



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."

COLA November 2020 Newsletter

BOOZHOO COLA FAMILIES!

COLA's remote distance learning plan is intended to provide students with new learning while sustaining previous learning throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Our task is to create meaningful experiences related to student learning goals and outcomes. They also need to be aligned with state and national academic standards. With your help at home, we can make instruction and learning as meaningful as possible. **We miss you!**



Key Tenets of Distance Learning

- Focuses only on essential learning - the most critical learning goals to make learning manageable for everyone
- Does not require students to be working on academics for the same duration of time as a face-to-face school day
- Establishes routines and structures that support students/families
- Provides instruction that meets the needs of all learners to the best extent possible
- Leverages digital tools that students have already used as part of their regular instruction

How Distance Learning Days Work

- Teachers will be available during the school day to answer questions and provide guidance as noted in the Staff Availability section below.
- Teachers who specifically support Special Education, Intervention, and Anishinaabe programming will be reaching out to students and families to help provide support and learning.
- Some students may face unique challenges while adjusting to distance learning. Please have patience, encourage perseverance, provide positive feedback, and reach out to teachers with any concerns or needs.



Staff Availability

Teachers and other licensed professionals will be available by email or phone from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday to connect with students and families.

Daily Time Commitments & Routines

The guideline for student time commitments are as follows (not to exceed 60% of class period):

Grades K-2: Approximately 1-2 hours per day

Grades 3-5: Approximately 2-3 hours per day; this includes homework

Grades 6-8: Approximately 30 minutes per class; 2.5-3 hours daily including homework

Grades 9-12: Approximately 45 minutes per class; 3-4 hours daily including homework

Need Internet Access?

COLA is partnering with White Earth Indian Child Welfare to positively target the immediate remote Distance Learning needs of our students, families and staff during this unprecedented time. If you have limited or zero internet connectivity at your home, please let your teacher know as soon as possible or call COLA at 218-983-4180.



Attendance

Student attendance and engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted the importance of adopting equitable attendance policies. Attendance is vital to a child's success and a key piece of education funding and serves as an important data point in identifying students who are disengaging from school or could be facing barriers to their education outside of school. Students not attending or engaging with school represents a larger issue that COLA has thoughtfully addressed both internally and externally. According to federal and state guidelines, attendance will be taken each day. Attendance will be tracked by daily engagement and communication. Automated attendance phone notifications will be turned on using the phone numbers provided to COLA at the beginning of the school year. Your child's teacher or principal will contact you directly if there are concerns about your child's engagement and attendance.

COLA's COVID-19 attendance plan thoughtfully:

- Provides options for how students can attend during the day.
- Includes plan for how students can attend if technology fails to work.
- Incorporates updated policies to account for the effects of COVID-19.
- Separates engagement expectations from attendance tracking.



COLA's attendance tracking processes vary by grade level, but in general:

- Teachers document daily attendance.
- Teachers document every attempt to get into contact with students who are not attending.
 - This includes, but is not limited to emails, phone calls, text messages, Facebook messages, ZOOM meetings, Google Meet, and Google Classroom.
- If Teachers have exhausted all connection attempts, they bring those students they cannot get into contact with to their direct Principal.
- If the Principals have exhausted all connection attempts, they bring those students they cannot get into contact with to one of our two Student Support Teams.
- The Student Support Teams review all documentation, make additional connection attempts via staff whom may have established a stronger rapport in the past and home visit attempts with volunteer COLA staff.
- If our Student Support Teams are unsuccessful in all connection attempts, COLA will continue to document, and a referral is made to Indian Child Welfare.

Student Expectations

Although learning won't be happening within the school building, students are still expected to follow the expectations and rules as laid out in the District Handbook.



NEW Heat and Eat Lunch Option



On Monday October 26, and in addition to our cold lunch options, your COLA Meals on Wheels lunches started to offer a variety of "Heat and Eat" foods. This includes foods like pizzas, chicken pot pies, corn dogs, burritos, chicken nuggets, etc. Instructions to cook each "cook-at-home" food item will be included.

COLA Bus Drivers asking for HELP from our students and families!

