March 10, 2020

Hello Cotting Families,

In my update yesterday I referenced a conference call that was scheduled to take place between the Massachusetts Department of Health and local health boards, including Lexington. We were notified today that the call was cancelled and thus there was no new guidance available regarding community access for schools. However, members of our Senior Administrative team and our Director of Nursing have been meeting regularly to review our response to the unfolding situation and spread of the coronavirus. In addition, today we spoke again with our medical director, Dr. Elizabeth Harstadt, about next steps in our effort to minimize risk to our community.

We are all in agreement that effective Thursday, March 12, we will suspend all off-campus activities including community trips, Project Bridges, and Circle of Friends. In addition, we are limiting access to our campus from outside groups, meetings, or other organizations. Our plan is to discuss these changes with students tomorrow and and explain they will go into effect on Thursday. Suspending off-campus activities is a pro-active measure and one we want to implement without increasing student distress.

Unsurprisingly, over the past week we have noticed an increase in overall levels of anxiety from students. We know that changes can be difficult for some students and we are working with the Mental Health Team to ensure that we are providing factual information and also reassurance. Tomorrow, we will share with you the language we are using with students about the changes to the schedule. Please note: students who participate in Project Bridges will be working with their job coaches and vocational staff during their regularly scheduled Project Bridges time. We will send information about specific schedule changes home on Thursday.

Our hope is that these changes to the schedule will be as short-lived as possible. We will continue to monitor the situation very closely.
As always, please be in touch with any questions you have. We appreciate your ongoing support, especially during such a challenging time.

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Chief Academic Officer

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