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Duluth

Public Schools

Every Student. Every Day.

Superintendent's Report

October 20, 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
- Referendum
- Budget Reductions Next Steps
- Demographics and Capacity Study
- Legislative Platform
- Other

Student Representative Reports

Referendum Update



Operating Levy Referendum

Vote on or before Nov. 3



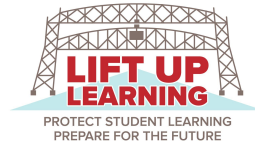
The Plan

Protect Student Learning; Prepare for the Future

The Duluth Public Schools Board **unanimously approved** a referendum for the Nov. 3, 2026 ballot.

The board came to the realization that **cuts alone cannot solve the larger structural problem.**

The district is asking taxpayers to consider a revenue increase to protect **student learning and prepare Duluth schools for the future.**



2 Operating Levy Questions

Question 1 - Step Up Levy

- \$3.9 million in 2027
- \$8.3 million in years 2-10
- Tax impact: \$8/month on a \$300,000 home

Question 2 - Additional Levy

- \$3.4 million per year for ten years
- \$7/month on a \$300,000 home

- Question 2 is contingent on voter approval of Question 1.
- Both levies would increase at the rate of inflation each year.



Information Sharing Efforts

- We have held nearly 80 informational sessions for staff, families, community members and students, including four in-person and virtual town hall meetings.
- We have tabled at many other events, such as open houses and conference nights.
- Our website has extensive amounts of information, including a robust frequently asked questions section and tax calculator.
- We have shared numerous posts on social media

Play videos









Budget Reduction Next Steps

Budget Reduction Next Steps

There are really three different budget reduction scenarios, depending on what happens with our referendum questions:

- Scenario 1: Both questions pass - We will still need to reduce by approximately \$5M for FY28. We would attempt to reduce in areas that have less systemic impact as we would begin to limited restoration the following year, but we also need to consider our fund balance.
- Scenario 2: Question 1 passes but question 2 fails - We would need to reduce by \$5M but the reductions would need to have more significant ongoing impact on our structural deficit.
- Scenario 3: Neither question passes. - We would need to reduce by \$12M over the course of the next two years, with a priority placed on addressing the structural deficit as quickly as possible. Systemic changes would need to be addressed in a time sensitive manner.

Budget Reduction Next Steps

- We will begin addressing our budget reduction needs as soon as we know the outcome of the referendum vote. In fact, we have meetings scheduled for the morning of November 4th.
- We will utilize the 2026 Budget Reduction and Realignment Guiding Change to provide direction on these difficult decisions.
- We will seek to make recommendations to the board by our January board meeting in order to meet contractual obligations and staffing and budgeting guidelines.

Demographics and Capacity Study

Next Steps

Demographics and Capacities Study

- We will continue to examine the results of our demographics and capacity study efforts at our November work session.
- Overcrowding at some schools, enrollment campaign efforts and other steps will be considered.
- Any process of boundary examination or other actions, like potential school closures would be an inclusive and well-shared effort.

Legislative Platform

This session, there is a forecasted budget deficit, so we should tailor our asks accordingly. Some things to consider might be:

- Special Education funding and Blue Ribbon Commission recommendations
- Continued funding supports for literacy and Duluth Promise
- Full funding for previous mandates and no new unfunded mandates

We can discuss this further at our Committee of the Whole on November 12th and could consider a special board meeting for approval.

Legislative Platform

Questions