1. If anyone in a COLA family is positive for COVID-19 please notify COLA immediately. We will not share your confidential medical information, as we only seek it to both protect our bus drivers and ensure our ability to continue home deliveries.
2. Our bus drivers are required to make visual contact with a student or their family member before dropping off any food or school items.
 1. Regardless of visual contact with a student or their family member, our bus drivers will not open the bus doors to drop off food or school items if loose dogs are present.
3. With winter weather here, we have secured and will provide each COLA home with a red heavy-duty storage bin to drop off food or school items. We ask that you ensure these bins are visible for our bus drivers and placed away from snowplows.

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

- POSITIVE
 NEGATIVE

Can YOU spot Superintendent Jenna in class?



Make sure you are attending all your classes! Keep your eyes open for Superintendent Jenna. Catch her in your class and you will win a special prize! Special prizes will be sent home to students who spot our Superintendent in class!

There will be no school November 25th, 26th, and 27th. Have a great Thanksgiving Holiday!



Thanksgiving Break
No School

COLA Welcomed U.S. Deputy Secretary of the Department of Interior

Thursday October 15th COLA was pleased to open their doors to Katharine MacGregor, U.S. Department of Interior (DOI). Although the Circle of Life Academy is currently closed to students for in-school learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the school opened its doors for Katharine MacGregor, U.S. Deputy Secretary of the Department of Interior (DOI) on Thursday, Oct. 15. The Circle of Life Academy (COLA) is a Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) grant school and is currently operated by the White Earth Reservation Business Committee (RBC). The BIE is an agency of the DOI. The school offers a comprehensive K-12 culturally based education program to Native American students residing on or near White Earth Reservation. COLA Superintendent Jenna Leadbetter and staff, along with White Earth RBC council members and staff, welcomed MacGregor on behalf of the White Earth Nation. During a tour of the school, several topics were discussed to include distance learning, food and transportation issues, special education services, Covid-19 mitigation measures, importance of Ojibwe language and culture revitalization, and the need for broadband internet services for students and community members. The tour ended with a demonstration of COLA's Smart Bus, part of a pilot project that outfits a school bus with wi-fi. The bus then visits communities where students, who are currently distance learning, can use the wi-fi. COLA officials consider this a short-term solution due to the distance between the school and where students live on the reservation. Plus, the satellite connectivity is spotty due to the lack of cellular towers. MacGregor appreciated the feedback and said she was impressed with the school and its scenic location on Mission Lake.



Circle of Life Academy Superintendent Jenna Leadbetter, left, gives U.S. Deputy Secretary of the Department of Interior Katharine MacGregor a tour of the school's library on Thursday, Oct. 15.



COLA's Smart Bus to U.S. Deputy Secretary of the Department of Interior Katharine MacGregor on Thursday, Oct. 15. COLA was selected to participate in a pilot program that outfits a school bus with wi-fi.

A message from K-12 Principal Lynda Wadena

Did you know that Circle of Life Academy had the third-highest Lexile growth, out of all Bureau of Indian Education schools in the nation, for Grades 9-12? Students with Lexile growth received a Student Achievement Award. Congrats to each of you! Keep up the good work! Thanks to all for letting me observe many of the classes. It was nice to hear/see the students. Continue your attendance and ZOOM, Google classroom work. I look forward to seeing/hearing you soon.

Chi-miigwech,
Principal Lynda

A message from K-12 Assistant Principal David Perry

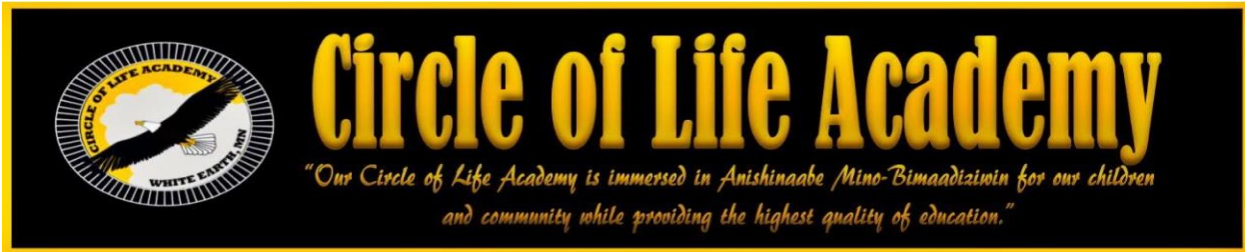
Greetings COLA parents, students and community! I am your new Assistant Principal and I have been with COLA since February 2020. I am really happy to be a member of the COLA team. We have been working hard during these difficult times to provide the best learning opportunities to our COLA students. As I'm sure you all know, trying to make teaching and learning happen during a pandemic is challenging to say the least. But please know that the challenges that we are facing are shared throughout the country. I feel good about the instruction that we are providing through Distance Learning at COLA.

