

School Continuous Improvement Efforts Update

Committee of the Whole

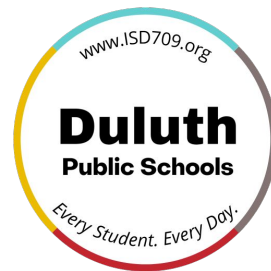
October 6, 2026



Continuous Improvement Teams (CITs)

&

School Continuous Improvement Plans (SCIPs)



Overview: Continuous Improvement Teams (CITs)



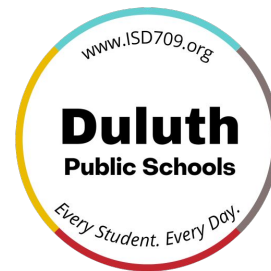
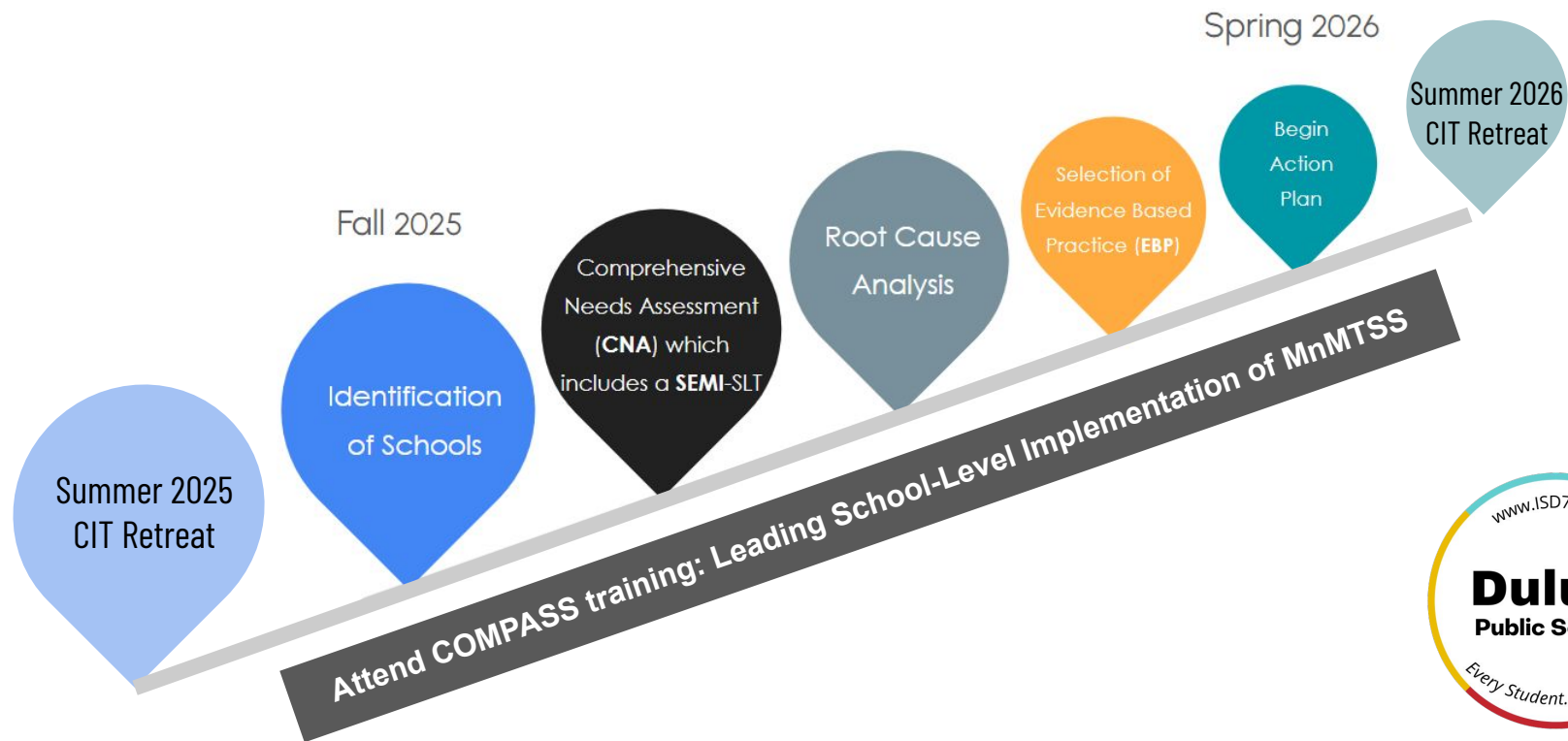
Continuous Improvement Process

