Hello to All Cotopaxi Families:

**Message of Thanks:** First, I would like to thank everyone for your patience and support as we navigate through these unprecedented waters. With the increased restrictions and evolving recommendations associated with COVID-19, we as a school district will continue to make the necessary changes to keep everyone safe. Please know that all of the measures we are taking are to ensure the safety and well-being of our students, staff and community. Therefore, we are encouraging all of our families to stay home, enjoy this time with your children and lookout for your neighbor. We ask and the health department recommends connecting with your neighbors by phone, not in person. If they need anything, please leave it at their front door. Do not try to make in person visits to your elderly neighbors or individuals with underlying health concerns (like diabetes, cancer, or respiratory disease) at this time because they are the most at risk, but again, phone calls are very important.

**Regular and Increased Communication:** As rapidly as requirements are changing across the state and nation, please pardon increased communication from the school district as our plan of action adapts to meet those changes. Increased restrictions and evolving recommendations associated with COVID-19 are occurring daily, therefore we encourage everyone to refer to our website [http://www.cotopaxire3.org/](http://www.cotopaxire3.org/) regularly as we continue to provide updates and links to the latest information.

Rest assured that we are working directly with Fremont Public Health along with both state and local agencies to keep abreast of all information and guidelines. Principal, Mr. Eckelberry and I met with state and local officials yesterday along with personnel from both Fremont RE-1 & Fremont RE-2 in order to combine efforts to meet the needs of all students across Fremont County and to discuss services such as food distribution, day care options, instructional needs, extended closures and health department recommendations. If you need help with any of these services, please contact the Cotopaxi School District, Fremont Public Health, Fremont Department of Social Services or even Fremont Sheriff’s office. We are all here to help.

**School Closure Information:** Based upon new recommendations and support of all staff members, Cotopaxi Fremont RE-3 is making the decision now to close through **April 3, 2020** with the expectation to return to school on April 6, 2020. We are issuing this notification early in order to provide families enough time to make alternative day care arrangements as needed. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause but hope this early notification will help as you plan for the next couple of weeks.

**Student Instruction during school closure:** For the week of **March 30th - April 3rd**, our teachers will be working to provide instructional material to each of our students no matter what grade level. Our dedicated Staff is finalizing these instructional materials for our students and we will be able to provide this information to you and your children by **Thursday, March 19**. Although instruction may look different, we will work to provide learning opportunities and maintain high expectations for our students. This won’t replace the valuable teacher/student interaction and instruction that takes place in the classroom on a daily basis, however, we believe it will keep each student moving forward academically. We will be sending you more information about online and/or alternative instruction options while your children are at home very soon.
In addition, in an effort to help fill the time with your children, Mrs. Christensen and Nurse Debbie will also be providing helpful handouts on fun activities to do during this extended break as well as discussion points on how to address some of your child’s concerns. It can be a confusing and scary time for our children with the constant news reports and updates about the virus.

**Possible extended school closures:** Again, I cannot stress enough the rapidly changing characteristics of this circumstance, so please be aware that we will continue to actively monitor this situation and as we follow recommendations, school closures could likely extend through the month of April or further as necessary.

Thank you for entrusting your children to us and together, we will overcome these challenges with renewed strength. We are extremely proud to serve you and our students, so please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions, comments or concerns.

Sincerely,

Danielle Van Esselstine, Superintendent