

For Immediate Release

A STATEMENT FROM THE COLCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

COLCHESTER—Tuesday, February 15, 2022—“The Colchester Board of Education would like to address the events that recently occurred in our schools and in the community at large. We understand the actions of our board and administration in response to the Title IX investigations and recent events at Ledyard High School seem slow and lack the swift justice many yearn for. We assure you, however, that these events are being reviewed with the utmost seriousness.

What we will not, and cannot do, what none of us can do, is viscerally react and view those involved as ‘guilty until proven innocent.’ There are systems in place to investigate these issues, and, in many cases, regulations and protocols that dictate certain responses. The appropriate processes must be followed to ensure that the proper parties are identified and held accountable and that guidance and support to our students, families, and staff is provided. When the systems and processes are circumvented, our institutions fall into chaos and our children are burdened with unnecessary emotional strain.

“The past two years have left us all raw, tired, and filled with anger and frustration. We must, collectively, rise above these emotions. Anger is easy, and often unbridles us from our angst, but leaves the world more damaged. Instead, we ask for your positive support- support for our children, our parents and guardians, our teachers, staff, and administrators.

“Everywhere has its own challenges; Colchester is no exception. As a board, we are interested in long-term systemic change for our school and community. Permanent change takes time, and we have every intention of doing this hard work to see it through. We need your partnership in creating this change, as the community our children and families live in will mold and shape them just as much as their school environment.

“We are all neighbors. We are part of a community. Our actions speak louder than our words. Social media and mainstream media are not judge and jury. Recently, there have been those that have taken to social media to point blame, and pass judgment without facts. In the process, reputations are being damaged and people, especially our children, are being hurt. This **must** stop, and our deliberative systems and processes allowed to continue unhindered.

“We respect everyone’s right to the freedom of speech and encourage everyone to use that right constructively. Social media is not the platform for raising concerns and often creates a larger problem. Instead, reach out to your school administrators and the superintendent directly or contact a board member. If you have used these channels to advocate for change, you are part of the solution, and we thank you for your courage and honesty. As a board, we encourage community input and continue to look for ways to connect and build positive relationships. We urge all citizens to be part of the solution and show our children the support they deserve.

“The Colchester Board of Education stands with our administration, faculty, staff, and most importantly our students. We denounce the poor behavior and cyberbullying that has occurred in our community and implore all citizens, no matter of age, to reflect before they act. Those that have acted in a way that does not reflect the mission and spirit of our school and community will be held accountable. We need all of you to respect one another, use positive language, give support, and show forgiveness when

someone has repented. Most importantly, we ask that you lead by example. These actions are what make a community great, and this IS a great community. The acts of a few will not, and cannot, overpower the positive force of the many.” – **The Colchester Board of Education**