I think that we are fortunate that we have chosen one method of instruction (Distance Learning) and have stuck to it. Other school districts have used the Hybrid method only to have to return to full Distance Learning when there's a COVID-19 outbreak. Those school districts then return to hybrid when it's safe but will have to again return to full Distance Learning if there's another outbreak. From the reports I've gotten, this is really confusing for everyone involved and it doesn't allow the teachers to create routines and to perfect one method of instruction. Our teachers have really done a great job of perfecting Distance Learning as their method of instruction. As I sit in on classes, I see really good interactions taking place between the teachers and the students and I couldn't be happier with what I am seeing!

I do look forward to the day when we return to in-person instruction. I came to COLA only a month before the quarantine began and I've hardly gotten to know any of the students because of that. I hope to have the opportunity to meet more students and their families in the not too distant future!

Chi-miigwech,
Assistant Principal David

If you have not signed and returned the following **Student Use of Technology Agreement and Release of Liability Form**, please read through it, sign and return the document below (i.e., 3 total pages).



Student Use of Technology Agreement and Release of Liability Form

The COLA authorizes students to use technology owned or otherwise provided by the school as necessary for instructional purposes. The use of school technology is a privilege permitted at the school's discretion and is subject to the conditions and restrictions set forth in applicable Board policies, administrative regulations, and this Acceptable Use Agreement.

The school reserves the right to suspend access at any time, without notice, for any reason. The school expects all students to use technology responsibly in order to avoid potential problems and liability. The school may place reasonable restrictions on the sites, material, and/or information that students may access through the system.

Each student who is authorized to use school technology and his/her parent/guardian shall sign this Acceptable Use Agreement as an indication that they have read and understand the agreement.

Definitions

School technology includes, but is not limited to, computers, the school's computer network including servers and wireless computer networking technology (Wi-Fi), the Internet, email, USB drives, wireless access points (routers), tablet computers, smartphones and smart devices, telephones, cellular telephones, personal digital assistants, pagers, MP3 players, wearable technology, any wireless communication device including emergency radios, and/or future technological innovations, whether accessed on or off site or through school-owned or personally owned equipment or devices.

Student Obligations and Responsibilities

Students are expected to use school technology safely, responsibly, and for educational purposes only. The student in whose name school technology is issued is responsible for its proper use at all times. Students shall not share their assigned online services account information, passwords, or other information used for identification and authorization purposes, and shall use the system only under the account to which they have been assigned.

Students are prohibited from using school technology for improper purposes, including, but not limited to, use of school technology to:

1. Access, post, display, or otherwise use material that is discriminatory, libelous, defamatory, obscene, sexually explicit, or disruptive.

2. Bully, harass, intimidate, or threaten other students, staff, or other individuals ("cyberbullying").
3. Disclose, use, or disseminate personal identification information (such as name, address, telephone number, Social Security number, or other personal information) of another student, staff member, or other person with the intent to threaten, intimidate, harass, or ridicule that person.
4. Infringe on copyright, license, trademark, patent, or other intellectual property rights.
5. Intentionally disrupt or harm school technology or other school operations (such as destroying school equipment, placing a virus on school computers, adding or removing a computer program without permission from teacher or other school personnel, changing settings on shared computers).
6. Install unauthorized software.
7. "Hack" into the system to manipulate data of the school or other users.
8. Engage in or promote any practice that is unethical or violates any law or Board policy, administrative regulation, or school practice.

Privacy

Since the use of school technology is intended for educational purposes, students shall not have any expectation of privacy in any use of school technology.

The school reserves the right to monitor and record all use of school technology, including, but not limited to, access to the Internet or social media, communications sent or received from school technology, or other uses. Such monitoring/recording may occur at any time without prior notice for any legal purposes including, but not limited to, record retention and distribution and/or investigation of improper, illegal, or prohibited activity. Students should be aware that, in most instances, their use of school technology (such as web searches and emails) cannot be erased or deleted.

All passwords created for or used on any school technology are the sole property of the school. The creation or use of a password by a student on school technology does not create a reasonable expectation of privacy.

