April 6, 2020

Hello Cotting Families,

I hope that everyone is well, healthy, and getting through each day as best as possible. I try and remind myself daily of the many things I have to be grateful for even during this uncertain and stressful time. One of the things I am most thankful for is our wonderful community and the many ways parents, students, and staff offer support and encouragement to each other.

It's also helpful to look ahead, plan for the future, and remind ourselves that we will not be in our current situation forever. With that in mind, I have several important updates to share with you.

**April Vacation Week** - Cotting School will be open from April 21-24, 2020. We will be closed on Monday April 20th so there will be no video lessons offered that day.

**Last Day of School** - Since we will be open during April vacation week, our last day of school will now be Thursday, June 18th. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is not changing the standard requirement of completing 180 school days.

**Change in Summer Programming** - We are all eager to return to school as soon as possible so that our students can have access to all the instructional and therapeutic supports they need. Like you, we are concerned about how the extended school closure will impact student learning and progress. We want to do everything we can to support our students and help mitigate the impact of this disruption to the school year. Therefore, we have decided this summer we will offer our "regular school program" focused on academic and therapeutic skills, rather than the various independent living and vocational options we typically offer in the summer. The summer program this year will be 25 days of the more typical classroom model and therapeutic support that we provide during the school year. Our goal is to spend the summer
focusing on assessing areas of need, re-building skills, providing continuity and stability, and positioning our students for a strong start to the next school year.

**Distance Learning Plan** - As you know, Cotting School began implementing a range of supports for students immediately after school closure on March 13th. Since that time, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has continued to update its guidance and requirements for how schools should develop a plan for distance learning. Cotting is providing distance learning to students through a variety of platforms including live video meetings with teachers and therapists, recorded academic and therapeutic video activities, daily assignments, comprehensive resource lists for families in therapeutic and academic content areas, and social opportunities for students. We are finalizing our formal **Distance Learning Plan** and will be sharing those details and specifics with you shortly. **Some things that will be included in this next phase of our distance learning plan are more opportunities for therapy support, addition of weekly live video lessons in, art, performing arts, industrial arts, and adapted physical education, live vocational classes, and expanded live social opportunities.**

Thank you for all the feedback you have provided regarding our efforts so far. We want our Distance Learning Plan to be as effective as possible for students and families and your input is a valued part of this process. Our Distance Learning Plan is a work in progress and we will continue to rely on your feedback to revise and refine our efforts as we move ahead. I do want to remind families, that our goal is to provide a range of program offerings to you that you can access in the way that works best for your student and family, **not to add stress or pressure**. I continue to hear from many families about the very real challenges you face in trying to meet all the demands of work, home, and family support. Cotting staff are experiencing and understand those same challenges and want to make this a supportive process - not an additional burden. As I mentioned last time, **do what you can and remember that is enough.**

As always, please reach out with any questions you have.

Be well,

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