- Analysis: data, root causes, barriers
- Goal setting and alignment
- Monitoring implementation and fidelity of practices

Continuous Improvement Team (CIT)

- Provides leadership to guide each school's continuous improvement work
- Represents a variety of perspectives

CIT Process: 2025 - Present



School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP): The Tool



Collaborative Development

CIT collaboratively writes a School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) based on:

- Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA)
- Rigorous data analysis
- Direct input from site representatives



Core Plan Deliverables

SCIP clearly outlines strategic next steps:

- Action plan for high-impact, evidence-based practices (EBP) aligned with school-wide goals
- Structured documentation for monitoring implementation fidelity and academic progress

School Improvement Efforts

Introduction to Principals

Sharing:

Points of Pride

School Continuous Improvement Plan

Evidence Based Practices

Lakewood Elementary - Lynx



Principal: Dr. Darren Sheldon

Points of Pride:

- MCA Reading Scores
- [PBIS Exemplary Status](#)
- Many School Updates: New Sports Court, School Forest Grant, new heating system, updated PBIS banners/signage throughout the school, and near future: Reading Garden in front of the school, BOB (Battle of the Books) went from 30 kids two years ago to 76 this year.

School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) & Evidenced Based Practice (EBP):

EBP: Diagnostic Instruction

- **3 Year Goal:** Focus on analyzing multiple data sources (most notably: K-2 LETRS spelling screener and Functional Morphology screener grades 4-5 to bolster our phonics skills school-wide).
- **In year three,** our plan is to use a common planning time for all grades so we can differentiate school-wide.

Homecroft Elementary - Hornets

Principal: Tom Cawcutt



Points of Pride:

- Enrollment increased by over 100 students over the last 8 years
- MCA & FAST scores routinely exceed state/district averages
- Teacher retention nearly 100%
- Refinement of MTSS practices
- Fully implemented PBIS
- 64% decrease in Office Discipline Referrals from 24/25 to 25/26 school years.
- 96% of Homecroft students received zero Office Discipline Referrals during the 25/26 school year.
- New school signage

School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) & Evidenced Based Practice (EBP):

EBP: School Climate and Community Building

- **In the 2026-2027 school year**, we will increase reading achievement for students in grades 2-5 from 61.5% proficient to 75% proficient as measured by aReading (FastBridge). Homecroft students will make incremental progress toward grade level proficiency in reading as measured by leveled indicators (FastBridge, MCAs).

Congdon Park Elementary - Cougars

Principal: Kathi Kusch Marshall



Points of Pride:

- Dedicated Staff: Works together to meet the needs of the whole child
- Special Education: Met and exceeded math and attendance goals
- Student Council: Voice & leadership through empowering students
- Farm to School: Connecting kids with agriculture & hands-on learning
- Safe Routes to School: Focus on health, wellness & safe transportation
- School Environment: Well-cared for and clean learning environment

School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) & Evidenced Based Practice

EBP: Explicit Instruction

- **Maintain robust infrastructure and collaborative teams** to support MnMTSS. Primary focus areas include Reading, Math, and Attendance, with targeted interventions for Special Education, math, and attendance.
- **Ensure instructional consistency**, enforce rigorous utilization of PLC data, progress monitoring, and the digital PLC Hub. CIT will actively use PLC Monitoring Tools to track progress and maintain a focus on Tier I instructional priorities.
- **Continue to identify root causes** and drive ongoing targeted interventions. Tier I Community of Progress.

Lester Park Elementary - Labradors

Principal: Anna Cawcutt



Points of Pride:

- Overall increase in MCA scores in all 3 tested subjects compared to 2025
- Successful implementation of our Recess & Lunch Buddies student leadership program
- Positive and supportive climate and culture
- Positive climate survey results - staff, students, and families

School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) & Evidenced Based Practice (EBP):

EBP: Explicit Instruction

- **3-year Goal:** Students in grades 2-5 will increase aReading achievement by June of 2029, from 72.5% no-risk to 80% no-risk, through strategic action planning, professional development, and data based decision making.
- **2026-2027 Goal:** In the 2026-27 school year, we will increase reading achievement for students in grades 2-5 from 72.5% proficient (no-risk) to 75% proficient (no-risk), as measured by aReading.