Personally Owned Devices

If a student uses a personally owned device to access school technology, he/she shall abide by all applicable Board policies, administrative regulations, and this Acceptable Use Agreement. Any such use of a personally owned device may subject the contents of the device and any communications sent or received on the device to disclosure pursuant to a lawful subpoena or public records request.

Reporting

If a student becomes aware of any security problem (such as any compromise of the confidentiality of any login or account information) or misuse of school technology, he/she shall immediately report such information to the teacher or other school personnel.

Consequences for Violation

Violations of the law, Board policy, or this agreement may result in revocation of a student's access to school technology and/or discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion. In addition, violations of the law, Board policy, or this agreement may be reported to law enforcement agencies as appropriate.



Student Acknowledgment

I have received, read, understand, and agree to abide by this Acceptable Use Agreement and other applicable laws and school policies and regulations governing the use of school technology. I understand that there is no expectation of privacy when using school technology. I further understand that any violation may result in loss of user privileges, disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal action.

Student Name: _____

(please print)

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____ Grade: _____

Parent or Legal Guardian Acknowledgment

If the student is under 18 years of age, a parent/guardian must also read and sign the agreement. As the parent/guardian of the above-named student, I have read, understand, and agree that my child shall comply with the terms of the Acceptable Use Agreement. By signing this Agreement, I give permission for my child to use school technology and/or to access the school's computer network and the Internet. I understand that, despite the school's best efforts, it is impossible for the school to restrict access to all offensive and controversial materials. I agree to release from liability, indemnify, and hold harmless the school, school, and school personnel against all claims, damages, and costs that may result from my child's use of school technology or the failure of any technology protection measures used by the school. Further, I accept full responsibility for supervision of my child's use of his/her access account if and when such access is not in the school setting.

Parent Name: _____

(please print)

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Employment Opportunities!!

Open Positions

[COLA Anishinaabe/Debwewin Teacher](#) (1 Position Available)

[COLA Industrial Technology Teacher](#) (1 Position Available)

[COLA K-12 Music Teacher](#) (1 Position Available)

[COLA EBD Special Education Teacher](#) (1 Position Available)

[COLA Education Technology Coordinator](#) (1 Position Available)

[COLA Maintenance / Custodian](#) (2 Positions Available)

[COLA Bus Driver](#) (1 Position Available)

[COLA Substitute Bus Drivers](#) (Multiple Positions Available)

[COLA Substitute Teachers](#) (Multiple Positions Available)

Please call **(218) 983 4646** to inquire about open positions!

If you have specific questions or concerns regarding your child's education, please contact one of your building Principals as follows:

K-12 Principal, Lynda Wadena
Office: 218-983-4180
Work Cell: 218-850-8876

Assistant K-12 Principal, David Perry
Office: 218-983-4180
Work Cell: 612-578-6141

If you have specific question or concerns regarding Circle of Life Academy, please contact the School Superintendent as follows:

Superintendent, Jenna Leadbetter
Office: 218-983-4180
Work Cell: 218-850-8677

If you have other questions or concerns:

K-12 Cultural Coordination

- Principal, Lynda Wadena
- Teacher of Anishinaabe, Vince Olson
- Teacher of Anishinaabe, Susie Ballot

K-12 Special Education Coordination

- Assistant Principal, David Perry

K-12 Curriculum / Instruction Coordination

- Principal, Lynda Wadena
- Assistant Principal, David Perry

K-12 Technology Coordination

- Superintendent, Jenna Leadbetter
- High School Teacher, John DeJong
- High School Teacher, Wanda Goodwin

K-12 School Assessment Coordination

- Assistant Principal, David Perry
- Principal, Lynda Wadena

K-12 Transcripts / Graduation Coordination

- Principal, Lynda Wadena
- Assistant Principal, David Perry
- High School Counselor, Matt Meyer

K-12 Attendance / Truancy Coordination

- Principal, Lynda Wadena
- Assistant Principal, David Perry
- Dean of Students, Mike Bunker
- Assistant Dean of Students, Loretta Solmon

K-12 Activities / Athletics Coordination

- Athletic Director, Mitch McLeod

K-12 Student Support / Mental Health / Wellness Coordination

- High School Counselor, Matt Meyer
- K-8 School Counselor, Sheila McLeod
- K-12 Social Worker, Willy Ann Heisler-Hoban

