



# 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 January 2021 Newsletter

**Dear Circle of Life Academy,**

First and foremost, Happy New Year! I hope the holidays gave you chances to celebrate in safe, meaningful ways with your families.

Throughout the break, we have been monitoring the pandemic and have been in regular contact with our Interim School Board, White Earth Emergency Operations Committee, the Minnesota Health Department, the Minnesota Department of Education, the Bureau of Indian Education, and surrounding schools regarding our ability to reopen schools safely. District administrators have also been monitoring infection rates, new COVID-19 cases and tracking students, families and employees who are subject to quarantine throughout our Winter/Holiday break. Through these conversations, we have assessed the current situation and as a result have decided **to continue with our plans of remote virtual distance learning as regularly scheduled starting Monday, January 11, 2021.**

However, I want to share an update about our commitment to return to in-person learning at Circle of Life Academy. Over our Winter/Holiday Break, Governor Walz announced new guidelines that will allow elementary schools to start welcoming students and staff back as soon as Monday, January 18. This is good news, and we are updating our plans to begin in-person learning as quickly and safely as possible.

The Governor's revised [Safe Learning Plan](#) requires that elementary schools bring students back in groups, with no more than three grade levels starting at one time. After that, additional grade levels can begin coming back at two-week intervals. Although Governor Walz has directed this mandate of Minnesota Public and Charter Schools, Circle of Life Academy's Learning Model is ultimately at the discretion of the Sovereign Nation.

In the event the Sovereign Nation of White Earth supports a change in Circle of Life Academy's Learning Model and in order to allow adequate time for our families, teachers and school staff to plan for this transition, including implementation of important health and safety measures, we are planning to start bringing students back for full-time in-person learning on Monday, February 1, starting with both our youngest learners (Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade) and any student with an active Special Education Individualized Education Plan (i.e., IEP).

We are awaiting additional guidance from our Interim School Board to approve grades and programs that will come back first. Families and staff will receive more information as soon as these important details are finalized.

For our teachers and school staff, this transition period will include:

- **Week of January 18:** COVID-19 testing will be available for all staff involved in the transition to in-person learning. These tests will be available for staff to take every two weeks.
- **Week of January 25:** Teachers and other school staff will continue transition planning efforts. This will include a number of days to be determined without student instruction.

### **Elementary School (Grades K – 6)**

Kindergarten through 6th grade students, who wish to stay in distance learning for the remainder of the school year are asked to notify the school. If your preferred learning model has changed due to this announcement, please contact the COLA front desk at 218-983-4180.

### **Secondary School (Grades 7 – 12)**

Secondary students (grades 7 through 12) will remain in distance learning for the time being. We are working on ways to support middle and high school students who may be falling behind in their learning. This includes a new opportunity for students who are struggling to receive in-person learning support at their schools. More information about this program will be coming soon.

### **Special Education (Grades K - 12)**

Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students with active Special Education Individualized Education Plans (i.e., IEPs) who wish to stay in distance learning for the remainder of the school year are asked to notify both the school and their Special Education Teacher. If your preferred learning model has changed due to this announcement, please contact the COLA front desk at 218-983-4180.

Distance learning has been challenging for all of us. We are excited to be getting closer to in-person learning and promise to provide regular updates if any changes are finalized.

Please note the district will continue to monitor the situation closely and adjust our learning model as needed. While we've made this determination at this point, it is important to understand that as cases increase, our school may be forced to shift to remote virtual instruction. All families should be prepared for this change should it become necessary.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your school principal. In addition, if your child is currently exhibiting symptoms or has been in contact with a positive COVID case, please contact White Earth Health and notify the school at 218-983-4180.

Happy New Year once again. We are excited to welcome back our students virtually as we begin the second half of the 2020-2021 school year. On behalf of myself, the Interim School Board, and our dedicated COLA staff, I wish you all the health and happiness. Thank you for placing your trust in us.

