

## **LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM 2020**

### **Special Education Funding – Finishing the Work We Started Together**

Duluth Public Schools special education funding gap must be corrected in order for the District to adequately address the critical special education student needs throughout our district. The House Education Committee heard our story and included the correction in their Omnibus bill during the 2019 regular session, but unfortunately this language, along with many others, was removed during the special session. We look forward to building on the work we have done with legislators to see this issue, and others, resolved in 2020.

- A permanent increase to the District's Special Education base in FY20
- A one-time payment of \$4.5 million to fill the gap that was created by the artificially low base created in FY16 under the new formula
- To create more equity in tuition billing rates of charter schools to resident districts
- Additional cross-subsidy aid payment for districts "over the cap" in FY16-FY20

### **Increase Basic Formula Allowance**

The basic allowance is a universal district support that impacts every student, every day. Duluth Public Schools has great needs in facilities, technology, and transportation, and the basic allowance is the main source of funding to address the impact of years of budget cuts in these critical areas. While the Legislative commitment of 2% increases in FY20 & FY21 helps bridge the funding gap, many districts are still forced to make reductions or delay implementations in order to avoid budget deficits.

- Adjust the FY21 basic allowance to 3%
- Add an annual cost of living increase

### **Expand Eligible Uses for Long-Term Facilities Maintenance (LTFM) Revenue**

School Districts throughout the state struggle to maintain safe and educationally focused buildings and facilities. Limitations in the use of LTFM funding force districts to choose inefficient plans, or, in some cases, not moving forward on critical facility improvements. The following items should be included as eligible expenses through LTFM funding:

- Safety and security
- Energy efficient replacement plans and improvements
- Remodeling costs for career & technical programming
- Demolition and replacement of facilities on contaminated property
- Technology infrastructure

### **School Based Early Education Programs - for all learners**

Investments in early education throughout the state are making a difference for Pre-K learners. Now is the time to commit to this foundational funding by creating a categorical revenue stream based on student enrollments and regional impacts. Flexible revenue uses and opportunities for funding collaboration would be important components to best meet the needs of all early learners.

- Fully fund the expansion of school-based early education programs allowing school district flexibility in implementation and design to best meet the needs of the local community.

### **Mental Health Professionals**

While over half of the schools in Minnesota are benefiting from School Linked Mental Health Services Grant funding, districts like Duluth Public Schools continue to see a gap in funding, with only partial elementary level services covered by the current grant. Expanding this grant, and providing complementary funding directly to districts, will allow greater support to students in need of critical care coordination and provide district staff and families mental health educational opportunities.

- Increase State grants to fully fund mental health professionals on an ongoing basis.

### **Increase Support for Full-Service Community Schools Model**

Full Service Community Schools work to coordinate holistic systems of support to ensure the needs of all students are met. Recognizing the importance of this cooperative investment, Duluth Public Schools was one of the initial districts to develop a service model meant to grow and expand to meet K-12 needs. Additional and adequate funding is needed help Duluth and other Full Service Community School districts address the vital supports for students and families through this collaborative model.

- Provide funding for planning and implementing Full Service Community Schools