

Executive Director Report


Meeting Date: July 28, 2025 - 5:00 PM


Prepared by: Dr. Jenna Leadbetter, Executive Director


Executive Summary - Summer 2025 Key Wins


Bottom Line Up Front: CCS achieved exceptional operational excellence this summer with 76 graduates, comprehensive staffing success (168 applicants for all positions), maintained strong enrollment at 500 ADM, solid financial health with \$2.58M fund balance, and comprehensive technology transformation positioning us for outstanding fall launch.

Key Achievements This Summer

 **76 Graduate Celebration:** Successfully graduated 76 students from our Class of 2025, representing the collective impact of our entire CCS community

 **Comprehensive Staffing:** Completed major hiring initiative with exceptional recruitment results and strategic team building for SY 2025-26

 **Technology Transformation:** Network infrastructure upgrades, phone system modernization, and comprehensive digital integration underway

 **Enhanced Communication:** Launching multi-level communication framework in direct response to student, family, and staff satisfaction survey feedback

Federal Education Funding & Legislative Updates

Critical Federal Funding Impact

CCS district's federal awards totaling \$17,191.61 affected by ongoing federal funding freeze:

- **Title II-A:** \$7,191.61 (placeholder amount during federal review)
- **Title IV-B:** \$10,000 (standard charter school allocation)

Current Status: Approximately \$1.3 billion of withheld federal funds may be released this week for summer programming, with new compliance certification requirements under evaluation. Minnesota and 23 other states pursuing legal action for full fund release. The modest exposure limits district risk, but budget planning continues with awareness of potential impacts.

Budget Planning & Finance Updates

Completed Items (Week of July 14-23)

- **Administrative Assistant Pay Scales:** Successfully finalized and approved by Finance Committee
- **June 2025 Financial Reports:** Approved by Finance Committee for board consideration
- **Technology Budget Coordination:** Completed comprehensive SY 2025-26 planning with Creative Planning advisors

Financial Context & Budget Health

Current Financial Position: Strong financial health with ending fund balance of \$2.58M (31.7% of expenditures), well above the 30-day minimum requirement. The modest \$17K federal funding exposure represents minimal risk against our \$7.5M total budget. Year-end financial performance shows revenues at 103.8% of budget and expenditures at 100.9%, demonstrating excellent fiscal management.

Enrollment Success: Successfully maintained 500 Average Daily Membership (ADM), representing positive retention and positioning for our traditional August-September enrollment growth period when families make final school decisions. **Finance Committee**

Recommendations (July 22):

- Administrative Assistant pay scale adjustments approved for board consideration
- Seat-based Kids Care wage increase proposal (from \$20 to \$25/hour) presented for future Finance Committee review
- Updated enrollment numbers integrated into budget planning

Strategic Budget Restructuring (Late July/Early August)

Two critical meetings scheduled to ensure comprehensive financial planning:

Budget Line Items Meeting: Engagement funding restructure from centralized district marketing to school-specific allocations based on three-year expenditure analysis. Equitable non-instructional supply and student support distribution between learning environments.

Immediate Board Considerations

Staffing & Organizational Excellence

Comprehensive Recruitment Success

After **168 applicants** and **61 interviews**, we have successfully completed our comprehensive hiring initiative for SY 2025-26. All open positions have received offers, with several still pending final acceptance. This extensive recruitment process demonstrates our commitment to finding exceptional educators who align with our mission and values.

New Team Members (SY 2025-26)

Internal Promotions:

- **Monique Duray** - Associate Director of Online Learning
- **Erin McCullough** - Full-time School Counselor
- **Amy Scheuman** - MnMTSS Lead Teacher

New Hires Completed:

- **Math Teachers:** Angela Kemp and Theodore Casparian
- **Math Interventionist:** Gabrielle Johnson
- **English Teachers:** Rhiannon Farr and LouAnn Muhm
- **Special Education Teacher:** Randa Arvold
- **Administrative Assistant:** Devan Bartels
- **Science Teacher:** Alyssa Swan
- **Elementary Teacher:** Mindy Glazier
- **History Teacher:** Anna Fisk
- **Learning Coaches:** Lisa Chan and Heather Eckert

Recognition and appreciation extend to all committee members who dedicated their time throughout the summer hiring process. Their expertise and insights were instrumental in identifying candidates who will strengthen our growing CCS community.