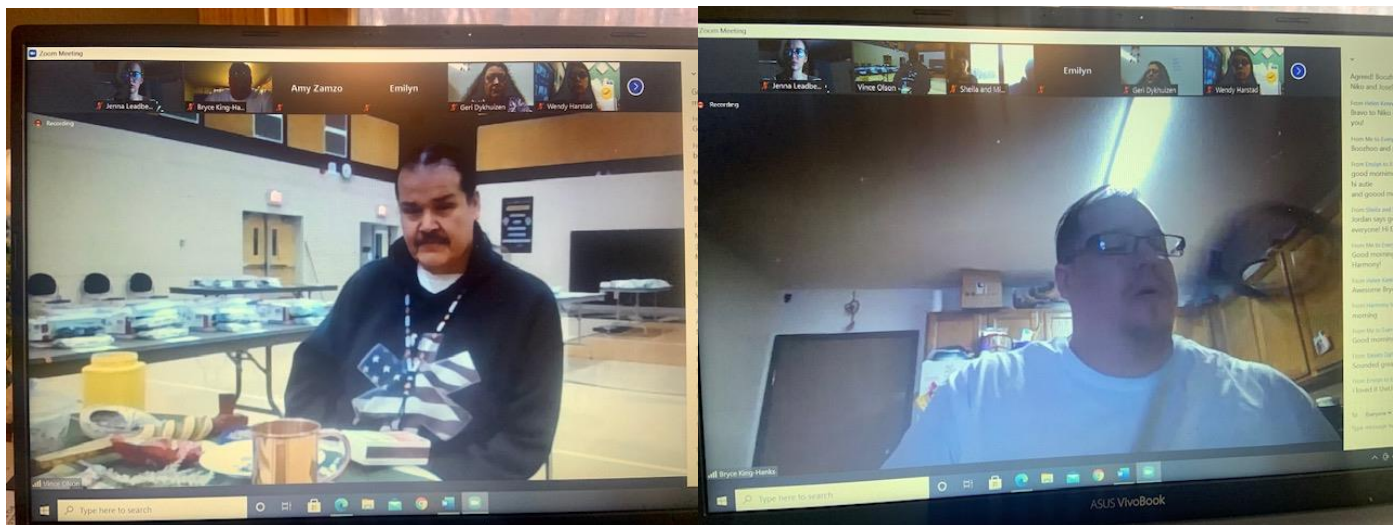
In partnership,

Superintendent Jenna Leadbetter

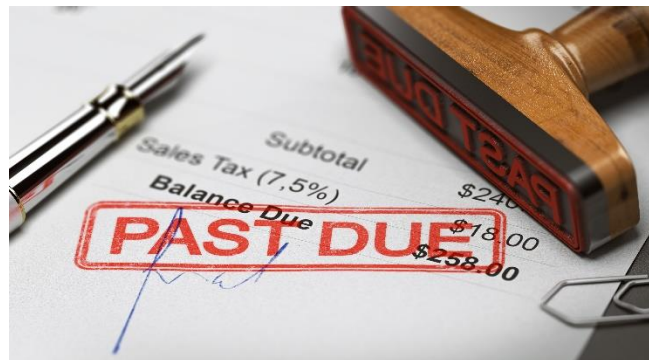
**NO SCHOOL January 18th, 28th,  
and 29th, 2021 due to a Holiday  
and two Staff Professional  
Development Days.**



Friendly reminder that COLA's amazing Team of Cultural Educators is hosting our remote virtual ZOOM Opening Ceremony at 8:30 AM at the beginning of each week and our remote virtual ZOOM Closing Ceremony at 3:00 PM at the end of each week. The teachings incredible and the ZOOM chat box was full of student and staff chatter this past Monday January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021! We LOVE seeing and hearing from our students!



**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Enrollment Window** for K-12 students to join COLA officially opened Monday, January 11, 2021! Parents/guardians can submit complete enrollment packets NOW until the enrollment window closure date of Friday January 22, 2021. **CIBs and Birth Certificates are required with all applications.** Become a COLA Warrior by contacting our school at 218-983-4810 for your enrollment packet paperwork.



### **A Friendly Reminder on Outstanding School-owned Technology Invoices**

As of December 30th, 2020, Circle of Life Academy has \$16,145.98 worth of school-owned distance learning technology that has been reported as lost, broken or stolen since last March 2020. To the parents/guardians that have paid these invoices, we appreciate your follow-through and thank you. Please know that Circle of Life Academy also recognizes this unprecedented time of hardship. We are working diligently to secure one-time funding to replace all current reported lost, broken or stolen school-owned technology as well as return payment to parents/guardians who have followed through on their payment(s) of lost, broken or stolen school-owned technology invoices since March 2020. In the meantime, and in the case, funds are not received to cover any replacement of school-owned distance learning technology, we kindly ask families to work with the school to pay their outstanding invoices.

## Need Help 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.



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## A friendly Message from your COLA Bus Drivers

This is friendly reminder to set out your heavy-duty red storage bins every day for our deliveries! With winter weather here, we secured extra heavy-duty red storage bins to drop off food or school items. If you need another heavy-duty red storage bin, please call COLA at 218-983-4180. We ask that you ensure these bins are visible to the bus drivers and placed away from snowplows.

Chi-miigwech,  
Your Bus Drivers





## 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 snail mail style to students who spot her in class!

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Thank you to COLA's very own and incredible Occupational Therapist, Amy Zamzo, for putting together this wonderful gift box donation for a COLA family! The Harper family was randomly drawn prior to our Winter/Holiday break and received this delightful package!



COLA sent triple the fruit, double the vegetables, and additional "take and bake" frozen food meals home to all our students prior to the Winter/Holiday break!





COLA partnered with the Bureau of Indian Education to offer a FREE virtual Parent Training opportunity in collaboration with Love and Logic on Tuesday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Several COLA parents/guardians reports that this training was helpful and targeted:

- Parenting in the age of COVID-19
- Helping kids with anxiety, depression, worry and stress
  - Helping kids stay motivated in virtual school
  - Dealing with challenging behaviors
- Long-term effective parenting strategies
  - Caring for your own mental health

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The entire COLA Team received a PPE refresh, NEW COLA apparel and a book for a virtual professional development book study!



