



2019







**There is no deadline to register to vote.**

You can register ahead of time or at the polls on the day of the vote.



**Voting Day** ↻ Tuesday, March 5 | 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM | Colchester High School



**Out of town? Busy schedule?**

Vote early at the Town Clerk's Office Monday through Friday during business hours, or go online to the My Voter Page and request a ballot be mailed to you: [www.mvp.sec.state.vt.us](http://www.mvp.sec.state.vt.us)



**O**UR RESPONSIBILITY TO THE community is to ensure equity and excellence for all students entrusted to Colchester Schools.

While serving as Superintendent of Schools the past three years, nothing has been more rewarding than witnessing our district transform into an exciting, energized place to learn. I am often honored and humbled when I hear families, students, and alumni speak about how our district fostered life-long learning habits and contributed to their success after graduation.

An early primary objective of my entry plan as Superintendent was to unite the five schools that make up our district as a cohesive and collaborative group of educators.

My first year, we identified the steps we needed to take to ensure that all students, in every grade and building, felt represented, supported, and safe. Those three important factors allow our students to focus on what matters most: learning and growing. Two years later, we have developed ambitious goals aimed at aligning our

systems, analyzing our strengths, and identifying future areas of growth.

There is incredible value in offering comprehensive programming and a balanced curriculum. As a school district with over 2,000 students, we teach a broad spectrum of learners with a variety of needs. We evaluate student performance using a diverse array of methods. We use that data in a targeted way to improve our curriculum and instructional practices aimed at enhancing student intervention and support programs. We are intentionally focused on closing the gaps found in achievement and opportunity by doing our part to make sure students are exposed to quality, engaging learning environments.

As a district, and as individual educators, we cherish the relationship that we have with all of our students, families, and the greater Colchester community. We are incredibly encouraged by your continued support of our efforts and successes. Together, we can grow our schools to create happy, successful adults that exceed their own aspirations.

