

Superintendent's Report: Our Charter Renewal Application

Board of Education Regular Meeting, September 28, 2026 | Agenda Section: Academic Performance

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The Short Version

- **What we're asking:** Approve our application to keep operating as a school for another five years, and sign it.
- **How we did:** Our students met or beat almost every goal we set. Our overseeing organization rated us above 100%.
- **Where we need to grow:** Math and graduation rates in our online program.
- **Money:** We are growing, with about 47 more students than last year. Our budget is tighter because we are investing in staff pay, marketing and communication, technology, and safety and security to carry out our strategic plan and meet state requirements. Health insurance costs are also rising. If new enrollments come in as expected by October 1, we should end the year close to even.

What the Board Is Being Asked to Do

Approve the renewal application and the four-year financial plan so we can send them to Osprey Wilds. Board members at tonight's meeting will also sign the application's signature page.

Suggested motion: *"Motion to approve the Crosslake Community Schools Charter Renewal Application and FY27–FY30 Four-Year Financial Plan as presented, and to authorize the Board Chair and Superintendent to sign and submit them to Osprey Wilds."*

What Is a Charter Renewal?

As a charter school, CCS operates under a contract with Osprey Wilds, the organization the state approved to oversee us. Our current contract ends June 30, 2027. To keep operating, we have to apply for a new five-year contract.

The application is our report card for the last five years and our plan for the next five. Osprey Wilds agreed to accept it after tonight's Board vote.

How Our Students Are Doing

- Osprey Wilds scored us at 108% of possible points on our academic goals. That puts us on track for a simpler, faster renewal process.
- Students are making strong progress during the year, beating our targets for improvement in both reading and math.
- Our in-person students score higher than the state average in reading and science, including students from lower-income families.
- Attendance goals were met every year of the contract.
- We completed every requirement of the improvement plan Osprey Wilds gave us at the start of this contract.

- We met 15 of our 22 environmental education goals last year.

Where We Need to Improve

The application is honest about these, and it includes our plan for each:

- Math scores in our online program, especially for students from lower-income families and students with disabilities. This is Osprey Wilds' biggest concern.
- Our online high school's four-year graduation rate. Because of it, the state has placed that school on its list for extra support.
- Regular attendance for online students in grades 6 through 12.
- Early reading: about half of our kindergarten through 3rd grade students were reading at grade level last spring.

Our Money Picture

Almost all of our money comes from the state, which pays us for each student enrolled, about \$9,000 per student per year. Over this contract we have grown from 424 students to about 600, and Osprey Wilds has approved us to grow to 700. This year alone, enrollment is up from about 553 last year.

This year's budget is tighter by design. To carry out our strategic plan and meet state requirements, we are investing in competitive staff pay, marketing and communication, technology, and safety and security. We also built the budget expecting even more growth, 636 students, so the students we still enroll this fall matter.

Our savings (called "fund balance") are our cushion for emergencies. Osprey Wilds expects us to keep savings of at least 20% of a year's spending. The table walks through where this year stands, one step at a time.

What we're looking at	Result for the year	Savings (as % of a year's spending)
The budget the Board approved in the spring (planned on 636 students)	\$108,601 surplus	20.9%
Step 1: Enrollment so far is about 600 (up from about 553 last year, but below the 636 we planned for)	\$216,000 short	17.6%
Step 2: Add a state grant that pays for staff already on payroll	\$104,000 short	18.8%
Step 3: Add the January health insurance increase (expected to be more than 30%, costing roughly \$68,000 to \$106,000 for the rest of this year)	\$172,000 to \$210,000 short	17.5% to 17.9%
Step 4: If 28 more students enroll by October 1 (projected, not yet counted)	About break-even to a small surplus	About 20%

Step 1 is Creative Planning's estimate. Steps 2–4 are district estimates, which Creative Planning will confirm.

The last row is our best estimate if enrollment staff meet their October 1 goal. It is not a sure thing. A few other things are not counted yet and could help:

- The Board's decision tonight on how employees and the district share health insurance costs.

- Two state grants we are waiting to hear about, which would pay for staff if awarded.

We will send Osprey Wilds an updated budget by December 15 based on real enrollment. The application says all of this plainly.

Our Four-Year Financial Plan

The Board is also approving a four-year financial plan, which Osprey Wilds requires with every renewal application. It shows how we expect our budget to look through the 2029–30 school year:

- **Next year (2027–28):** about break-even, with enrollment of 650 students and savings dipping slightly below 20%.
- **The two years after that:** surpluses of about \$200,000 to \$250,000 a year as enrollment reaches 690, bringing savings back above 20%.

The plan was built before this fall's enrollment count and the latest health insurance projections. We will update it with the revised budget we send Osprey Wilds by December 15.

Promises We Make in the Application

- The Board will formally review the Superintendent's performance at least four times a year and record it in the minutes. The policy for this is on tonight's agenda.
- We will have a clear plan for who leads the district if the Superintendent is away. That plan is also on tonight's agenda.

What Happens Next

- **October 5:** We send Osprey Wilds last year's test results.
- **This fall:** Osprey Wilds visits our schools as part of its review.
- **December 15:** We send Osprey Wilds an updated budget.
- **After that:** Osprey Wilds decides on renewal. A new five-year contract would start July 1, 2027.

Attachments

1. Application – Osprey Wilds Charter Renewal, September 2026 (DRAFT)
2. Financial Plan – FY27–FY30 Four-Year Plan, September 2026 (DRAFT)