



June 1, 2020

Dear ALH Staff, Students, and Families,

(8 minutes and 46 seconds) Last week, on May 18th, I wrote you all a letter, once again with a heavy heart, informing you that the normal end of year senior celebrations are now canceled, or now occurring virtually due to COVID-19 and social distancing restrictions. I attempted to encourage our community, and especially our seniors, and impart that this experience, although challenging, frustrating, and confusing on all levels for all people, would help us to learn, and become stronger and wiser, and even more resilient in the future. I acknowledged how our amazing community has repeatedly come together in a moment's notice when called upon and been able to successfully pivot, plan, and implement a course of action with relative ease and persistence. I acknowledged and thanked our seniors for their ability to remain steadfast and maintain optimism throughout so much adversity and sacrifice. I remember thinking as I wrote these words to you that, "We will get through this and we will be better for it." These sentiments empowered my writings, believing in each and every word intensely. I was filled with emotion as I wrote, and I felt so very proud of us. (8 minutes and 46 seconds)

As the events of the last several days, including this weekend locally unfolded, I, as I'm sure many of you have, watched in horror and anger and sadness in response to the senseless killing of George Floyd while in Minneapolis Police custody (8 minutes and 46 seconds), and the violence that occurred in protest. Many members of our own community endured being directly affected by this violence in their neighborhoods and waited in fear, thinking only of how to protect their loved ones (8 minutes and 46 seconds). Even still, I attempted to remain optimistic for the sake of our seniors and ALH Community and held onto the hope that we would be able to continue with our parades to celebrate our seniors this week. Alas, it became evident this morning that it would not be possible to ensure the safety and security of our community given the state of the city and country (8 minutes and 46 seconds), and we were forced to cancel our senior parades. Nevertheless, we already have plans in motion to shift these celebrations to on-campus events, and we will be providing details in the next few days.

Throughout the day today, I have reflected on these events and have tried to choose my words and message wisely, and I honestly struggled, knowing that no matter what, each person has been affected in their own way and may receive it from a different perspective. But what I kept coming back to was, "8 minutes and 46 seconds." This is the length of time that George Floyd was subdued with a knee on his neck blocking his airway until he succumbed to asphyxiation and died. In solidarity and in dedication to George Floyd, and all those who have and will continue to suffer from racism in our country and cities, I ask of all of you to think of what you can do in 8 minutes and 46 seconds to take action, be heard, and elicit positive change. #8minutes46seconds, #ALHStrong.

In Peace and Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cariña D. Cook".

Cariña D. Cook
Principal/CEO

"One Leader Changes Everything"