

Executive Director Report

June 2025 Update

Overview

This comprehensive report covers critical developments affecting charter schools and educational institutions, including updated federal accessibility requirements, state legislative outcomes, and key court decisions. Immediate attention is required for compliance planning and strategic positioning.

I. STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Special Session Outcomes

Governor Walz successfully concluded a one-day Special Legislative Session on Monday, June 9th, avoiding a potential government shutdown. The Legislature demonstrated remarkable efficiency, with the House and Senate passing the E-12 Bill without amendments following largely bipartisan votes. Most working group bills proceeded with minimal debate, though healthcare coverage for undocumented adults generated significant discussion.

Key Timeline:

- Session convened: Monday, June 9th at 10:00 AM
- House conclusion: Late Monday
- Senate conclusion: Early Tuesday morning
- Expected gubernatorial signature: Within days

Future Legislative Considerations

Legislative leaders have indicated a potential additional Special Session may be necessary later this year to address federal budget implications. This session would specifically respond to potential federal funding cuts as Congress finalizes their budget, which could significantly impact Minnesota's recently enacted \$66 billion two-year budget.

II. CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING & REVENUE CHANGES

Facilities Funding Protection

Charter schools successfully avoided proposed facilities funding cuts, with \$132 per pupil transferred from Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Revenue (LTFMR) to general charter school aid. This represents a significant victory, as the Governor's original budget proposed complete elimination of this funding stream.

Special Education Adjustments

Charter special education tuition reimbursement state aid will be reduced from 10% to 6% beginning in FY28-29. While this represents a reduction from current levels, it avoided the complete elimination initially proposed in the Governor's budget.

Additional Revenue Impacts

Positive Developments:

- General education formula remains linked to inflation (up to 3%)
- Quality Compensation (Q Comp) maintains current funding levels
- One-time compensatory revenue "hold harmless" funding established for FY26

Areas of Concern:

- Long-term reductions scheduled for Student Support Personnel Aid, Library Aid, Special Education Transportation, and School Lunch Aid

III. GOVERNANCE & OVERSIGHT REQUIREMENTS

Authorizer Accountability

New requirements have been implemented for authorizer reporting, training, transparency, and public access to board hearings. Charter schools must now post authorizer accountability information on school websites with new distribution procedures.

Board Governance Changes

Mandatory Requirements:

- Addition of Finance Committees for all charter boards
- Enhanced financial corrective action protocols
- Oath of office filing requirements with authorizers
- Gift ban rules for school leaders and board members

- Strengthened penalties for multiple board service violations

Operational Updates

- Site change location applications now require enhanced approval processes
 - ABC board conflict of interest provisions have been expanded
 - Procurement thresholds clarified with formal processes required for large contracts
-

IV. PROGRAM & POLICY CHANGES

Academic & Operational Requirements

- Expanded attendance and enrollment reporting requirements for school leaders
- READ Act deadlines delayed with additional flexibility for dual immersion and training programs
- Short-call substitute program made permanent for qualifying support staff

Health & Safety Updates

- Cardiac response plans now required for all schools
 - Student opioid antagonist administration protocols established
-

V. FEDERAL COURT DECISION IMPACT

AJT v. Osseo Area Schools

The U.S. Supreme Court issued a unanimous decision strengthening protections for students with disabilities. The ruling establishes that schools must follow identical legal standards as other organizations under the ADA and Rehabilitation Act for discrimination claims.

Implications for Charter Schools:

- Elimination of higher legal thresholds previously applied in school cases
 - Increased accessibility for families pursuing legal action for accommodation failures
 - Enhanced requirement for reasonable accommodation provision
-

VI. FEDERAL ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Key Regulatory Update

On April 24, 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice issued updated regulations for Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These regulations establish mandatory accessibility standards for digital content and services provided by public entities, including all school districts and charter schools.

Compliance Requirements

All school districts and charter schools must ensure their digital platforms meet the following standards:

- Web content accessibility compliance with WCAG 2.1 Level A and AA requirements
- Mobile application accessibility meeting identical WCAG 2.1 standards
- Digital content accessibility across all platforms and services

Implementation Timeline:

- **Effective Date:** April 2026 or April 2027 (varies by district/school size)
 - **Action Required:** Districts must begin preparation immediately to meet compliance deadlines
-

VII. ENROLLMENT UPDATE - ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAM

Current Enrollment Status

Director of Online Learning Rose Bierce reports strong enrollment momentum for the upcoming academic year. The program began with approximately 70 new student applications at the start of the enrollment period and currently has 38 students registered—representing the highest mid-June registration numbers in program history.