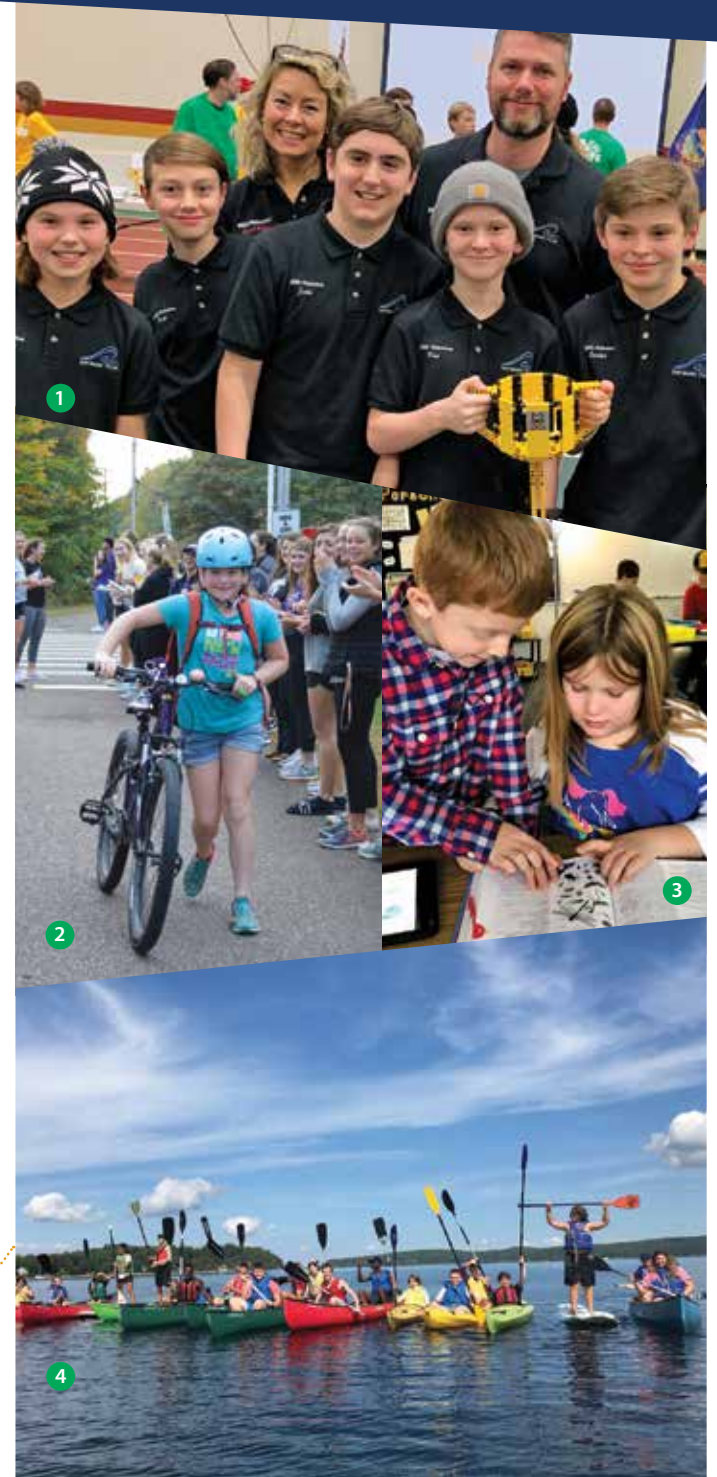


Sincerely,

*Amy Minor*

SUPERINTENDENT  
OF SCHOOLS

1 The MBS Robotics team took first place in a state tournament and will compete in the world championship in Detroit this April. 2 Sixty athletes from Saint Michael's College cheer on students during their annual Walk or Bike to School Day. 3 Two second-grade students practice how to use a dictionary by exploring different words found in their reading. 4 A high school physical education class takes advantage of the school's close proximity to Lake Champlain.



## Personalizing Education

**P**ersonalized learning honors students' various learning styles, interests, strengths and challenges by providing them with different ways to engage in their learning. At Colchester High School, we promote personalized learning throughout our students' experiences by offering a multitude of opportunities for voice and choice in what they learn and how they approach their learning.

Guided by a set of common learning outcomes, teachers flexibly adapt

learning experiences to meet the different needs of students, supporting each in reaching their potential. Students can also engage in a completely personalized experience through several courses and programs, including Extended Learning and the Laker Learning Lab. These allow students to build off of their personal interests and passions to create a meaningful learning experience with the support of a faculty advisor.

Students consistently find that personalized



learning improves their engagement and provides a more authentic learning experience because they have more responsibility and ownership over their learning.

**📍 Students cook a meal for residents at a local homeless shelter as part of their community service requirement for graduation.**

## Encouraging Independent Readers

**U**nion Memorial School couldn't say, "No," when a world-renowned expert in reading instruction offered to work with teachers this year. Dr. Marge Lipson has been working with the UMS staff as they implement the Interactive Strategies Approach (ISA) to reading instruction. Teachers have been writing lesson plans, adjusting schedules, analyzing data and gradually

releasing the responsibility of utilizing the strategies to the students. The proven theory is, if students know and can apply the eight strategies (e.g. looking for parts in the word you know), they will become independent readers.

The teachers are using the classic Plan-Do-Study-Act approach to school improvement and are already seeing results.



**📍 Community volunteers and district staff at Union Memorial School read individually with each kindergarten student on Wednesday mornings.**

## Changing Middle School Math



**T**his fall we made a change in our grade 6 math program to reverse a trend seen over time in our Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

(SBAC) math scores. The trend showed strong elementary scores, then a dip in scores from grade 5 to grade 6. To address this concern, we replaced the existing program with Everyday Mathematics, a program that has been successful in the elementary grades. This switch better aligns student learning to Common Core State Standards, our elementary grades, and grades 7–12. This

summer we purchased materials, held professional development trainings, and planned curriculum with the grade 6 teachers. In a short period of time the teachers made a large shift in curriculum and instruction. While it is only the first year, this change has already shown growth in learning in the grade 6 classrooms.

**📍 A teacher helps a middle school student work through a math equation.**

## Embracing New Science Standards

**I**n 2013 Vermont adopted new science standards, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), that outline science content, as well as science and engineering practices. The goal of the standards is to develop deep understand-

ing and application of scientific concepts, practices, and cross-cutting patterns within the standards. Colchester began aligning curriculum to these standards shortly after adoption, first by developing science graduation requirements

and discipline proficiencies, then by revising our curriculum in grades 6–12. The elementary grades began with 2 years of professional development, revised curriculum, and developed a 3-year roll in of new science units. This year we are implementing NGSS in all of our grades. Across the grades, students are engaged in our new science standards and engineering practices!

