

CROSSLAKE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Superintendent's Report to the Board of Directors

February 23, 2026

Prepared by Dr. Jenna Leadbetter, Ed.D.

ENROLLMENT UPDATE

District-wide enrollment stands at 591 students as of February 13, 2026, representing 84% of our enrollment target. This is a net gain of 83 students since August 4, 2025—a 16.3% increase during the school year. In-person K–5 enrollment continues to exceed capacity at 112%, and our online 6–8 program remains at 100% of target. PreK enrollment for Fall 2026 is already showing strong early interest with 10 students registered.

Program	Enrollment	% of Target
In-Person PreK	6	32%
In-Person K–5	106	112%
In-Person 6–8	29	57%
In-Person Total	141	86%
Online K–5	53	93%
Online 6–8	80	100%
Online 9–12	317	79%
Online Total	450	84%
District-Wide Total	591	84%

Of note, in-person 6–8 enrollment (57%) and online 9–12 enrollment (79%) remain areas where we are actively working to strengthen recruitment and retention strategies heading into spring enrollment season.

CELEBRATIONS AND RECOGNITIONS

Minnesota Online Teacher of the Year

Olivia Tracy was selected as Minnesota's Online Teacher of the Year at the third annual Minnesota Online Educators Summit. **Gena Jacobson** was also nominated. Having two CCS educators nominated among online teachers from across the entire state—and bringing home the top honor—is a significant reflection of the quality and dedication within our online program.

Sourcewell Regional Teacher of Excellence

Lisa Steffen was selected as the Sourcewell Regional Teacher of Excellence, with the official announcement expected in April 2026. **Rebekka Sievert** was also selected as a finalist. Both are members of our in-person team, and this recognition—alongside our online program's statewide honor above—reflects the caliber of teaching happening across our entire district.

QComp Goal Achievement

Both schools met their school-wide QComp goals for the fall-to-winter assessment window:

- **In-Person School:** 76.54% of students in grades 2–8 achieved or exceeded STAR growth goals in Reading (goal was 55%).
- **Online School:** 67.18% of students in grades 2–8 achieved or exceeded STAR growth goals in Math (goal was 55%).

These results reflect strong instructional practice across both programs and position us well as we continue working toward our north star goal of 80% proficiency.

Student and Community Highlights

- **Cabin Fever Family Fun Event** was well attended by staff and families on February 6.
- **Math Milestones:** 2nd graders finished spring math skills and 3rd graders passed spring math skills assessments.
- **Learning Coach Appreciation Week** was celebrated February 16–20, with student recognition shared on social media.
- **Spelling Bee** events were held February 18 (Primary) and February 19 (Whole School).
- **Spaghetti Dinner and Silent Auction** was held February 20, supporting the in-person school community.

Honoring Lisa Steffen's Retirement

As this section reflects, Lisa Steffen has had an extraordinary impact on CCS. After 15 years of service, Lisa has submitted her retirement letter effective at the end of the 2025–2026 school

year. Her retirement will be included on the board agenda for formal acceptance, and HR/Business Manager, Kelly Bittner is working with Lisa on benefits processing. I would like to discuss with the Board an appropriate way to honor Lisa's service and career at an upcoming board meeting, and will bring a recommendation for how to approach staff recognition at retirement consistently going forward.

TEACHING, LEARNING, AND STUDENT SUPPORT

MnMTSS and Strategic Outcomes

The District MnMTSS and Strategic Outcomes Team met on January 29 with broad representation including teachers, coaches, coordinators, principals, board members, parents, district leadership, and our Sourcewell contact. The team reviewed baseline data, celebrated QComp achievement, and focused on our three priority areas: Infrastructure, Data-Based Decision Making, and Engagement. Key outcomes included:

- **Team Purpose and Structure:** Reaffirmed that CCS operates as one unified district with two unique schools, and that this team serves as the engine aligning CACR, QComp, literacy requirements, and MnMTSS into one coherent system—not a collection of disconnected initiatives.
- **Baseline Data Review:** The team reviewed SEMI-DLT results, current MCA proficiency data, and our path to 80% proficiency—the threshold that positions CCS to pursue MDE's High-Quality Charter School designation.
- **School-Level Reports:** Both online and in-person MnMTSS teams presented updates. 436 students participated in STAR Reading and 435 in STAR Math as of January 29.
- **Open Positions:** We are actively recruiting an Online Parent Representative and Student Representative (grades 9–12) to strengthen family and student voice. A former in-person parent representative has also expressed interest in continued participation.