K-12 Food Service Coordination

- Head Cook, Grace Jackson
- Business Manager, Carol Zortman

COVID-19 Coordination

- Dean of Students, Mike Bunker
- Superintendent, Jenna Leadbetter

K-12 Transportation Coordination

- Transportation Coordinator, Matt Jensen
- Superintendent, Jenna Leadbetter

Business / Finance Coordination

- Business Manager, Carol Zortman
- Superintendent, Jenna Leadbetter

Facilities Coordination

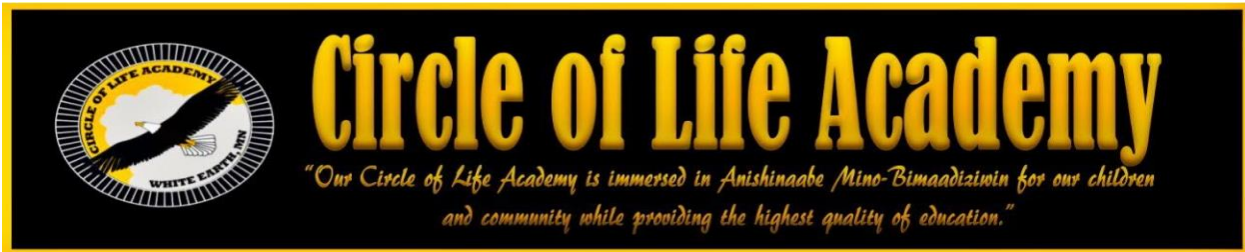
- Facilities Manager, Darwin Shaugabay
- Superintendent, Jenna Leadbetter

All Other

- Superintendent, Jenna Leadbetter

New information will be coming out as we progress through this school year. Changes and modifications may need to be made to the plan as situations, experience, and challenges arise. We thank you for your continued trust and support as we navigate these interesting times. Throughout history and into the future, Circle of Life Academy will continue to put children and families first.





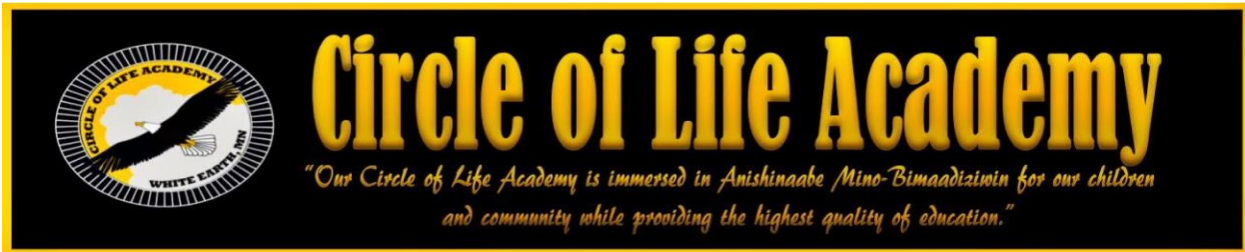
11/16/2020

Boozhoo Circle of Life Academy (i.e., COLA),

As the second quarter continues, with several holidays fast approaching, I wanted to provide you (our students, families, staff and communities), with a few important updates as we continue working together to support a safe and successful 2020-2021 school year.

I know that a back-to-school has never looked quite like this. And yet, we also know that significant connections are being established, and relationships are being built between teachers and students this year. As a staff of education professionals, we recognize that it is critical to maintain strong relationships with our students and their families in the absence of face-to-face interactions; therefore, as teachers and support staff there has been a lot of thought, conversations, and brainstorming about how to create a scaffold of support for all COLA students. Like many of you, we recognize that there are areas that could potentially be challenging in a Distance Learning Model of education. However, we assure you that we are walking with our students through these uncertain times, supporting them in their learning, and growing with them as we face a world filled with COVID-19 unknowns. Therefore, after a considerable amount of conversation as a COLA team, we happily report:

- Our school year successfully started with the Distance Learning model on September 17, 2020 as determined by the Board, the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) and supported by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE).
- We are tracking data that details how many students have logged into their computers, have signed on to ZOOM meetings, have logged into their GOOGLE Classrooms, and/or have reached out to their teachers/advisors.
- An active intervention process, that followed all COVID-19 best practices and was volunteer only, was initiated on Friday, September 18th. If any COLA student had not logged in and/or communicated with any of their teachers/advisors by September 18th, the process began. By Wednesday, September 23rd, we met our goal to connect with 100% of our students and/or their families.
- We have started up our monthly school newsletter again, to keep you up-to-date on more timely and specific matters.
- We are working collaboratively, both internally at COLA and externally with Indian Child Welfare, to ensure that attendance concerns are addressed thoughtfully and proactively.

