March 29, 2020

Good morning Cotting Families,

As we head into week three of school closure, I hope you are all staying healthy and coping as best as possible. We now know we have several more weeks before school will re-open. **Consistent with Governor Baker's order, Cotting School will be closed through May 4, 2020.**

We are all in the position of trying to find a new balance between managing home and work responsibilities under very difficult circumstances. Parents now have to take on the additional work of supporting student learning. For students with disabilities this is an especially complex challenge. I have heard from many of you who describe the struggle to simultaneously support all your children and family members, work from home, manage daily needs, and maintain calm during this time of stress and uncertainty. There is a strong feeling of not being able to do enough. Cotting staff are also experiencing these challenges, and we want you to know that we understand and appreciate everything you are doing.

Our goal for the coming weeks is to continue to do our best to support you and our students. Some thoughts for the week ahead:

**Reach out for support:** Many of you have joined Pam Varrin and Mental Health Team for **parent video meetings.** These are offered multiple times per week during the day and evening. They are **opportunities to connect with other parents, vent, commiserate, and problem-solve.** Pam will continue to send out information about these meetings and we encourage you to join if you can. We also encourage you to reach out to any members of the Senior Administrative Team with questions or for support.

**Do what you can and remember that is enough:** Our goal is to provide you with tools and resources you can use in the way that works best for your family. **There is no expectation or pressure for you to use everything or anything.** Every student is different, every family is different, and the capacity to support student learning activities
at home may change day by day or hour by hour. You are doing the best you can and that is enough.

**Give us feedback about the resources we have provided:** Over the next week we want to evaluate the resources, materials, and activities we have provided to see how they are working. We want to understand what is most useful and helpful for students and families. I encourage you to give feedback to your child’s teachers and therapists. You are also welcome to email me to share your thoughts and experiences.

**Get some support with technology:** While technology resources make many things possible, they can quickly become overwhelming. To help, the Cotting.org/families page on the Cotting School website has been modified and is now a hub for access to some remote resources during our school closure. On the page you’ll find a new “Technology Help Center” designed with the Cotting community in mind. This page offers tutorials for frequently used tools and the opportunity for live tech support Monday-Friday from 9am-12pm. In addition you can find “Classroom, Therapy, and Vocational Resources”, and even some “Social and Fun Resources”.

We hope these suggestions will be helpful for the week ahead. While it is difficult to be apart during this time, the support of our community remains around us. I recently received an email from a parent that ended with “Physically distanced but not disconnected. Together is better.” Cotting’s community is not defined by the walls of the physical building. We are together as a community, now more than ever.

Be safe and well,

Krista Macari
Chief Academic Officer

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