



08-03-2020

COLA Students, Families, Staff and Community Members,

I hope you are having a wonderful summer. The past four months have been extremely stressful for all of us, testing our patience and sense of security. We experienced the shock of the transition to distance learning in March, the uncertainty throughout the summer and the waiting game for guidance from the state. I know that we all have many questions about the re-entry of students. Two weeks ago, with Tribal Council support, Circle of Life Academy closed school to students, families and non-essential personnel through Labor Day. Last week, Governor Walz announced Minnesota's Safe Learning Plan for the 2020-21 school year. This localized, data driven plan helps local schools select a learning model that is responsive to the prevalence of COVID-19 cases in their county. As Circle of Life Academy is a tribally controlled school, we will share and thoughtfully discuss Governor Walz's directive with Tribal Council to determine the best course of action for COLA on September 8, 2020.

As we process what this guidance means for our students and staff, your input is needed. The Circle of Life Academy administrative team has been hard at work this summer vetting many options and scenarios to bring our staff and students back to school safely this fall. These preliminary plans are based on state planning guidance, cross teamwork groups and staff and family surveys. However, we also know that the strength of our plan depends on collaborating with our stakeholders. Please see below for finalizing our COLA Return to Learn Plan on September 8, 2020.

Return to Learn Plan Timeline

HIGH LEVEL REVIEW

Thursday, July 30

Gov. Walz Releases Back to School Information

July 31 - Aug. 11

Draft plans finalized and tailored with new guidance from Governor Walz.

Wednesday, Aug. 12

Employee Input Sessions

Aug. 13 - Aug. 18

Plan re-worked and edited with new suggestions.

Wednesday, Aug. 19

Parent Input Sessions

Aug. 20 - Aug. 26

Create final documents, graphics and resources for parents, employees and community.

Thursday, Aug. 27

School Board / Tribal Council Review & Approval

Friday, Aug. 28

Release Final Plan



Circle of Life Academy

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

We will be holding three Return to Learn Parent/Guardian Virtual ZOOM Feedback Sessions on Wednesday, August 19, 2020. You will have an opportunity to view the progress on our plan development to date and provide feedback that will help us finalize our Return to Learn plan for the upcoming school year.

Return to Learn Parent/Guardian Virtual ZOOM Sessions: Mark your calendar and watch for session links.

- Session #1 Monday, Aug. 19 Noon
- Session #2 Monday, Aug. 19 3 p.m.
- Session #3 Monday, Aug. 19 5 p.m.

Thank you for your patience and grace as we work through this ever-changing landscape. I am optimistic about this fall, because I believe in the people who make up the COLA team. I believe we can do anything we set our minds to, together as a team. This fall will require all hands-on deck and I am confident that we have the right people in place to do the right work. We will keep our students first, take care of our neighbors and rise to this challenge. We must hold each other up because we remain stronger, smarter and safer together.

Thank you for your time and input!

Sincerely,

Jenna Leadbetter
School Superintendent