

	Regular School Board Meeting	
	Date: January 12, 2026	
	Location: Circle of Life Academy	Time: 5:00pm

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Time: 5:00 PM ▾

2. **MISSION STATEMENT:** Our Circle of Life Academy is immersed in Anishinaabe Mino-Bimaadiziwin for our children and community while providing the highest quality of education.

3. ROLL CALL:

- a. Board Members Present:

Yes ▾ Trista Ayers, Chair

Yes ▾ Loretta Solmon, Vice Chair

Yes ▾ Chris VanWert, Secretary

Yes ▾ Dorothy Zima

Yes ▾ Fawn Roy

- b. Others Present

i. Seth Hougum

ii. Vince Olson

- c. Quorum Present? **Yes** ▾

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- a. Motion: Chris VanWert ▾

- b. Second: Dorothy Zima ▾

- c. In Favor: 4

- d. Opposed: 0

5. RECOGNITIONS - STAFF OR STUDENT

- Cindy Bunker - Cindy is taking on the HS ELA position after a career in elementary education
- Jennifer DC is moving to 2nd grade
- Linda Munnell shared her book

6. COMMENTS OR REQUESTS FROM VISITORS *(limit of 5 minutes per person)*

a. No Requests

7. PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS

a. No Requests

8. **CONSENT AGENDA:** Action is requested on the following items of the consent agenda. Consent agenda items are typically adopted without discussion of the individual items because they are routine or ordinary in action. Board members are asked to preview documents prior to the scheduled meeting. Any consent agenda item may be removed for further discussion and deliberation by any member of the board.

a. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes -**i. Regular Meeting - [December 9, 2025](#)b. **Student Enrollment Update**

As of 1/07/26	Currently Enrolled	Wait List	Transferred Out
KG	2	0	0
1st	8	0	1
2nd	7	0	0
3rd	4	0	1
4th	3	0	4
5th	7	0	1
6th	9	0	1
7th	5	0	4
8th	5	0	1
9th	9	0	8
10th	7	0	5
11th	0	0	4
12th	6	2	6
TOTAL	72	2	36
Dec 9, 2025			72
Nov 10, 2025			81
Oct 8, 2025			83

Discussion: Enrollment continues to fluctuate. Students are leaving the district due to personal reasons and need for alternative/flexible programs. COLA continues to receive student applications and is staying vigilant with reviewing and accepting applicants thoroughly.

c. **HR / New Hires Report:**

- i. No New Hires in December

d. **SPED Report**

- i. LSPP (Local School Performance Plan) submitted
- ii. Training for SPED staff taking place
- iii. May 2nd - Final Plan Due
- iv. Parent Surveys due June 30th
- v. Bardie attended the Missed Services webinar - will need to develop policy regarding missed services and make-up time

e. **Facilities Report**

- i. Arvig account corrections made
- ii. PA system issues being addressed
- iii. Prepping for pallet racking in bus garage (addressing storage needs)

f. **NASIS and Transportation Report**

- i. COLA Suburbans transported students to field trip with WE Natural Resources
- ii. Heidi is in communication with drivers on daily basis

g. **Any expenditures** previously discussed

- i. None this month

Approval of Consent Agenda

- ii. Motion: Chris VanWert ▾
- iii. Second: Loretta Solmon ▾
- iv. In Favor:4
- v. Opposed: 0

9. **ACTION ITEMS:** Action items receive individual attention because of the nature of the issues, the need to discuss or review the information prior to taking action, or the specific kind of action required for the action.

a. **COLA Student Handbook Update**

Discussion: The Board met on 12/29/25 to review the updated COLA Student Handbook. After reviewing and editing all policies within the handbook, the Board will approve all policies in the COLA Student Handbook.