**📍 Students enrolled in an AP Environmental Science course engage in conversation with Captain Steve Cluett onboard UVM research vessel "The Melosira."**





## How Many Are Too Many?



The Vermont Agency of Education sets Education Quality Standards (EQS) to ensure that all students in public schools are afforded opportunities that are substantially equal in quality and enables them to achieve or exceed the standards approved by the State Board of Education.



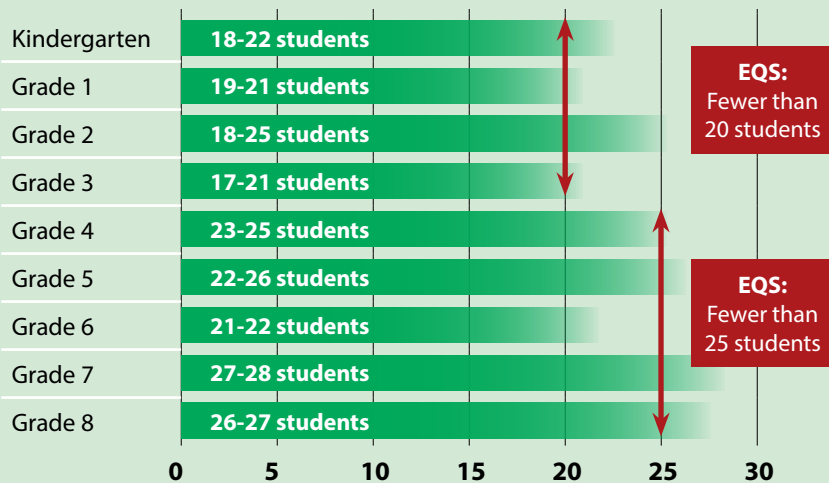
Those standards specify that classes in grades K-3, when taken together, shall average fewer than 20 students per teacher. In grades 4-12, when taken together, classes shall average fewer than 25 students per teacher. For high school, the total class roll of a teacher shall not exceed 100 students.



As a district, we strive to right-size each grade level to ensure that class sizes are as close as possible to the recommendations set by the EQS. When classes exceed the number of students recommended, it significantly limits the teacher's ability to provide high-quality feedback and focused individualized instruction to meet student needs.

## How Do We Compare?

### Colchester class sizes vs. Vermont Education Quality Standards



CHS campus sits on **90 acres**

CSD served **7,480 free meals** through the Summer Lunch Program



**76%** of CHS students participate in a co-curricular activity



The district owns **250+** instruments



On Fridays, middle school students can participate in one of **15 CLUBS**

**2,100** Total student ENROLLMENT



## Where are they now?

CHS graduates attend some of the finest colleges and universities in the nation, including: Harvard, Tufts, Macalester, Pomona, Dartmouth, Middlebury, Smith, McGill, West Point, Air Force Academy, Coast Guard Academy, Brown, Cornell, Clarkson, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Syracuse, Vassar, Drexel, Castleton University, Champlain College, University of Vermont, Colby-Sawyer, Saint Michael's College, Ithaca College, Southern New Hampshire University.



### Alumni Notes

**BOBBY BRIGANTE**  
Class of 2013

“I’ve been a resident of Colchester my whole life. Colchester was a perfect place to learn how to work hard and make a good living. Between my family, teachers, and coaches, there was always a good influence on how to succeed. I started working for Cummings Electric the weekend after I graduated from CHS. Five years later, I’m one exam away from being a master electrician, and I have definitely found a career I enjoy. I can’t sit behind a desk – it’s just how I was raised. I enjoy building things and doing stuff with my hands. I was even fortunate enough to purchase and renovate a property of my own here in Colchester. I hope I can give back to our community in the future.”

On January 22, the Colchester School Board approved a budget of \$42,589,168 for fiscal year 2020. This represents an increase of 4.98% over the current year's spending plan. When calculated in the state formula, this translates to an estimated 1.63% educational tax increase. An approval by voters would permit the school board and administrators to advance academic planning, support student needs, and maintain the district's facilities and grounds used by students and the Colchester community.