Action items are in progress, including a deeper dive into SEMI-DLT task completion, aligned school and district goal-setting between online and in-person MnMTSS teams, and refinement of the Screen, Identify, Intervene process led by Abi Swenson.

eduCLIMBER Data Platform

District-wide eduCLIMBER initial training wrapped up on February 19, led by Teaching and Learning Coordinator, Abi Swenson. This platform replaces Viewpoint and hundreds of spreadsheets, consolidating student data access and intervention tracking into one system. In March, the team will begin diving into specifics and customized learning. Abi is also working with the SIS implementation team to align our new student information system so that data flows into eduCLIMBER to support data-informed decision making across the district.

Statewide Assessments

MCA registration was sent to online families in grades 2–8, 10, and 11 with a registration deadline of February 27. As of February 17, registration is tracking ahead of last year in key areas:

- **20.83% of students registered** (compared to 29.95% at this point last year, with two weeks still remaining).
- **Only 5.2% of families have opted out**, compared to 24.66% last year—a significant and encouraging decrease.
- **35.76% of students have yet to register**, compared to 45.37% last year.

A follow-up communication will go out with the March Tremolo and Blue Sky newsletters (our school-to-home monthly news) to capture remaining registrations. District Assessment Coordinator, Abi Swenson is actively engaged in statewide assessment dialogues with MDE and meets weekly with school-level principals to ensure preparation. MDE has encouraged districts to use built-in scheduling flexibility within assessment windows.

To give the Board a sense of the operational scope behind these numbers: last year's MCA cycle required over 1,860 individual emails to students and families covering registration, personalized scheduling, rescheduling, and follow-ups—not including staff proctoring coordination or setting up testing locations around the state. This is a significant lift led by Abi, and the improved registration and opt-out numbers reflect the effectiveness of our communication strategy.

Staff Wellness and Professional Development

Both programs have continued intentional focus on staff wellness and professional learning:

- **Online staff** have engaged in Onward-based professional development sessions focused on finding bright spots, joyful anticipation, cultivating compassion, and guarding against compassion fatigue.
- **Both programs** have utilized the Common Language Guidance Document to support staff in responding to students navigating difficult current events.
- **Supporting All Learners training** was provided to all online staff on the February 2 PD Day, along with Canvas training for high school teachers.
- **National School Counseling Week** was celebrated to recognize our counselors, Natalie Grady and Erin McCullough .

OPERATIONS, FINANCE, AND COMPLIANCE

FY27 Funding Updates

MDE has announced a 2.69% inflation adjustment for Fiscal Year 2027, bringing the basic allowance to \$7,683 per adjusted pupil unit—a \$202 increase. I am also tracking changes to

compensatory revenue calculations as transitional funding protections expire on June 30, and monitoring the potential budget impact accordingly.

Hourly Compensation and Break Law Compliance

The Board's Ad Hoc Compensation Committee will be meeting soon to establish the scope, process, and timeline for the next hourly compensation review. Minnesota's updated break and meal period laws took effect January 1, 2026, and all hourly staff have been notified of new requirements. The district's Break Waiver Form is currently under review with legal counsel.