Enrollment Projections:

- **Day 1 Estimate:** 380 students
- **Current Registered:** 38 students
- **Historical Context:** Exceeds previous years' registration pace at this time

Recent Activity:

- Approximately 12 new inquiries received since May 27th
- Current period represents typical seasonal slowdown with expected acceleration in July

Capacity Management

The program successfully increased its enrollment cap but strategically limited additional student intake due to teacher and coach capacity constraints. The final group of students was admitted at the end of the previous academic year, maintaining program quality and appropriate student-to-educator ratios.

Strategic Enrollment Initiatives**Process Improvements:**

- Leadership team meeting conducted between Christy and Molly to address enrollment timing challenges
- New strategy development to encourage earlier parent enrollment decisions
- Proactive outreach planned to reduce end-of-summer enrollment surge

Data Collection Enhancement:

- "How did you hear about us?" field being added to enrollment forms
- Implementation target: Next week
- Goal: Improve marketing effectiveness and outreach strategy refinement

Current Market Conditions:

- Limited new interest form submissions observed through formal channels
- Seasonal enrollment patterns showing typical June slowdown with anticipated July acceleration
- Recent inquiry activity (12 inquiries since May 27th) indicates sustained interest
- Indicates need for enhanced marketing and outreach efforts during slower periods

Immediate Actions:

- Director Bierce will begin systematic outreach next week
- Email and phone campaigns targeting all families on the pending list
- Focus on converting interest into early enrollment commitments
- Enhanced data collection to inform future marketing strategies

Operational Implications

This enrollment trend demonstrates strong market demand for the online learning program while highlighting the importance of capacity planning and early engagement strategies. The proactive

approach to managing the pending list, combined with enhanced data collection through enrollment form improvements, should improve operational efficiency and provide better planning capabilities for the upcoming academic year. The seasonal enrollment patterns, with typical June slowdowns followed by July acceleration, suggest opportunities to optimize marketing timing and outreach strategies throughout the enrollment cycle.

VIII. SCHOOL OPERATIONS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Graduation Success

CCS celebrated a remarkable milestone with the graduation of 76 students in the Class of 2025. This achievement represents the collective impact of the entire CCS community and reflects years of dedication from teachers, coaches, and support staff who worked tirelessly to support these students across the finish line.

Graduation Event Recognition: Special acknowledgment to the planning and execution team, including Molly Papillon, Calli Walker, Will Lyke, Jennifer Miller, Mitch Swaggert, Amy Miller, Callista Klaus, Melanie Donely, Mindy Glazier, Monique Duray, Rose Bierce, and many others who contributed to this tremendous success.

Staffing Updates

New Internal Hires:

- **Erin McCullough:** Transitioning to full-time as School Counselor, joining Natalie in this critical role
- **Amy Scheuman:** Appointed as full-time MnMTSS Lead Teacher

Pending Offers: Following today's board meeting, the Director of Online Learning will be extending offers to six candidates for the following positions:

- Associate Director
- Administrative Assistant
- Social Worker
- Two Math Teachers
- Math Interventionist

The online learning division continues extensive recruitment efforts, conducting 3-6 interviews daily for the 2025-2026 school year. Interviews have been completed for Associate Director, Math Teacher, Social Worker, Administrative Assistant, and Math Interventionist positions, with upcoming interviews scheduled for Elementary Teacher, Special Education Teacher, Learning Coach, History Teacher, Science Teacher, and English Teacher roles.