Laura MacArthur Elementary - Eagles

Principal: Carrie Thompson



Points of Pride:

- Overall increase in MCA scores in reading and math scores compared to 2025.
- Overall reading score on MCA exceeds spring 2027 goal allowing focus on subgroups.
- Focus on family engagement continues - 170 guests came to our grandparent/special friend day event.
- Awarded Full Service Community School Grant!!!!

School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) & Evidenced Based Practice (EBP):

EBP: Engagement Strategies to Support a Positive School Climate

3 year goal:

- Grades 3-5 students will increase on MCA Reading by June of 2029, from 29.81% to 45% proficient through strategic action planning, professional development, and data based decision making. Target student groups: Black, special education, and free/reduced meals.

26-27 School Year Goal:

- By spring 2027, grade 3-5 students will increase MCA Reading by 5% from 29.8% to 34.8%. Targeted students groups increase by 7% (Black 23.5% to 30.5%), (free/reduced meals 34.9% to 41.9%), (special education 17.8% to 24%).
- By spring of 2027, number of minor Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs) for disruption will decrease by 30% from the baseline of 296 referrals to 198 referrals.

Lowell Elementary - Lions

Principal: Eve Hessler



Points of Pride:

- Positive growth in climate survey data from Fall 25 to Spring 26
- Achieved building goals in Reading!
- Implemented mixed specialist groups

School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) & Evidenced Based Practice (EBP):

EBP: Diagnostic Instruction

- **FOCUS: Tier 1 Instructional Vision Component 2**
 - Collect & Review Data Routinely using formative checks (exit tickets, quick quizzes, progress monitoring) to confirm current level of understanding
 - Improving PLC work
- **3 Year MN State Identification Goal:**
 - By June of 2029, Special Education students in Grades 2-5 will increase their FastBridge aReading achievement from 18% no-risk to 33% no-risk.

Myers-Wilkins Elementary - Wolves

Principal: Lisa Nicholson



Points of Pride:

- Restructured our data driven instruction and Tier 2 interventions to meet student needs.
- Partnership: UMD-Happiness Kits
 - For 6 Mornings, UMD students from different student groups and athletics greeted students as they arrived and then joined morning meetings.
- Positive Climate Survey Results from families, staff, and students
- Full integration of our Spanish Immersion program through our specialists classes
- Strong Partnerships with PTO and the Duluth Community Schools Collaborative
 - Playworks (increasing opportunities for physical activity and safe, meaningful play)
 - A Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) school forest designation

School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) & Evidenced Based Practice (EBP)

EBP: Structured Literacy: Tier 1 Instruction

- **3 year Goal:** Grades 3rd-5th will increase aReading achievement by June 2029, from 47% low-risk to 64% low-risk through strategic action planning, professional development, and data based decision making.
- **1 year Goal:** 2026-2027 school year, decrease the number of students in grades 3-5 from 30% high-risk to 22% high-risk as measured on aReading.

Piedmont Elementary - Panthers

Principal: Dr. Katie Britton



Points of Pride:

- Maximizing Intervention Time: Reduced substitute coverage duties to keep interventionists focused on intervention.
- Sustained Key Partnerships: Continued collaboration with Northwoods and Brightwater health to support student mental health and needs.
- Active PTA Collaboration: Continued support and with our PTA to support events for families and students.
- Kinder Camp Success: Leveraged fall transition days and beginning of the year to build balanced kindergarten classes.

School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) & Evidenced Based Practice (EBP):

EBP: Building Climate- Engagement Strategies to Support a Positive School Climate

- **1 yr Goal-** In the 2026-2027 school year, we will increase reading achievement for our special education students (Grades 3-5) by + 2% from 30.49% to 32.49%.
- **3 yr Goal-** Special Education students in grades 3rd-5th will exceed exit criteria in MCA reading achievement by June of 2029, from 30.49% to 36.49% proficient through strategic action planning, professional development, and data based decision making.