- i. Motion: Chris VanWert ▾
- ii. Second: Fawn Roy ▾
- iii. In Favor:4
- iv. Opposed:0

- b. Adoption of Board [Public Participation in School Board Mtg Policy](#)
Discussion: Received feedback and recommended changes from WE Legal on 1/08/2026. All recommended changes were made and the Board will approve the policy for Board Public Participation in School Board Meetings.
 - i. Motion: Chris VanWert ▾
 - ii. Second: Dorothy Zima ▾
 - iii. In Favor:4
 - iv. Opposed:0

10. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

- a. [Principal Report](#)
 - i. Thanks to Board for planning to attend the MSBA Conference
 - ii. Requesting ½ day for students on 1/21 for staff development to work on school goals, discuss staff attendance. Staff attendance will be required unless they provide a medical note.
 - iii. Behavior referrals are down overall.
 - 1. 25-26 SY to date = 128 referrals
 - 2. 24-25 SY = 583 total
 - 3. 23-24 SY = 683 total
 - iv. Education Minnesota - Elementary Ojibwe Apprentice Program for Paraprofessionals offers an accelerated degree program with an Elementary licensure. We have 3 paras interested.
 - v. WEPD has units stored in the COLA bus garage. WE Finance has recommended NOT to charge storage fees. Chris would like more info on why Finance prefers not to request storage fees. WEPD has stated that they will donate their old side-by-side to COLA.
 - vi. Possibly looking at an Occupational Therapist (OT) contract for in-person services. Currently receiving services virtually. Need more information regarding cost comparison of virtual vs. in-person services.
- b. [Student Data & Assessment Report](#)
 - i. FastBridge Assessments are happening
 - ii. NWEA assessment data will be available after the 26th
 - iii. MOY teacher observations will take place the first week of February
- c. [Culture & Language Dept Report](#)
 - i. Vince Olson presenting in Person
 - 1. Culture class offerings and assignments
 - a. K-2 - Culture/Lang - Jim
 - b. 3rd - Culture/Lang - Sandy
 - c. 4th, 5th, 6th - Culture/Lang - Kris Manning
 - d. 8th Grade - Intro to Ojibwe - Jim and Sandy
 - 2. Last week, the Culture Team went out ice fishing with students and White Earth Natural Resources. Two more dates are set to take students out.
- d. Finance Report
 - i. Financial Coordinator Position has been posted
 - ii. Budgets have been submitted to Tribal Finance and BIE for review

- iii. No formal report at this time due to transition
- e. BIE Expanding Educational Opportunities Grant
 - i. Due January 31st
 - ii. Focus is on strengthening credit recovery options

11. EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

- a. *Great on Their Behalf: Why School Boards Fail, How Yours Can Become Effective* Book Study
 - i. Report on Section I - What stuck out?
 - 1. Focus on student outcomes
 - 2. The importance of mindset
- b. IT meeting with Monte Bellanger - Thursday, December 11th at 1pm - this was cancelled. Has it been rescheduled yet?
 - i. Monte is available Monday or Friday - will work to get scheduled
- c. BIE is offering **New Board Member Training** (online) starting in January. They also offer monthly Lunch & Learn sessions. Here is the [schedule](#) and registration links. Also sent out an email to all Board members on 1/07/26.
- d. Minnesota School Board Association (MSBA) [training](#) - January 14-16, 2026 w/travel day on January 13th (afternoon/evening)
- e. Following up on wild rice donation request - waiting for response from RBC
 - i. Received response that donation request was denied. RBC offered to allow COLA to purchase at program price of \$12 per pound.
- f. Reviewed Mission Statement during work session on 12/29/2025 - Mission statement will stay the same
- g. Drafting proposed Vision Statement and school values. Bring your drafts of proposed Vision Statements.
- h. Programmatic & Fiscal Review visit - March 23-26, 2026. The Board will need to be prepared for interviews.

12. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND SCHEDULING OF MEETINGS

- a. Future Agenda Items
 - i. Approval of SY25-26 COLA Budget pending SY24-25 rollover funding
 - 1. Budget was submitted to the BIE after finalizing details in December and January
 - ii. Principal's Eval due in April
 - 1. The principal will need to complete self-evaluation prior to final evaluation by the Board. Will send him the information asap.
- b. Meeting Schedule:
 - i. January: 12th (changed from 13th due to MSBA Conference)
 - ii. February: 10th

- iii. March: 10th
- iv. April: 14th
- v. May:12th
- vi. June: TBD
- vii. Summer Board Retreat: TBD

13. ADJOURNMENT

- a. Motion: Chris VanWert ▾
- b. Second: Loretta Solmon ▾
- c. In Favor:4
- d. Opposed:0

Time: __7:06__ PM ▾