Compensation Structure Implementation

CCS has finalized the implementation of a comprehensive salary scale restructuring designed to ensure greater fairness and equity across all positions. The enhanced framework includes several key components:

Scale Structure Enhancements:

- Addition of levels 100, 200, 300, and 400 to provide appropriate entry points for new employees
- Clear progression opportunities maintained throughout the scale structure
- Years of service calculation based specifically on tenure at CCS

New Hire Policy:

- All new hires will be placed at step zero on their respective salary scales regardless of prior experience elsewhere
- Policy ensures consistency across all roles and supports internal equity goals
- Updated hiring procedures will be presented to the board at this meeting

Red Circle Staff Recognition:

- Staff members whose current salary exceeds their scale placement will maintain current salary plus 3% increase
- 3% adjustment exceeds Minnesota's state inflation adjustment rate of 2.6% for 2025
- Provides additional recognition for valued team members while maintaining scale integrity

The salary adjustments represent substantial raises for most staff members, with all employees positioned for step increases as they progress through their careers. Following board approval of all pay scales at this meeting, the executive director will distribute detailed information to all staff regarding their individual placement and the new compensation structure.

Facility & Operations Excellence

Seat-Based Campus Achievements:

- Successful year-end completion with organized classroom transitions
- 82% staff participation in exit interviews yielding positive feedback and improvement suggestions
- Timely report card completion
- Ongoing facility improvements including basketball court enhancements and deep cleaning initiatives

New Operational Procedures:

- Implementation of formalized Outside Organization Donation Form for compliance with Minnesota charter school statutes
 - Enhanced donation tracking and acknowledgment processes
 - PREK/K update: After brainstorming and deliberating, we are launching a new and exciting program which will combine the two ages aka multi-age, like the rest of the school. This will be heavily focused on exploratory learning, environmental education and outdoor learning. An experimental year!
-

IX. COMPLIANCE & REGULATORY UPDATES

Teacher Development and Evaluation (TDE) Changes

Effective July 1, 2025, CCS is updating teacher evaluation rubrics to comply with state requirements. The new evaluation system includes rubrics based on updated Standards of Effective Practice, incorporates culturally responsive methodologies, and provides common descriptions of effectiveness using multiple performance levels.

Q Comp Funding Restructuring

Beginning FY 2025, Q Comp funding becomes officially categorical with new compliance requirements:

- Use of Finance Code 335 for all Q Comp revenues and expenditures
- Implementation of Balance Sheet Code 437 for unspent funds
- Determination of beginning fund balance as of July 1, 2024

Health & Safety Preparedness

Measles Response Protocol: CCS is actively preparing response protocols following confirmed measles cases in Minnesota, including one in a school-age child. The district is:

- Assessing readiness for potential exposures during summer programming
- Planning family and staff communication regarding vaccination importance
- Ensuring compliance with immunization requirements per Minnesota Statutes

Cannabis Education Requirements: The district is reviewing MDE's List of Model Cannabis Education Programs to meet statutory requirements by the 2026-27 school year, with implementation planning underway.

Paraprofessional Qualification Updates

CCS is reviewing updated paraprofessional qualification requirements with new minimum standards based on job duties and funding sources, ensuring compliance with June 2, 2025 regulatory updates.

X. STRATEGIC OUTLOOK & FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Budget Pressures Ahead

A Blue Ribbon Commission has been tasked with identifying \$250 million in budget reductions for FY28-29, with charter sector representation required. This presents both challenges and opportunities for advocacy and strategic positioning.

2026 Legislative Session Preview

Key Factors:

- All lawmakers returning (no fall elections)
- Policy year with no constitutional requirement to pass bills
- Bipartisan conclusion to 2025 session provides positive foundation
- MACS focusing on funding equity issues and sector advancement

Federal Considerations

The potential for additional Special Sessions remains contingent on federal budget decisions. The U.S. Senate's movement on President Trump's budget proposal introduces uncertainty that may require rapid response and adaptation.

XI. CONCLUSION

This comprehensive period demonstrates CCS's operational excellence and strategic positioning across multiple domains. The celebration of 76 graduates represents the culmination of our educational mission, while successful internal promotions and ongoing recruitment efforts position the organization for continued growth and excellence.

The complex regulatory environment requires proactive compliance management, from digital accessibility requirements to teacher evaluation updates and health safety protocols. However, the organization's strong operational foundation, demonstrated through successful graduation outcomes and effective staff transitions, provides confidence in our ability to navigate these requirements successfully.

The protection of core funding streams through legislative advocacy, combined with strategic enrollment growth and enhanced operational procedures, creates a solid platform for advancing CCS's mission of growing environmentally literate, community-impacting learners of excellence.

Contact Information: For questions regarding this report, please contact the executive director's office.

This report requires immediate distribution and discussion at the next board meeting.