March 20, 2020

Dear Northstar Families,

I hope this email finds you well.  I wanted to thank you for your kind words and support of our staff over these last weeks.  They all have been so appreciated!

While we shared information briefly last week, I wanted to provide a more detailed update about our plans including distance learning and expectations for students.  Please bear with me as this email is a bit lengthy.

First, after much thought and monitoring of local, state and federal guidance, **we have decided to extend our campus closure through Friday, April 10, 2020**.  Please know that this was not an easy decision, but the safety of our students, staff and their families continue to be a priority.

Second, we have updated our website to include a page dedicated to updates about our campus closure related to the coronavirus as well as frequently asked questions and our plans for distance learning.  You can find that page at<https://northstaracademy.net/covid-19-preparation-and-planning/> and clicking on the bar at the top of the screen.  We encourage you to check the page often as updates will be posted there.

Distance Learning – we continue to monitor guidance from the Virginia Department of Education as well as the US Department of Education.  Additionally, we are in communication with other schools throughout Virginia, both private and public. Considering this guidance, we have developed the plan below.

Week 1, March 16-20, 2020 – Teachers created hard copy review packets individualized for each student.  These packets were designed to reinforce previously learned material and/or IEP goal work. Packets were picked up or mailed home on March 17 & 18, 2020.

Week 2, March 23-27, 2020 – Teachers created Google classrooms for each class they teach.  Lessons in these classrooms include content-specific assignments. For some, those classes were further differentiated based on the needs, learning styles and goals for the students.   During this week, teachers will hold office hours 8:00-10:00 am and 1:00-3:00 pm Monday-Thursday. During these hours, teachers will be monitoring classrooms and communicating with students to provide feedback, answer questions, etc. via discussion boards, emails, and/or phone calls.  During their planning time, they will continue to develop lessons to post to their classrooms.

Students should plan to access their Google classrooms and prepare to complete work both online and offline.  Students who participate in courses through Apex have been instructed to continue working in those classes. Throughout our school closure, teachers are maintaining contact logs related to class participation.  This will help us better prepare for our future opening.

Week 3 and beyond - Our digital lessons will become more robust and interactive with Zoom meetings to support Google classroom and provide instruction.  We will communicate those changes as needed including more specific information regarding expectations.

Thank you for all your patience and understanding as we all learn to navigate this situation.  We look forward to a productive learning experience for teachers and students. We are committed to providing a continuum of services for our students who need routine, reinforcement and support through our distance learning plan.

Sincerely,

Crystal Trent