Professional Development & Lifelong Learning Excellence

Graduate School Leadership Initiatives: Three key staff members are pursuing advanced leadership credentials beginning Fall 2025:

- **Rose Bierce** - Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) program at Concordia University – St. Paul for K-12 Principal Licensure
- **Monique Duray** - Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) program at Concordia University – St. Paul for K-12 Principal Licensure
- **Abi Swenson** - Masters (M.S.) program at Capella University for Curriculum and Instruction

Recent Academic Achievements: **Elizabeth Kylo** successfully completed her Master's degree in Educational Technology and Instructional Design, demonstrating exceptional commitment to continuous professional growth and enhanced instructional capability.

Professional Licensure Advancement: Lucas Christenson has submitted his application for higher tier teaching licensure, reflecting his continued professional development and leadership contributions to our educational community.

Comprehensive Licensure Support: The district continues actively supporting multiple staff members through various licensure pathways, including Tier 2 applications, university teacher preparation programs, and PELSB coordination to ensure compliance with evolving state requirements.

READ Act Training Excellence: Structured literacy training continues with strong momentum, with all licensed staff, paraprofessionals, and additional staff members registered for Fall 2025 implementation.

Strategic Alignment & Mission Implementation

Strategic Roadmap Progress (March 2024 Framework)

Current initiatives systematically implement our five strategic directions:

Direction A - Individualized Instruction: Curriculum enhancement with Fishtank books and Discovery Ed evaluation, comprehensive READ Act compliance implementation

Direction B - Staff Professional Growth: Graduate school initiatives for leadership development, comprehensive MnMTSS committee structure ensuring 100% meaningful staff participation

Direction C - Inclusive Community: Enhanced family communication systems responding directly to satisfaction survey feedback, comprehensive student support coordination

Direction D - Technology Integration: Complete technology transformation including network infrastructure, communication systems, and learning platform enhancements

Direction E - Operations & Facilities: New vendor accountability framework, strategic budget restructuring, comprehensive security and facility improvements

Mission Alignment

All initiatives support our mission of "growing environmentally literate, community-impacting learners of excellence" while implementing our proposed vision: "CCS strives to be a school where students build meaningful connections with each other, the community, and the environment through exceptional and relevant learning experiences."

Comprehensive Technology Transformation

Infrastructure Modernization (July 14-23 Completions)

- **Network Upgrade:** First batch of equipment delivered, switches awaiting delivery for completion
- **Communication Systems:** New hunt phone system with student-recorded greetings and multi-school integration
- **Staff Technology:** Laptop procurement orders placed for all new staff members
- **Digital Integration:** Canvas LMS enhancements, eduCLIMBER implementation (replacing Viewpoint), website management streamlining

Security & Accessibility Enhancement

- **Security Infrastructure:** 360-degree camera coverage planning, elevator monitoring, front door improvements, complete intercom system overhaul
- **Digital Accessibility:** ADA compliance review initiated for all web content and mobile applications
- **Communication Technology:** Comprehensive phone tree implementation with after-hours protocols and helpdesk integration

Family Communication & Engagement Enhancement

Multi-Level Communication Framework (Launching August 1, 2025)

Direct Response to Satisfaction Survey Results: Comprehensive communication enhancement addressing specific family concerns and requests for increased engagement:

External Communications:

- **School-Level Monthly Newsletters:** ADA-compliant newsletters for students, families, and community featuring celebratory tone, dual timeline approach (past achievements/upcoming opportunities), and school-specific content
- **Director Weekly Messages:** Ongoing school-specific updates for families and community engagement

Internal Communications:

- **District Focus (Friday Focus):** District-wide internal communication for CCS staff only

Impact Goal: Ensuring all families feel connected, informed, and celebrated as part of the CCS community across both learning environments through responsive, accessible communication.

Curriculum & Assessment Excellence

READ Act Compliance & Literacy Initiative

- **Local Literacy Lead:** Abi Swenson confirmed (meets August 30 deadline)
- **Structured Literacy Training:** All licensed staff with paraprofessionals, and open to all other staff, beginning Fall 2025
- **Curriculum Resources:** Fishtank books K-8 class sets are currently being ordered and received
- **Assessment Coordination:** SY 2025 Testing Calendar updated for both learning environments
- **Discovery Ed Evaluation:** Curriculum resources under review for seat-based grades 5-8

Teacher Licensure & Compliance

- **Comprehensive Support:** District supporting multiple staff through various licensure pathways including university teacher preparation programs
- **PELSB Coordination:** Active collaboration on behalf of staff navigating changing state requirements
- **Continuous Authorization:** Ensuring uninterrupted teaching capability across all positions

