Work?



Example 1

For a home valued at \$250,000, the owner should pay \$4,000 in education taxes (\$1.6001 tax rate). If their household income is \$60,000, income sensitivity would reduce their tax bill by \$2,534, making their total education tax payment \$1,466.

Example 2

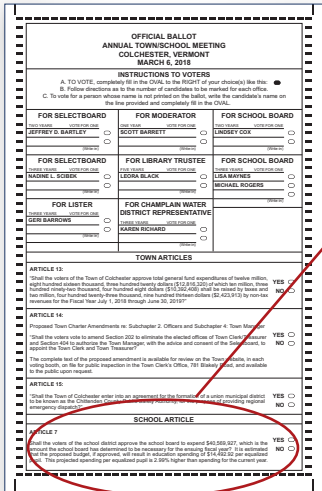
For a home valued at \$300,000, the owner should pay \$4,800 in education taxes (\$1.6001 tax rate). If their household income is \$70,000, income sensitivity would reduce their tax bill by \$3,089, making their total education tax payment \$1,711.

Approximately 70% of Colchester residents will receive property tax assistance in 2018.



VOTING *on* THE BUDGET

Understanding the Ballot on Town Meeting Day



SCHOOL ARTICLE

ARTICLE 7

Shall the voters of the school district approve the school board to expend \$40,569,927, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that the proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$14,492.92 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 2.99% higher than spending for the current year.

YES
NO

When calculating spending per student, Vermont uses “**equalized pupils**” rather than an actual head count. The formula gives less weight to pre-kindergarten pupils and extra weight to students in secondary schools, those from economically deprived backgrounds, and those whose first language is not English. The principle behind the weighting is that it costs more to educate students in certain categories.

Source: Public Assets Institute

2.99% is the percentage increase as compared to the FY18 budget.

\$40,569,927 operates a total of seven buildings and provides transportation and education for more than 2,000 students.

The wording used on the ballot is set by Vermont Statute. The specific language is jointly developed by the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of State and adopted by the State Board.



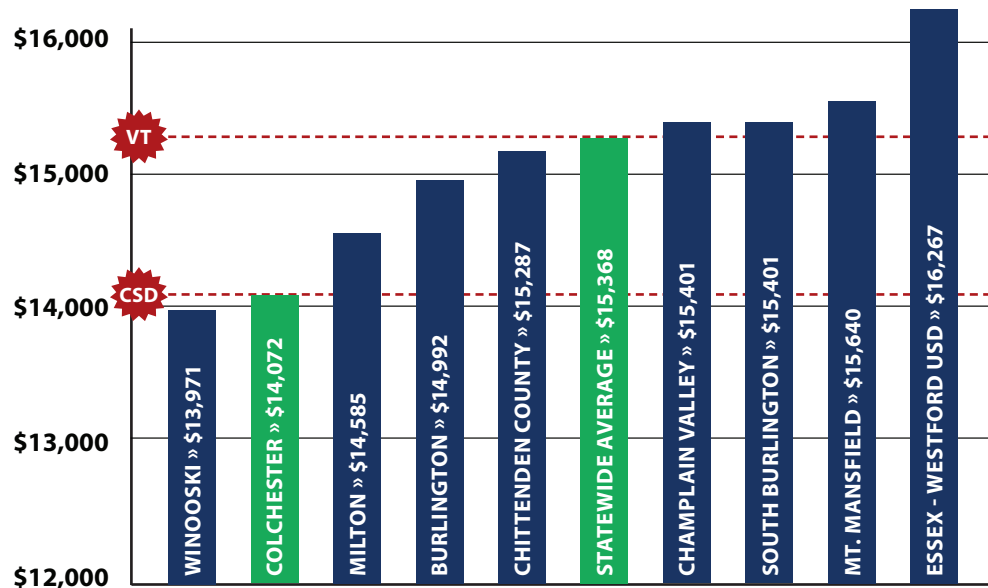
FACULTY NOTE

Rachel Cohen FULBRIGHT ROVING SCHOLAR IN AMERICAN STUDIES

Humanities teacher Rachel Cohen was awarded a Roving Scholar Fulbright Fellowship to Norway for the 2017-2018 school year. The Fulbright Program is an international educational exchange program that only awards two or three roving scholar awards each year to applicants from all across the United States. The program brings American teachers to Norway for the school year. They spend their time traveling the country teaching and leading seminars about American history, culture, and teaching methods to both students and faculty.

Spending Per Equalized Pupil by District

Colchester School District spends less per pupil than the vast majority of districts in Chittenden County. Even with spending less, CSD students consistently rank in the top quarter of schools in the county on statewide assessment exams.





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RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER
COLCHESTER, VT 05446

Colchester School District received an Award of Excellence, the highest honor from the National School Public Relations Association, for our *2017 Report to the Community*.



Colchester School District partnered with USPS to deliver these reports for only \$.08 a household.