COLA students will receive a large PPE refresh in the event of a change to a Hybrid or In-Person Learning Model. COLA students will also **soon receive** brand NEW COLA apparel to not only show their #WarriorPride, but also stay warm during these cold winter months!

# 5th Annual: White Earth Tribal 4-H Cultural Winter Camp

**Saturday, January 30<sup>th</sup> &  
Sunday, January 31<sup>th</sup>, 2021**  
10:00am-5:00pm each day



**Virtual this year!! Click on this link to sign up:**  
[https://umn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_bxgLwyFJDhV84Tz](https://umn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bxgLwyFJDhV84Tz)

*Celebrate Learning and Growing through  
Traditional Anishinaabeg Values*



Everyone is welcome to attend virtual with your families this year, for an introduction to 4-H Youth Winter and Cultural Activities: Storytelling, fishing demo, food & nutrition demo, learn birding, cultural arts (sign-up), theater, and as much winter fun as we can have on Zoom. Pour a cup of coffee, tea, or hot cocoa and gather your family around the computer! **This event is a collaboration between the White Earth Tribal 4-H Program and Community Extension Service of the White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC).**

The University of Minnesota Extension, Office of Youth Development, offers 4-H Community Programming serving the communities of the White Earth Nation. 4-H provides youth opportunities to learn, explore, and grow through leadership.

**For questions on this event, please contact: Dana Trickey at 218-289-1193, [tric0014@umn.edu](mailto:tric0014@umn.edu); Or Tammy Bellanger at 218-935-0417 Ext 213, [tbellanger@wetcc.edu](mailto:tbellanger@wetcc.edu)**



WHITE EARTH TRIBAL &  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
EXTENSION SERVICE

<https://www.wetcc.edu/extension.html>



United States Department of Agriculture  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture



White Earth Tribal 4-H Community & Youth Program  
[www.extension.umn.edu/youth/mn4-H](http://www.extension.umn.edu/youth/mn4-H)

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### **A message from K-12 Principal, Lynda Wadena**

Welcome back to school! I hope you had a great winter break and now are ready to work. Remember to set out your red bin for the meals on wheels and items from your teachers. I look forward to seeing you in your ZOOM classes or at least your name. Remember to join the Circle (at the start of the week) and Closing (at the end of the week) ZOOM gatherings.

Chi-miigwech, Principal Lynda

### **A message from K-12 Assistant Principal, David Perry**

I am so happy to be back to school after our long Winter Break! I enjoyed my time off and it was very relaxing. But now, I'm happy to be back on the job and helping COLA to grow into the great school that it is. There is so much work to do to make that happen and I'm so happy to be a part of it. We have a great staff at COLA and I'm proud to be a member of it. I hope to be able to meet all of you soon!

Chi-miigwech, Assistant Principal David

### **A message from K-12 Dean of Students, Mike Bunker**

As we start the new decade of 2021, I am wishing all of our students and staff a brighter future as we move forward after experiencing probably the toughest and most disturbing times that any of us ever have or will experience. I hope that everyone has good health and they can find prosperity in the times to come. 2020 was a year of reflection on how much we have had in the past and how much each one of you are treasured. As the saying goes, "You never realize what you have until it's gone." I have realized how much I have missed all of you and being able to see your faces here at the Circle of Life Academy. As I hope for a quick end to this pandemic, I eagerly wait for us to get back to our normal routines and see all of your bright and smiling faces.

Chi-miigwech,  
Dean of Students, Mike Bunker

If you have not signed and returned the following **Student Use of Technology Agreement and Release of Liability Form**, please read through it here, sign the **red outlined "PLEASE RETURN"** page and return to COLA.



## **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 Student Use of Technology Agreement and Release of Liability Form 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **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 with Competitive Wages at COLA**

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 MARSS and Data Coordinator (1 Position Available)

COLA Maintenance / Custodians (2 Positions Available)

COLA Bus Driver (1 Position Available)

COLA Substitute Bus Drivers (Multiple Positions Available)

COLA Substitute Teachers (Multiple Positions Available)

Please call White Earth Tribal Human Resources at  
(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 questions 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**

- Principal, Lynda Wadena
- Assistant Principal, David Perry

**K-12 Transcripts / Graduation Coordination**

- Principal, Lynda Wadena
- 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

**COVID-19 Coordination**

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

**K-12 Student Support / Mental Health / Wellness Coordination**

- High School Counselor, Matt Meyer
- K-8 School Counselor, Sheila McLeod
- K-12 Social Worker, WillyAnn Heisler-Hoban
- K-12 Principal, Lynda Wadena

**K-12 Food Service Coordination**

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

**Transportation Coordinator**

- Transportation Coordinator, Matt Jensen

**Business / Finance Coordination**

- Business Manager, Carol Zortman
- Business Coordinator, Andrea Thompson

**Facilities Coordination**

- Facilities Manager, Darwin Shaugabay

**All Other**

- Superintendent, Jenna Leadbetter

**New information continues to come out as we progress through this school year. Changes and modifications may need to be made to our plans as situations, experiences, 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.**