To all Cotopaxi Parents,

We have just completed the third week of our normal school routine being interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic (including Spring Break) and it seems like it’s been longer than that. As many of you already know, on Wednesday, **Governor Polis announced that the suspension of in-person instruction in Colorado has been extended to April 30.** Our staff has been working hard to create lessons and set up ZOOM meetings to keep each student’s instruction moving forward and to keep them in the loop as far as expectations. I want to express my appreciation to all of our parents for their patience and gratitude they’ve exhibited throughout these challenging times.

As we progress through providing distance learning for each student, we have a clearer picture of the needs of our students and the capabilities of the resources we have available to us. We have determined that approximately 75% of our students have some level of internet access. This means our instruction has to be delivered in a blended format utilizing paper handouts and online programs. This past Monday, we delivered instructional packets and materials to about 118 students. There were a few students who didn’t receive a packet and those situations are being corrected. Our teachers have established bi-weekly ZOOM meetings for the students/parents to attend to give the students an opportunity to check in with their classmates and teacher and to get clarification on assignments. Other than glitchy connections, the meetings are going well. I would like to emphasize to the students and parents that **every student is required to make contact with every one of their teachers once a week.** This can be done through the ZOOM meetings, by email, or by phone.

**The district has also checked out nearly 40 Chromebooks to students** to assist them with the online components of the instruction and assignments they are receiving. If anyone needs a Chromebook, please notify the school and we will get you set up with one. Also, if you need technical assistance with the computer, please let the school know and we will do our best to answer any questions you may have.

Throughout this crisis, there are and will be a handful of staff members at the school Monday through Thursday. There are still things that need to be done on-site to keep the school operating. If you find that you need something from the school to assist your child in his/her school work, please contact us and we’ll be happy to help.
This next week the procedures for the Monday drop-offs will be slightly different. This will be the first week that students will be returning assignments back to the school. The drop-off sites are the same, Howard Fire Department, Coaldale Community Center, the school, and the “Y”. The time of the drop-off will be from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. When you arrive at the drop-off site, you will receive your food bags and will **turn in your child’s assignments before receiving the next week’s packet**. Parents, I ask that you make sure that all of your child’s papers have their name on them. Also, **return all the assignments a plastic bag with your child’s name is clearly written on the outside of the bag**.. If during the week the bag was damaged or lost, please use another bag to return the assignments. This is to ensure your child gets credit for all the work they are completing.

An **alternate way of returning assignments** is to take a photo of each assignment and email the pictures to your teachers. Some of your child’s teachers may specify that this is how they want their assignments returned.

A concern that has been expressed by some of the students is they are feeling overwhelmed by the number of assignments and emails they’ve been getting from their teachers. The teachers have noticed this with their students also. **My advice to students and parents is not to panic or throw your hands up in frustration**. We realize this is a learning process for the students but it’s also a learning process for the teachers. They will be adjusting their assignments as the weeks go on. This is not to say the assignments won’t be challenging but they will be realistic as far as the quantity of work that will be expected of the students.

Another piece of advice I’d like to give is to **be aware of the due dates on assignments**, however there may be some flexibility of the due dates. It is imperative that each assignment is completed satisfactorily and returned to the school on time to get credit for the work. Remember, even though the delivery of the instruction and assignments look different, **the satisfactory completion of assignments will determine your 4th quarter grade**.

If you haven’t done this already, if possible, please create a **designated spot in your home that’s free from distractions, where your child can do his/her school work**. Regularly check on them to make sure they’re completing their assignments and are staying focused. Encourage and assist them when needed and don’t forget to **give them occasional “brain breaks”**. Sitting at the kitchen table doing school work for hours on end is mentally fatiguing, a 5 to 10 minute break can help keep your child focused and refreshed.

I want to close by saying a big “**Thank You!” to all the parents** for your support. I also want to thank all of the staff for all their work to make all of this possible. These are historic times that will require all of us to unite together and do our part. **We will get through them and be better for it in the end**. All of us will have our determination, tenacity and grit challenged through these times but **we’re up to the task**.

Ken Eckelberry- Principal