## How Would This Proposed Increase Affect You?

Property Value	FY 2019 Current Year	FY 2020 Proposed Budget	Annual Increase
\$100,000	\$1,530	\$1,555	\$25
\$150,000	\$2,295	\$2,333	\$38
\$200,000	\$3,061	\$3,110	\$49
\$250,000	\$3,826	\$3,888	\$62
\$300,000	\$4,591	\$4,666	\$75
\$350,000	\$5,356	\$5,443	\$87
\$400,000	\$6,121	\$6,221	\$100

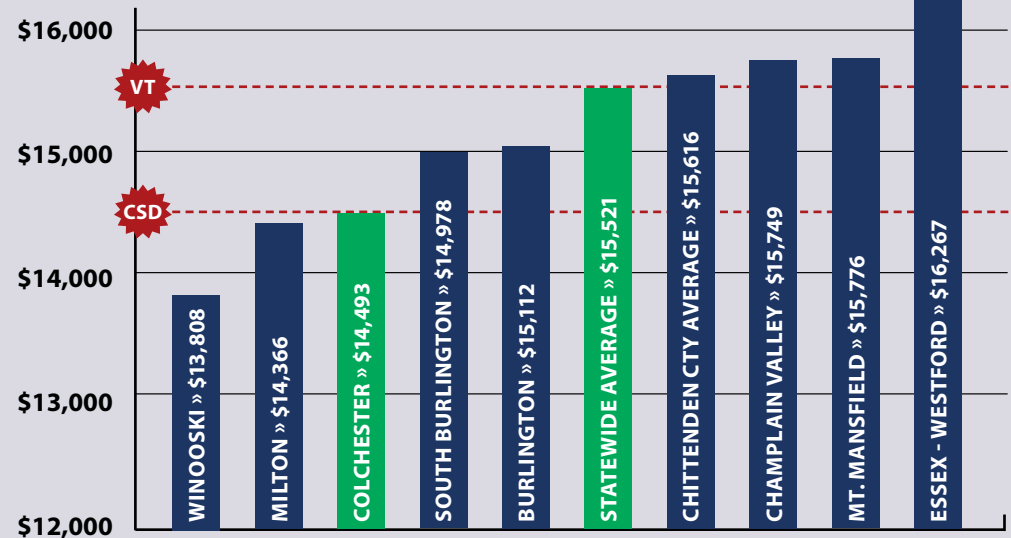
Q For a Colchester home with an assessed value of \$300,000, the homeowner would pay an additional \$75 per year, or \$25 each tax installment.



Students celebrate successfully building to 100 using groups of 10.

## Spending Per Equalized Pupil by District

Colchester School District spends less per pupil than the majority of districts in Chittenden County.



## How Does Income Sensitivity Work?

Income sensitivity is a form of tax assistance which allows homeowners to pay property taxes based on their income, rather than the value of their home.



For a home valued at \$250,000, the owner should pay \$3,888 in education taxes.



If their household income is \$60,000, income sensitivity would reduce their tax bill by \$2,502, making their total education tax payment **\$1,386**.



Approximately 70% of Colchester homeowners will receive property tax assistance in 2019. That's 2 out of 3 people.

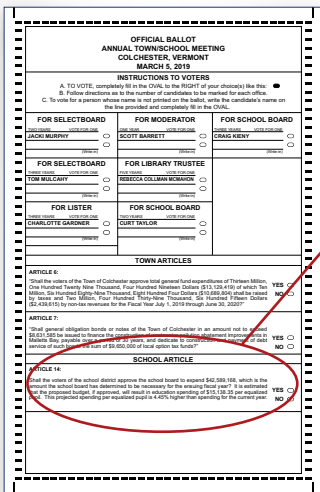


### Alumni Notes

**WHITNEY GRANT**  
Class of 2014

Colchester High School gave me the educational experience that serves as my foundation for a lifetime of success. I was proud to attend Drexel University in Philadelphia, where I graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in Graphic Design. That degree has taken me to Rahway, New Jersey, where I am currently a Packaging Designer at SDI Technologies. I work to create packaging concepts and artwork for the iHome division, which produces docking stations, headphones, smart home devices, and other accessories. It's cool to think my designs are on shelves back home in Vermont! It's been an amazing journey so far and I am looking forward to what comes next."

## Understanding the Ballot on Town Meeting Day



**SCHOOL ARTICLE**

**ARTICLE 14:**

Shall the voters of the school district approve the school board to expend **\$42,589,168**, 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 **\$15,138.35 per equalized pupil**. This projected spending per equalized pupil is **4.45%** 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

4.45% is the percentage increase from the FY19 budget. It is not the tax increase. The estimated tax increase is 1.63% and does not appear on the ballot.

\$42,589,168 operates a total of 7 buildings, and provides transportation and education for over 2,000 students.

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



# Our MISSION

The mission of Colchester School District is to partner with our community to educate each of our students to become engaged, productive citizens who lead successful, balanced, and healthy lives.



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