

As our online enrollment is projected to hit 525 students across the state, it has become clear that sustaining our standard of excellence requires a structural shift in leadership and operational support. To give our elementary and middle school learners the dedicated focus they deserve, and to allow Rose to focus on resolving our MDE graduation rate mandate for our possible 400 high schoolers, I am proposing we restructure the online administration into two distinct, autonomous roles: Principal - Online K-8 School and Principal - Online High School.

To fully operationalize this shift, I also propose aligning our Engagement Coordinators to match these grade bands, one full-time coordinator dedicated to PreK-8 across both the in-person and online programs (approximately 300 students) and one full-time coordinator dedicated to the 9-12 online program (approximately 400 students). By absorbing \$10,500 in previously stipended duties, we are able to heavily subsidize the transition of our PreK-8 coordinator to a full-time role, while positioning the district to fully fund both positions through our pending grant applications. This shift unlocks bandwidth for cost-saving operational audits and drives robust, age-appropriate student engagement.

The detailed strategic rationale for this shift is outlined below, alongside the revised job descriptions for the [Principal - Online K-8 School](#), [Principal - Online High School](#), [High School Engagement Lead](#) and [PreK-8 Engagement Lead](#).

Equity of Leadership and Scale

- **Correcting Span of Control:** The combined online school serves nearly 576 students with 65 staff members. Splitting the roles creates a sustainable leadership model.
- **Parity with In-Person Leadership:** The In-Person program has a dedicated Principal for 138 students. The K-8 Online program has the potential for 176 students and requires supervision of 20 staff members. It is structurally inequitable, and operationally risky, for a program of that size not to have a dedicated, autonomous Principal.
- **Dedicated Focus for a Massive High School:** The Online High School is the district's largest division, with a possible 400 students and currently 45 staff members. Managing a staff of 45 requires a full-time Principal simply to maintain compliance with evaluation cycles and provide adequate coaching.

Addressing K-8 Historical Inequities

- **Moving Beyond the "Add-On" Model:** Because Crosslake began as a high school, the K-8 program was added later and has historically been treated as an extension of the secondary program. This has resulted in K-8 policies and needs occasionally taking a back seat or being retrofitted from high school models.
- **Unique Developmental Needs:** K-8 online learners require drastically different operational strategies, family engagement models, and behavioral interventions than high schoolers. A dedicated Principal ensures the K-8 division has policies and a culture designed explicitly for early and middle childhood development.

Resolving the MDE Graduation Rate Mandate

- **Focus on MDE Compliance:** The district has been identified by MDE for our low graduation rate. Turning this metric around requires intensive, daily focus on credit attainment, progress monitoring, and intervention. As the High School Principal, dedicating 100% of my time to the 9-12 population is a necessary strategic move to address this state mandate.
- **Developing Post-Secondary Pathways:** Improving graduation rates requires giving students clear reasons to graduate. Splitting the roles allows me the bandwidth to build and sustain three distinct, robust pathways for our high schoolers: Workforce Ready, Career Ready, College Ready.

Driving Middle Level Engagement and Culture

- **Creating a True Middle School Experience:** Middle school is a critical transitional period that requires its own distinct identity. A dedicated K-8 Principal can build age-appropriate programming, traditions, and milestones, such as a dedicated 8th-grade graduation, that validate the middle school experience.
- **Unified PreK-8 Engagement Coordination:** Transitioning the current 0.5 In-Person Engagement Coordinator to a 1.0 FTE serving PreK-8 students across *both* the in-person and online schools drastically increases our capacity for joint events. This allows the coordinator to get to know the online program and open in-person clubs and dances up to online same-age learners.
- **Cross-Program Collaboration:** Focused K-8 leadership and unified engagement coordination creates the logistical bandwidth to coordinate joint events with the in-person middle school, fostering a unified district culture and expanding crucial social opportunities for online learners.

Driving High School Engagement and Culture

- **Dedicated 9-12 Engagement Coordination:** Shifting the current 1.0 Online Engagement Coordinator to focus exclusively on the high school allows for the creation of robust, age-appropriate clubs and opportunities for our largest population without the competing demand of planning elementary virtual events.
- **Implementation of Statewide Pods:** As we scale, creating localized connection is critical. With a dedicated 9-12 Engagement Coordinator and Principal, we have the capacity to fully design and implement statewide pods to drive student engagement and combat the isolation of online learning.
- **Expanding the High School Experience:** Building on the momentum of our first-ever in-person prom in May, the high school needs a leadership team that can dedicate time to establishing major, identity-building events and traditions that keep older students connected to the Crosslake community.

FSCS Grant Contingency & Compliance Plan

- **Stronger Alignment with Grant Narratives:** This restructure fully operationalizes the "Cross-Pathway Coordination" already promised in the pending FSCS grant applications. Furthermore, dedicating the online Engagement Coordinator strictly to 9-12 guarantees to MDE that 100% of that grant-funded time will be laser-focused on the specific graduation metric identified in the application.
- **Standard Budget Amendment Process:** We do not need to delay this operational improvement while waiting for grant award notifications in August. Should both FSCS grants be awarded, we will utilize the standard MDE budget amendment process (as we successfully did with the MnMTSS grant) to split-code the Engagement Coordinator salaries, ensuring the funding perfectly aligns with the new grade-band structure while remaining compliant with site-specific funding rules.

Operational and Financial Efficiency

- **Subsidizing the Full-Time PreK-8 Role:** Moving our PreK-8 Engagement Coordinator from 0.5 FTE to 1.0 FTE is a necessary investment in our middle and elementary school culture. However, this transition is heavily offset by consolidating roles. The new Principal and Coordinator structures will absorb K-8 administrative duties and the district Environmental Education (EE) coordination, eliminating \$10,500 in existing piecemeal stipends.
- **Proactive Hiring and Consolidating Part-Time Roles:** The current 0.5 PreK-8 Engagement Coordinator was slated to spend the other half of her time as a Title I teacher. If we wait until August to hear about the FSCS grant before making her full-time, we will be forced to scramble to hire a 0.5 FTE Title I teacher right before the school year starts. By making the Engagement Coordinator full-time *now*, we can immediately combine the newly vacant 0.5 Title I role with our existing 0.5 MnMTSS Coordinator vacancy. This creates a highly attractive 1.0 FTE position that we can post today, ensuring we hire a top-tier candidate rather than struggling to fill fractured, part-time roles late in the summer.
- **The FSCS Grant Upside:** We have submitted two Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) grant applications specifically designed around these coordinator roles. If awarded, the grant will cover the salaries of *both* 1.0 FTE Engagement Coordinators. Moving to this optimized structure now ensures we are ready to seamlessly execute the grant, which would move both salaries entirely off the district's general fund.
- **Reclaiming Instructional Time:** Eliminating the K-8 administrative stipends returns our teachers' focus 100% to classroom instruction. Teachers should not have to sacrifice their FTE or take on side stipends to keep the school running.
- **Driving Cost-Saving Initiatives:** Distributing the administrative load appropriately prevents burnout and frees up high-level leadership capacity for strategic operational audits. Having dedicated time to thoroughly investigate and execute measures like a comprehensive curriculum switch will generate significant long-term financial savings for the district.

- **Maximizing High School Revenue (1.2 ADM):** The state of Minnesota funds secondary students at a higher 1.2 ADM rate (\$9,246 per student compared to \$7,705). Because the 9-12 population is our largest revenue driver, freeing up the High School Principal and the 9-12 Engagement Coordinator to focus entirely on secondary growth, retention, and graduation will yield financial returns that far exceed the net cost of the coordinator expansion. Retaining just two high school students pays for the FTE difference.