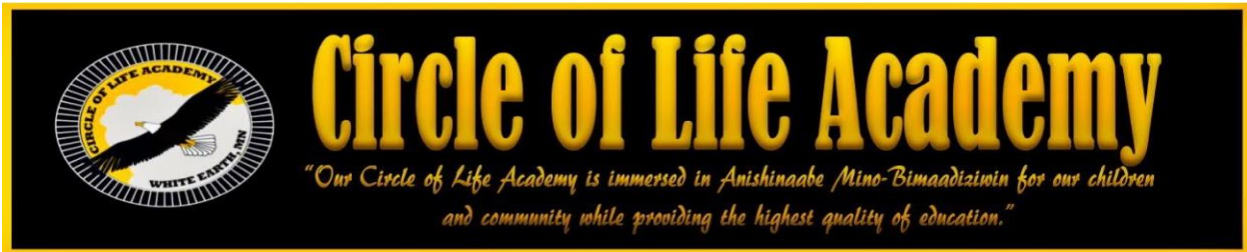


We assure you that COLA staff have and will continue to work tirelessly to address connectivity issues. As a collaborative whole, we assure you that we have also planned for various scenarios that could potentially arise. You have hired a group of administrators, teachers and support staff that are gifted at providing differentiated instruction to assure that ALL learner needs are met. We do this in the classroom, and we will continue to strive for educational excellence in the online environment. When necessary we will provide paper/pencil versions of lessons, interact one-on-one, and work with interventionists to additionally support learning. The following additional supports, scaffolds, and considerations have been implemented:

- Elementary K-6: All teachers are checking in with students, parents, and guardians to make sure that ALL students can get in, identify any issues with connectivity, and other concerns.
- High School 7-12: An advisory list was created to check with families, provide information and troubleshooting, and to make sure that all have the correct information to remain connected.
- There are SST's (Student Support Teams) for both Elementary and High School that will troubleshoot and evaluate areas of concern.
- Depending on bandwidth and stressors on already taxed systems of connectivity, we have moved to an Asynchronous Model of Learning, where students can work at their own pace, with manageable chunks, and at a time that works best for them. We are well prepared for this scenario.

As we've continued to work through the technical and adaptive challenges of remote Distance Learning these first two months of school, the parents/guardians of COLA have also been addressing schedule changes, life changes, lack of internet connectivity, materials distribution, and so much more. However, we cannot lose sight of the fact that strong relationships between caring parents/guardians and educators are crucial to keeping students and families involved in school and engaged in their learning. Building strong relationships with our students and families is a focus for us all this year, not just during this time of remote Distance Learning.

I want to also thank our students and families for doing the impossible, for adjusting to remote Distance Learning, and for displaying patience, compassion, and a willingness to learn. We continue to add resources, events, videos, and more to our Google Classrooms, ZOOM sessions and soon-to-debut website to support families and students during remote Distance Learning. Please continue checking in with your educators, reading your email, and thank you for keeping your contact information up to date.



I know some students are not only surviving remote Distance learning but are thriving in this new environment. And to those struggling in remote Distance learning, students, and adults alike, I see you too. This is not going to last forever, and we are here to help, which leads me to my final update.

I shared information in a recent Return to Learn Framework that we are equally preparing for a transition to hybrid learning. I do want to be clear that no date for hybrid learning has been set at this time. We are still in remote Distance Learning for the foreseeable future and are simply preparing for all formats of learning. The Board and I are committed to making any decision with the priority being on the health and safety of all students, their families, the staff, and tribe. This decision cannot be rushed. It must be based in fact, not fear. And we must be sure we are prepared for the opportunities and challenges that a transition of this magnitude is sure to bring before we safely return to any version of in-person learning. We will provide more information in the coming weeks through all COLA platforms and upcoming Board meetings.

We are in this together. Thank you for your continued partnership during this health crisis. Stay safe and stay healthy.

Chi-miigwech and be well,

Superintendent Jenna Leadbetter