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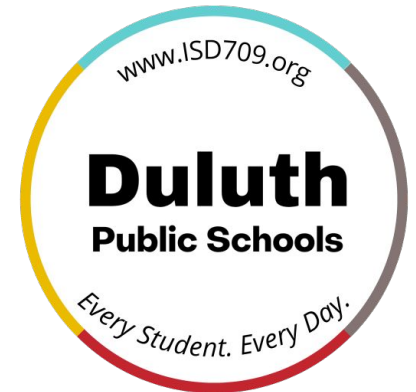
Duluth

Public Schools

Every Student. Every Day.

Superintendent's Report

April 21, 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
- Budget Reduction Update
- Legislative Update
- Litigation Update
- Education Equity Advisory Committee Bylaws Update
- Area Learning Center Update
- Other

Budget Update

The Current Challenge: A \$4 Million Gap

State funding and mandates are not keeping pace with rising operational costs.



Special Education

Rising costs and significant underfunding.



Health Insurance

Impact of rapidly rising premiums.



Transportation

Increased costs of student transit services.



Unfunded Mandates

Other costs driven by legislative requirements.



The Bottom Line:

To maintain fiscal health, we must optimize resource allocation and reduce spending for the upcoming school year.

Budget Realignment: Guiding Change



Principles Over Politics for Greater Transparency

Open, honest communication with the board, staff, and families.



Student-First Focus

Prioritizing the educational and developmental needs of every learner.



Mental Health Needs

Expanding essential support systems for student and staff well-being.



Overhead Reduction

Streamlining administrative costs to maximize classroom funding.



Referendum Promises

Upholding our commitments to the community and maintaining trust.



Inclusive Process

Engaging diverse perspectives in every step of the decision-making cycle.

General Fund Budget Reductions

Throughout this process, our primary goal was to keep reduction as far away from the classroom as possible. To achieve this, the largest percentage of cuts was taken at the district administrative level (15.61%), compared to 5.8% at secondary schools and 4.1% at elementary schools.

The finalized plan includes a total of \$4,296,067 in estimated savings in the general fund budget. It is important to note that these changes involve two distinct actions;

- Reductions: Eliminating certain positions or software contracts to save general fund dollars.
- Reallocations: Using restricted funds (such as Title funding or special grants) to keep essential positions.

General Fund Budget Reductions

We are currently finalizing the difficult phase of notifying dozens of educators and support staff regarding displacements. While we are working diligently to place as many individuals as possible into alternative roles for the 2026-2027 year, these conversations emphasize the human impact of the funding gaps we are fighting to close.

Identified Reductions

Legislative Update

Legislative Updates

In alignment with our Board's legislative platform, I testified before the House Education Finance Committee earlier last week in support of HF 4114, the goal of which is to repeal the mandated \$250 million contingent reduction in special education aid.

I emphasized that Duluth's current \$4.2 million deficit is a "systemic math problem," with 50% driven by the special education cross-subsidy. I urged the committee to provide fiscal stability rather than using special education funding as a placeholder for state budget balancing.

I will be conducting additional lobbying efforts next Wednesday to advocate for our schools' needs.

Litigation Update

- As you know, we have entered into a lawsuit as plaintiffs with Fridley School District and Education Minnesota seeking to return protected status to schools related to immigration enforcement within schools.
- Our initial federal court hearing was on April 8th. We are currently awaiting the judge's findings.



Education Equity Advisory Committee (EEAC)

Bylaw Updates

EEAC's History

- EEAC bylaws started in 2003 - though the work existed prior
- The EEAC underwent a revitalization process that began around December 2021
 - This process involved approximately 30 education equity partners who collaborated to develop new bylaws for the School Board to approve
- Several subcommittees were formed starting around summer 2022
- The most recent update of the bylaws was in 2022

The Process

- **Activity:** Held 3 meetings over the past 4 months.
- **The Challenge:** We identified a structural mismatch. The group operated as a "committee," but our bylaws outlined a "community forum."
- **The Decision:** After careful deliberation, we officially committed to **functioning as a formal Committee.**
- **Action Taken:** Formed a dedicated subcommittee and engaged in an intensive, collaborative process to rewrite our bylaws.



Area Learning Center Update

Area Learning Center

The Minnesota Department of Education has changed its procedures for the approval of four-day school weeks for alternative programming. Previously, there was not a need to submit for a variance for such programs, but that has changed for the coming year.

This year, they are requiring applications, but will allow for significant flexibility, whereas next year the application process will be more robust.

Given that the board has approved Duluth Federation of Teacher contracts with four-day week language since 2011, we only need documentation in our minutes from tonight's meeting that we have previously taken action that has approved this.

Questions