District Marketing Committee

The District Marketing Committee met on February 4 and February 11 with representation from district leadership, principals, and key staff. The committee is focused on three integrated areas: Branding (setting the promise), Marketing (telling the promise), and Engagement (fulfilling the promise). Key updates include:

- **Marketing Coordinator Position:** The committee reviewed and provided feedback on a draft 0.5 FTE District Marketing Coordinator job description. Feedback centered on ensuring the role emphasizes collaboration and partnership with existing staff rather than assuming sole responsibility, and that the position serves as a strategic "sharer" of the great work happening across both schools.
- **Marketing Budget:** As of February 3, the district's marketing budget is \$35,000, with \$29,620 spent year-to-date across digital marketing, radio, and regional partnerships. The remaining school-year spend is minimal.
- **Deliverables:** The committee is awaiting final deliverables from our outgoing marketing partner (Hubbard) and is reviewing the organization and usability of the district's shared marketing drive.

The committee also discussed the importance of creating more opportunities for families to share feedback with us—not just for us to communicate outward—including the potential use of satisfaction surveys. I will be bringing survey formats to the committee for review.

Technology

- **GoGuardian Parent App** was rolled out to all K–12 online families, extending digital safety monitoring into the home.
- **Telecom/Internet Access Aid** cost reporting data is being submitted to MDE before the February 27 deadline.
- **Technology Manager, Will Lyke**, has been leading both hands-on facility work (network cabling improvements) and policy development (Google Suite access, in-person camera policies).

Grants in Progress

- **Full-Service Community School Grant:** Application is actively in development. I will be reaching out to key personnel for involvement as it progresses.

- **Fish Art Contest:** Student entries due February 28, aligned with our environmental literacy mission.
 - **Ethnic Studies Grant:** Application deadline March 6 for grades 5–12 course development.
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SAFETY, SECURITY, AND ADVOCACY

School Safety Training

Principal Klang and I will attend the “I Love U Guys” Standard Response Protocol Train the Trainer session on February 25 at Sourcewell in Staples. This training builds on our December 2025 commitment to a joint Crow Wing County training session with Pequot Lakes School District and will strengthen our team’s ability to lead ongoing safety preparedness across the CCS community.

Charter Schools Day at the Capitol

I will be attending Charter Schools Day at the Capitol on February 24 with CCS Board members to advocate for charter school funding equity and support for Minnesota’s charter school students and families.

2026 Legislative Landscape

As the Board is aware, Minnesota’s 2026 legislative session gaveled in on February 17. Key considerations include:

- This is a policy year (not budget-setting), meaning new funding is likely to be one-time and difficult to secure.
- The state is navigating a tight fiscal environment.
- The House is at a 67–67 tie; the Senate remains under DFL control at 34–33.
- The Blue Ribbon Commission on Special Education continues its work to develop recommendations for reducing special education spending by \$250 million, with recommendations targeted for the 2027 session.

CCS remains a nonpartisan entity focused solely on our educational mission. We will continue to monitor state guidance and support our staff and families as the landscape evolves.

CULTURE, AWARENESS, AND COMMUNITY

- **Ramadan Awareness:** Ramadan began this week and runs through March 19. Staff have been notified to be aware of students and families who may be observing fasting, prayer, and adjusted schedules. Thank you to Olivia Tracy for sharing this reminder.

- **Lunar New Year:** Information about community Lunar New Year celebrations was shared with staff, courtesy of Online Team Member Lisa Chan.
- **IFest-MN:** Student Day is set for April 10 at St. Paul RiverCentre—a cultural experience gathering over 60 nations and ethnic communities. Information has been shared with staff.

LOOKING AHEAD

The University of Minnesota’s Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) will be sending a charter school board governance survey to board chairs and executive directors later this month as part of a three-year, MDE-funded project. Our Board Chair has been notified. No action is needed at this time.

February 24	Charter Schools Day at the Capitol
February 25	I Love U Guys Train the Trainer (Sourcewell)
February 27	MCA Registration Deadline / Telecom Aid Reporting Deadline
February 28	Fish Art Contest Submission Deadline
March 1	Lane Change Request Deadline
March 6	Ethnic Studies Grant Deadline
March 9–13	Spring Break (No School)
March 19	MDE PLD Panelist Application Deadline
March 23	Next Board Meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Jenna Leadbetter,
 Superintendent
 Crosslake Community Schools