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Duluth

Public Schools

Every Student. Every Day.

Superintendent's Report

August 18, 2026



OUR MISSION

Every student, every day will be empowered with learning opportunities for growth, creativity and curiosity, in preparation for their future in a global community.

OUR VISION

Duluth Public Schools provides an academically engaging, safe and inclusive environment with high expectations and responsible use of resources.

OUR CORE VALUES

Learning



Developing a love of learning through life-long inquiry.

Excellence



Having high standards for all through accountability, integrity and authenticity.

Equity



Creating conditions of justice, fairness and inclusion so all students have access to the opportunities to learn and develop to their fullest potential.

Collaboration



Working in partnership with staff, families, students and community.

Belonging



Providing a welcoming and accessible environment where everyone feels safe, seen and heard.

Topics

- 2026 Student Representative Reports
 - Osiris Garcia Henderson- ALC
 - Tamia Bowles - Denfeld
 - Kalina Mattila - East
- Moody's Rating Update
- Referendum
- Duluth Leadership Team Update
- Summer Planning
- AASA National Research Initiative
- Other

Student Representative Reports

Moody's Rating Update

Moody's Rating Update

We reported at the end of last week that we had a drop in our Moody's rating from A3 to Baa2.

As with many districts around the state, funding has not kept pace with the rising costs of meeting our students' needs. Based on this, we have tapped into our reserved funds, which is one of the main causes of the decreased rating.

To address our financial situation, we have gone through multiple cycles of budget reduction and are also seeking an operational levy in the fall to assist with the gap between our funding and our student needs.

Referendum

Referendum

Question 1 asks for \$8 per month on a \$300,000 home to prevent additional cuts after our next round of reductions - \$5M for 2027-28

If question 1 passes, voters can vote for Question 2 - an additional \$7 per month on a \$300,000 home. This would allow us to restore some of our current and future reductions.

Referendum

We will be focusing much of our efforts over the next 11 weeks on informing voters on the importance of this choice, as well as the impacts the district and community will face if we do not pass the referendum.

Even if the referendum passes, we will have another \$5 million in reductions for the 2027-28 school year and another \$7 million the following year if it does not.

These reductions, stacked upon the past three years of reductions will have significant impact on our ability to meet the needs of our students.

Duluth Leadership Team Update

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Morning Sessions

8:00 - 8:30

Continental Breakfast

8:30 - 8:45

Welcome and Agenda Review — John

8:45 - 9:05

Introductions — New People / Who Are We (All)

9:05 - 9:15

Human Resources — Onboarding (Steve)

9:15 - 9:35

Team Building — Simone

9:35 - 9:55

Strategic & Operational Plan — Progress Monitoring (Team)

9:55 - 10:10

Working Together — Shared Goals (John)

Midday & Afternoon

10:25 - 10:45

Referendum Update — John

10:45 - 11:00

Safety Discussion — August

11:00 - 11:15

Professional Learning Theme — Annie

11:15 - 11:30

Closure — John

11:30 - 12:30

Lunch Break

12:30 - 4:00

Principal+ Session

Summer Planning

Summer Planning

We have been collaborating with our leadership teams as we close the 2025-26 school year and prepare for the 2026-27 school year. Here are some of the meeting key dates:

- Duluth Leadership Team - August 19th
- Extended Cabinet and Unity in Our Community - August 24th
- All Staff Professional Learning and Welcome - September 1st
- Duluth Central Education Services and Ethel Ray Nance Welcome Center Opening - September 3rd
- First Day of School - September 8th

AASA National Research Initiative

AASA National Research Initiative

The Nationwide Research Initiative is study on confidence in public education, run in partnership, with AASA, state superintendent associations (including MASA), as announced at the MSBA / MDE Welcome Back Day.

Although many traditional indicators of success have improved over 25 years, confidence in public education has declined. This study seeks to understand how alignment between district-reported success metrics and community-held judgments of school quality affect public confidence in local schools.

Duluth Public Schools, along with thousands of other districts around the state and country, plans to participate.

AASA National Research Initiative

What we will gain from participation:

District-specific Cross-sectional Insights: what your own district's staff, students, parents and community shared

National Benchmark Report: state and national benchmarks, confidence drivers and future-readiness indicators from 1000s of districts, mapped to your district's results

Access to explore the data technology platform

Questions