

Colchester School District  
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Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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City, County, State Colchester, VT

**COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT  
IS RECOGNIZED BY NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR THEIR  
SCHOOL EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM**

Colchester School District has been recognized as 2011-2012 Silver School Employee Wellness Program winners by the Directors of Health Promotion and Education (DHPE, [www.dhpe.org](http://www.dhpe.org)), a membership association of high level professionals from public health departments.

As a Silver winner, they will:

- Receive a \$500 grant to use for their School Employee Wellness program from DHPE
- Receive a banner recognizing their achievement to proudly display
- Be featured on DHPE's school employee wellness web site, and
- Be invited to National Conferences to make presentations about their successful School Employee Wellness program.

The Colchester School District began their school employee wellness program in 2011 to serve their 450 school employees. With support from the Vermont Educators Health Initiative (VEHI), the program conducted a district wide health survey that identified two key health areas to focus on – healthy eating and stress management. Wellness activities have included Zumba, Yoga, walking programs, farm shares, walking maps, stress/mindfulness workshops and discounted gym memberships. Many community partners have supported this program including Hannafords, YMCA, Vermont Ethics Network and the South Burlington School District.

School employee health is one area that DHPE focuses its work on with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In 2007, DHPE released a comprehensive guide providing information, practical tools, and resources for developing school employee wellness programs—**SCHOOL**

***EMPLOYEE WELLNESS: A Guide for Protecting the Assets of Our Nation's Schools*** (available at [www.schoolempwell.org](http://www.schoolempwell.org)), for which they received the first Lloyd J. Kolbe Award from CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH).

In 2009, DHPE launched an awards program to recognize schools that have implemented school employee wellness programs that promote employee health, improve workforce productivity and reduce the costs of employee absenteeism and healthcare. A total of 57 schools/districts from around the country submitted applications for DHPE's 2011-2012 School Employee Wellness Awards program, and nine schools are being recognized.

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