Stowe Elementary Bulldogs

Principal Nathan Anderson



Points of Pride:

- **Reading WIN Groups:** Integrated Service Delivery Model (Interventionist + SPED + Gen Ed collaboration)
- **Staff Connectedness & Family Engagement:** Increase via survey results.
- **Improvement in FastBridge Reading:** Free/Reduced Meals & Special Education students improved!
- **Preschool Program Belonging:** Feel like part of the the school, not just a program housed in Stowe.
 - New classrooms to accommodate program- 2 full classes with a wait list!
- **Facility Improvements:** Entire New Roof, Flooring, Paving
- **Community Partnerships:** Stowe Foundation, GND Rec, PTA
- **School Forest:** MN DNR School Forest Conference is hosted at Stowe in February!
- **Student Support Additions:** Part time Integration Specialist, Northwood Partial Day Program

School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) & Evidenced Based Practice (EBP):

EBP:Diagnostic Instruction

- **3-Year Goal:** By June 2029, 3rd-5th grade students eligible for free/reduced-price meals (2025 identification) will increase from 27.7% to 50% on Reading MCA - using FastBridge Reading 3 times per year to monitor progress.
- **Year 1 Goal:** By Spring 2027, 3rd-5th grade students eligible for free/reduced-price meals will increase from 39% (Spring 2026) to 46% (Spring 2027) as measured by FastBridge aReading.

Lincoln Park Middle School - Wild Cats



Principal: Brian Kazmierczak

Points of Pride:

- Through our behavior response team, PBIS, and PAWS, we reduced events that lead to OSS by 46.9%
- Saw an increase in our overall MCA scores in all subjects tested
- Continue to provide a robust afterschool program supported by the Full Service Community Schools Collaborative and grant funding

School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) & Evidenced Based Practice (EBP):

EBP: Explicit Instruction

- **3-year Goal:** 6th-8th grade students will increase MCA Reading by June 2029, from 42.2% to 45.2% proficient through strategic action planning, professional development, and data based decision making.
- **2026-27 Goal:** 6th-8th grade students will increase MCA Reading achievement by June 2027, from 42.2% proficient to 43.2% proficient through strategic action planning, professional development, and data based decision making.

Ordean East Middle School - Huskies

Principal: Kristen Kennedy-Anderson



Points of Pride:

- MCA scores in Reading, Math and Science are higher than district average scores
- Fall 2026 FastBridge aReading scores are 79% proficient
- Strong student advocacy groups established to lift up student voices and create connections
- Student referral numbers
- Academic recognition

School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) & Evidenced Based Practice (EBP):

EBP: Explicit Instruction

- **3-year Goal:** 6th-8th grade students will increase MCA Reading by June 2029, from 64.8% to 67.8% proficient through strategic action planning, professional development, and data based decision making.
- **2026-27 Goal:** 6th-8th grade students will increase MCA Reading achievement by June 2027, from 64.8% proficient to 65.8% proficient through strategic action planning, professional development, and data based decision making.

Denfeld High School - Hunters



Principal: Tom Tusken

Points of Pride:

- Overall Class of 2025 graduation rate was 84.77%, **+ 7.9%** from Class of 2024
 - Specific student groups: **Homeless:** + 28.2%, **Two or More Races:** + 14.9%, **Free/Reduced Meal Eligible:** + 11.9%. **American Indian / Native American:** + 11.6%
- Time capsule opened on Sept 25th; placed in cornerstone in 1925 of the second school to bear Denfeld name. Process organically included several Denfeld alum in interesting ways and ceremony included several dignitaries including Robert E. Denfeld family, Superintendent, Mayor, Masons of Minnesota, St. Louis County Historical Society, and Western National Bank.
 - New time capsule set to be opened in 2076.

School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) & Evidenced Based Practice (EBP):

EBP: Structured Literacy - Diagnostic Instruction

- Through District-PLC, teaching staff will be trained in STRIVE strategies.
- By the end of the 26-27 school year, STRIVE strategies will be used in all classes as measured by formal and walk-through observations.

Duluth East High School - Greyhounds



Principal: Kelly Flohaug

Points of Pride:

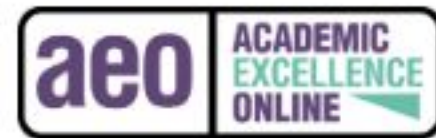
- 2025 Graduation Rate = 96%. which included + 3% in Special Education and + 4% Free/Reduced Meals.
 - High graduation rate due specifically to Check & Connect, MTSS, School Counselors, as well as staff at ALC for their work with credit recovery when students lose credits.
 - Every staff member has a hand in preparing and graduating students.
- Greatly expanding and successful Career Work Based Learning.
 - Currently 171 in grades 11/12. Semester 2 already w/215.