Operational Excellence & Facilities

Student Information Systems & Scheduling

- **JMC System:** Completed scheduled maintenance July 22
- **Master Schedules:** Prepared for both schools for SY 2025-26
- **Enrollment Management:** Current enrollment maintained at 500 students, with our season for increasing fast approaching mid-August when back-to-school letters are sent and parents/guardians are making their final decisions

Facilities & Transportation

- **Summer Improvements:** Deep cleaning and maintenance completed across all buildings
- **Security Infrastructure:** Basketball court permanent poles installation, front door power supply (\$1,845) for ADA compliance and improved security latching, comprehensive intercom system overhaul
- **Transportation Partnership:** Bus driver recruitment in partnership with Crosby-Ironton transportation provider underway due to recent regional shortages

Special Education & Student Support

- **Enhanced Staffing:** New SpED teacher recruitment completed for improved service delivery
- **Service Coordination:** Internal district representation in direct partnership with PBEC for both learning environments with proactive planning for new student demands. The special education department purchased an online transition curriculum designed specifically for special education students. During the summer, three staff members received training on this curriculum and have continued working with it voluntarily on their own time to prepare for the 2025-26 school year. These three trained special education teachers will provide training to the rest of the department during staff development sessions and in the weeks following the start of the school year.

Organizational Structure & Governance Excellence

Vendor Accountability & Committee Structure

- **Vendor Framework:** All outside vendors accountable to Executive Director while maintaining direct school communication channels
- **Committee System:** 21 operational teams (7 seat-based, 8 online, 6 district-wide) with tri-directional communication flows supporting strategic implementation

Infrastructure Development & Partnership Opportunities

Strategic Projects Under Exploration:

- **Electronic Scrolling Sign:** Spring 2026 target for enhanced community visibility (exploring nonprofit partnerships, coordinating with city ordinances)
- **Stage Lighting/PA System:** Community event support with streaming capabilities (~\$15,000)
- **Security Enhancement:** 360-degree camera coverage, elevator monitoring, front door security improvements (~\$5,000+)
- **Building Expansion:** Long-term comprehensive facility planning for enhanced services
- **PreK Program Extension:** Five-year free programming consideration for community impact
- **Technology Infrastructure:** Staff laptop standardization and enhanced PA system with digital signage (~\$40,000)

Partnership Development: Actively exploring nonprofit and grant partnerships to support infrastructure improvements and community impact initiatives that align with our mission of growing environmentally literate, community-impacting learners of excellence.

Immediate Priorities & August Preparations

This Week (July 28-31)

- **School Board Meeting:** July 28 - 5:00 PM
- **District Focus Publication:** July 31 deadline for internal staff communication

August Launch Preparations

- **Family Newsletter Launch:** August 1 implementation across both schools
- **Seat-based Open House:** August 26 (4:30-6:00 PM)
- **Local Literacy Compliance:** August 30 deadline achieved (Abi Swenson confirmed)

Recent Community Events (Successfully Completed)

- July 4 community fireworks marketing campaign
- July 7-11 Kamp Kimchee programming
- July 16 Finance Committee meeting

Fall 2025 Success Metrics & Looking Forward

Key Performance Indicators for Fall 2025:

- **Enrollment Growth Target:** Build upon our stable 500 ADM base during traditional August-September growth period
- **New Staff Integration Success:** Monitor onboarding effectiveness of 14 new team members through 90-day check-ins
- **Communication Framework Impact:** Measure student/family engagement through newsletter readership and satisfaction survey improvements
- **Technology Integration:** Assess network infrastructure performance and digital platform adoption rates
- **READ Act Compliance:** Track structured literacy training implementation and early student reading outcomes

Strategic Priorities: Continue systematic implementation of March 2024 Strategic Roadmap while monitoring these success metrics to ensure our summer investments translate into enhanced student and family experiences.

Board Recommendations

1. **Approve Administrative Assistant pay scale adjustments** as recommended by Finance Committee (July 22)
2. **Support comprehensive budget restructuring process** ensuring equitable resource distribution between learning environments

3. **Acknowledge successful completion of major summer initiatives** including 76-graduate celebration, comprehensive staffing excellence, technology transformation, and strategic communication enhancement

This report reflects systematic implementation of our March 2024 Strategic Roadmap through collaborative planning with Creative Planning advisors and comprehensive operational excellence across all district functions during the critical summer preparation period for SY 2025-26.