April 10, 2020

Hello again Cotopaxi Families:

Weekly Message: During the past several weeks, communication from both the local and state levels have been coming to us at a high volume but this week they appear to be slowing down just a little. This perhaps may mean some good news in terms of things may be starting to level out just a bit. However, as we have always maintained, we would like to continue to take this unprecedented journey together one day at a time. We have proven that together, we can and will overcome all obstacles with grace and patience towards one another. I hope everyone had a nice week and at various points, you were able to enjoy spending time together enjoying some outside activities or indoor fun.

Board Meeting Date Change: Our priority is to keep you informed of dates that may change due to circumstances that arise from our current situation. Therefore, due to our weekly Monday food distributions and instructional material exchange, we have changed the date of our monthly Board Meeting. This month our meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 14th at 5:00 pm. Due to the current ‘stay at home’ orders issued by the Governor, the Board meeting will be held in an online format. The Zoom link is attached/published on our posted Agenda on the Cotopaxi website. All of our Board Meetings, including this one, allow for a public comment section which is restricted to three (3) minutes per person if a person signs up in advance of the Board meeting. If you would like to address the Board within the public comment section, please send an email to Ms. Amber Canterbury at acanterbury@cotopaxire3.org, or Mrs. Danielle Van Esselstine, Superintendent at dvanesselstine@cotopaxire3.org, or Mrs. Stephanie Tunstall, Board President at stunstall@cotopaxire3.org prior to the Board Meeting. All other guidelines associated with the public comment section are still in effect.

Governor Polis Orders and Expectations: As mentioned in our prior communications to you, the week of April 20th is important because Governor Polis expects to make his next announcement regarding in person instruction at all public and private schools. It remains highly likely that his suspension order will be extended beyond the current date of April 17th, however, that determination has not yet been made. The Governor continues to stress the importance of school district’s support throughout this crisis within their individual communities and the continuation of educational services to all of our students. In addition to this mandate, Commissioner Anthes also reiterated today that Governor Polis stated that school districts must adhere to their original yearly calendar with only slight adjustments of days. State and local officials have also released their recommendation to wear face masks. The district personnel are utilizing these safety precautions in preparation and distribution of all food and educational materials to students and family following recommendations established through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

Instructional time Waiver: One of the allowances made by the Governor and the Colorado Department of Education was the submission of an ‘Instructional Time Waiver’ which allows school districts during this crisis to provide alternative and online instructional methods to their students with flexibility on the required minutes. I am excited to share that although the deadline is technically April 17th, we already submitted our documentation to the Chief Operation Officer at CDE and received approval. This means that Cotopaxi is meeting instructional requirements with modified minutes therefore we meet state guidelines to grant grades and promotion of students. They were very pleased with our design, communication, tracking methods and initial results. This could not have been possible without the support of our amazing staff and families!

COVID-19 Stimulus: Currently both the Federal and State agencies are working to develop avenues to push out the allocation of stimulus funds specific to COVID-19. As a first step, the Colorado Department of Education worked with the Colorado Education Initiative on a needs assessment to be completed by each school district. We have completed and submitted this needs assessment document for consideration. In addition, there are several different grant pathways that have opened up to various agencies through the CARES ACT for the immediate needs of school districts and their families. We are working to determine what qualifications are required in order to apply for these funding sources, many of which apply towards increase or improved internet service, technology, and instructional tools for our students. Community needs are also our priority, therefore it is important for you to continue to communicate your needs to us so we can assist wherever possible by emailing us at dvanesselstine@cotopaxire3.org. We want to hear from you.
Meal Delivery: An all call went out yesterday with a quick reminder. Our next delivery is schedule on **Monday, April 13, 2020 from 5 pm - 7 pm at all four locations**: the Cotopaxi Schools, the Coaldale Community Center, the Howard Volunteer Fire Department, and the ‘Y’ bus stop. In order to minimize the number of misdirected packets, please reach out to the school and let us know which location you prefer if it is different than your normal bus route. As always, if you are unable to make our schedule delivery date/time, just contact us and we can make other arrangements.

**Instructional Packets and Remote Learning:** We are traveling this road together as we develop and refine our processes for the instructional packet exchanges and remote learning. Thank you for your patience and flexibility as we evolve our systems and we appreciate your support in working with your child(ren) through this evolution. We understand the struggles and frustrations associated with completing instructional material during this trying time and this alternate way of learning, however, our **educational focus must remain strong**. We are committed to each and every one of our students and moving them forward. It is critical for all students and parents to engage in this process. We have some flexibility with grades, however, your student’s engagement must be present. Encourage your child(ren) to attend zoom meetings with their teachers or email their teachers, make telephone calls, email their teachers and submit assignments as instructed by their teacher and please ask questions. Our dedicated teachers and staff are here to help! Together we will become stronger and more comfortable with these remote learning processes.

**Website & Resources:** We want to continue to support you through the updates and evolution of information that pertains to COVID-19 and the mandates issued. We will provide important updates and messages through our ‘all call’ system as the first means of communication when they become available, however, please refer to the Cotopaxi School District website and Facebook page for updates and valuable links as well. If you have questions, concerns or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us at either dyanesselstine@cotopaxire3.org or keckelberry@cotopaxire3.org.

**A word of thanks!** We have many talented individuals in our community that are sewing masks associated with the new recommendations. If you are willing to provide masks or are in need of a mask, we can connect everyone together so that we can all remain safe. What a remarkable community we have!

Stay Strong!

Danielle Van Esselstine, Superintendent