School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) & Evidenced Based Practice (EBP):

EBP: Structured Literacy - Diagnostic Instruction

- By June 2027, Duluth East High School will establish a centralized, multi-tiered data disaggregation system across Academic, Attendance, Behavior, and Social Emotional Learning categories to track, analyze, and address disparities across student demographic groups (ethnicity, grade level, IEP status, English language proficiency, and socio-economic status), improving staff access to and usage of school data.

Academic Excellence Online High School



Principal: Eric Stang

Points of Pride:

- Enrollment has continued to grow, currently serving 718 students
 - 621 Comprehensive enrollments (96 Full-time)
 - 97 Supplemental enrollments (out of district)
- This flexibility provides students with the opportunity to build a school schedule that fits their busy lives.

School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) & Evidenced Based Practice (EBP):

EBP: Literacy

- In accordance with the READ Act, teachers will utilize reading strategies learned from STRIVE to increase student reading comprehension and fluency.
- Teachers will use ROAR testing to identify students in need of reading intervention.

Area Learning Center

Principal: Eric Stang



Points of Pride:

- **Facility and Enrollment:** We have successfully transitioned to our new facility, and our student enrollment continues to grow.
- **Attendance:** Student attendance has increased significantly, despite the longer school day.
- **Continuous Learning Plans:** We developed and implemented an improved process for creating Continuous Learning Plans, bringing together key stakeholders, including students, parents/guardians, and staff.
- **Credit Recovery:** Credit recovery has started. We currently have 166 students taking 302 classes in 37 different courses and Internship making progress towards graduation.
 - ALC (93), Denfeld (36), East (26), Harbor City (4), Hermantown (3), Floodwood (2), Carlton-Wrenshall (1), Proctor (1)

School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) & Evidenced Based Practice (EBP):

EBP: Graduation

- Strategic approach toward gaining compliance with MDE as an ALC, specifically regarding our ability to offer independent study and targeted services, which directly impact graduation rates across the district.
- MEIRS data teams will work to identify early warning factors and interventions for individual students.

Care & Treatment Programs

Principal: Jacob Hintsala

Points of Pride:

- Six students graduated at Arrowhead Academy through Credit Recovery
- 100% of 10th graders passed the MCA Reading Test at Chester Creek Academy
- 79% of students at Chester, 70% at Rock Ridge, 75% of students at Merritt made great gains in math on STAR test
- 84% of students at Chester, 83% at Rock Ridge, 83% of students at Merritt made great gains in reading on STAR test

School Continuous Improvement Plan (SCIP) & Evidenced Based Practice (EBP):

EBP: Diagnostic Instruction

- 70% of students with a minimum of 90 days of enrollment will gain 1/2 grade from pre to post STAR testing in math and reading.

Acronym Cheat Sheet:

AREA: Academic, Relearning, Enrichment and Activities

BARR: Building Assets and Reducing Risks

CICO: Check-In, Check-Out

CIT: Continuous Improvement Team

CNA: Comprehensive Needs Assessment

CTE: Career Technical Education

EBP: Evidence Based Practice

FAST: Formative Assessments and Screening
(Assessment screener administered to students)

FRPM: Free/Reduced-Price Meals

LETRS: Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (READ Act aligned professional learning program)

MCA: Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment

MEIRS: MN Early Indicator and Response System (evidence based practice being used)

MTSS: Multi-Tiered System of Support

ODR: Office Discipline Referrals

PBIS: Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

ROAR: Rapid Online Assessment for Reading

Acronym Cheat Sheet:

READ Act: Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act

SEL / SEB: Social Emotional Learning / Social Emotional Behavior(ist)

SCIP: School Continuous Improvement Plan

STAR: Screening Assessment Tool

STRIVE: Structured literacy training for secondary educators
(READ Act aligned professional learning program)

TFI: Tiered Fidelity Inventory

UFLI: University of Florida Literacy Institute
(curriculum)

WIN: What I Need

SCIP: School Continuous Improvement Plan

EBP: Evidenced Based Practice