

Executive Director Report

Meeting Date: September 22, 2025 - 5:00 PM

Prepared by: Dr. Jenna Leadbetter, Executive Director

Executive Summary

Bottom Line Up Front: CCS continues exceptional momentum through September with enrollment reaching 532 students, successful completion of comprehensive staff committee assignments, strong operational foundation with \$2.58M fund balance, and successful implementation of the "FORWARD" theme driving unified district excellence across both schools.

Enrollment Growth and Community Engagement

Current enrollment has grown to 532 students as of September 12th, representing steady growth from our August baseline of 520: seat-based at 135 students (K-8), and online serving 397 students (K-5: 47, 6-8: 51, 9-12: 299). This trajectory positions us well toward our 600+ student projection for 2025-26. Marketing initiatives have generated strong community engagement through our YouTube channel launch, with school-specific videos now live and driving brand recognition across our service area.

Staffing Excellence and Professional Development

Completed district-wide committee assignment process for SY 25-26 with 100% staff participation across all district-wide, online, and seat-based committees. All required professional development initiatives are progressing on schedule, including completed READ Act training by paraprofessionals and ongoing Infinitic training requirements due September 26th. New staff integration has proceeded smoothly with Associate Director Monique Duray, School Counselor Erin McCullough, and all teaching positions demonstrating strong performance in their respective roles.

Financial Health and Strategic Operations

Maintained exceptional financial position with \$2.73M fund balance as of August 31st, representing 28.9% of annual expenditures and providing strong fiscal stability well above best practice minimums. Total cash position stands at \$2.76M (\$1.73M checking, \$1.04M investment CDs) ensuring robust operational liquidity. Current enrollment of 523 students against budgeted 600 represents 87.2% ADM achievement, with revenue collection at 15.7% and expenditure

disbursement at only 6.9% through August, demonstrating controlled spending and healthy cash flow management.

Board-approved budget projections indicate strategic investment in growth requiring planned fund balance utilization over the next two fiscal years to support enrollment expansion to 600+ students. Projected deficits of approximately \$577K-\$615K in FY26 and \$18K-\$57K in FY27 position CCS for sustainable growth, with financial models showing return to surplus operations beginning FY28 and fund balance recovery to 20.4%-22.7% of expenditures by FY31. This strategic approach maintains fund balance above critical thresholds throughout the projection period while enabling necessary staffing investments for enrollment growth.

Universal screening implementation has shown strong progress with 346 students having completed Star Reading assessments and 359 having completed Star Math screenings as of mid-September. Technology infrastructure improvements are ongoing with enhanced phone tree system implementation featuring student voice recordings to improve community engagement.

Strategic Implementation and Innovation

Launched comprehensive "FORWARD" theme implementation with clear focus areas: student success through strategic implementation, enhanced technology integration experiences, resilience demonstration through reauthorization success, welcoming environments across both programs, achievement in enrollment and recognition, strengthened relationships through communication improvements, and dedication to environmental education and digital literacy excellence.

Restarted strategic planning implementation conversations with Teamworks, our outside vendor, to ensure successful execution of spring 2024 strategic planning efforts, including 1:1 Executive Director coaching support. Completed MnMTSS Leadership Development assessment (SEMI-DLT) with Sourcewell partners, identifying Component 1 (Infrastructure for Continuous Improvement) and Component 5 (Data Based Decision Making) as priority areas for action planning this year.

Initiated exploration of GRIT framework integration following staff attendance at Sourcewell Education Summit and Dr. Cindra Kamphoff's keynote presentation. Staff feedback indicates strong interest in building perseverance, resilience, and mental strength tools for both staff and students.

School-Specific Achievements

Seat-Based School Excellence: Conducted successful Deep Portage team-building experiences for grades 1-8, achieved perfect attendance day on September 10th, and completed successful fire drill and bus safety protocols. Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled for September 23rd and 25th with strong family engagement anticipated. Farm to School event planning is underway for October 10th featuring locally sourced lunch with

community partnerships including donated beef and invited guests from MDA and local government.

Online School Growth: Record-breaking K-5 morning meeting participation with 27 students on first day, representing significant engagement improvement. Open house participation growth exceeded expectations: K-5 up 36%, 6-8 up 56%, and 9-12 up 14% compared to previous year. Middle level communication log successfully launched with strong team collaboration, and "Chit Chat and Chill" sessions driving positive staff culture.

Grant Opportunities and Strategic Partnerships

Applied for the Cybersecurity & Security Grant, positioning CCS to receive reimbursement for qualifying cybersecurity and security expenses incurred after July 1, 2025. This grant opportunity aligns with our ongoing technology infrastructure enhancements and commitment to maintaining secure learning environments across both schools.

Identified Nonexclusionary Discipline (NED) grant opportunity for State Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027, encompassing SEL, mental health, and PBIS initiatives that align with our comprehensive student support framework. Our online 6-12 school has been identified for comprehensive support through Minnesota's ESSA accountability system in the area of graduation rates, positioning us to access additional state support and resources through targeted improvement planning.

CCS leadership participated in Sourcewell school identification kickoff event, demonstrating commitment to collaborative improvement efforts and strategic partnerships that enhance our educational delivery.

Looking Forward - Continued FORWARD Momentum

CCS celebrates our 25th anniversary milestone while embracing unprecedented growth and innovation. The September 25th Minnesota Charter School Recognition celebration at Union Depot in St. Paul will formally recognize our quarter-century of educational excellence. With successful enrollment growth, comprehensive staffing, robust financial health, and innovative program development, the district is positioned for exceptional impact throughout our milestone year.

Immediate Priorities: • Complete universal screening window by September 19th • Finalize Parent-Teacher Conference logistics for both schools • Continue GRIT framework research and feasibility analysis • Advance Farm to School event planning for October 10th • Maintain enrollment momentum toward 600+ student goal • Strengthen unified district communication top-down, bottom-up, side-by-side and community engagement initiatives