

[www.ISD709.org](http://www.ISD709.org)

# **Duluth**

## **Public Schools**

*Every Student. Every Day.*

# Superintendent's Report

*February 29, 2024*



## 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

- Student Reports
- Duluth Public Schools Branding Video
- Negotiations
- Referendum
- Legislative Platform and Advocacy
- Superintendent Mid-Year Evaluation

# Duluth Public Schools Branding Video



# Negotiation Updates

Our Integration Specialists contract is moving forward for your approval tonight.

We have a tentative agreement with the Duluth Federation of Teachers for the 2023-2025 time period, as well as another for the 2025-27 school years. Site meetings to review changes are taking place and a membership vote is anticipated in mid-March. Pending member approval, the teacher contract(s) would come before the board at our March meeting.

We are also continuing Director and individual contract negotiations.

# Referendum Updates

- Updated Fact Sheets, Frequently Asked Questions and [futureforward709.org](https://futureforward709.org) website
- Frequent Social Media and Newsletter Updates
- Billboards
- Updated Story North Video
- Op Ed Column for the Duluth News Tribune
- Editorial Interview
- Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce
  - Duluth & St. Louis County Days
  - March Exec. Board Meeting Presentation

# Legislative Platform and Advocacy

The School Board met on February 8th to finalize our 2024 Legislative Platform and also met with local representatives on February 9th to share our priorities.

Priorities include an increase to the funding formula, Read Act funding, permanent funding for unemployment insurance and school meals, and increasing resources for cybersecurity, safety, Career and Technical Education, special education and solar projects. We are also seeking greater flexibility with operating levies and long-term facilities maintenance.

Additional advocacy will be taking place, including during Duluth St. Louis County Days next week, to meet the needs of our students, staff and families.



## Our Challenges

The Duluth Public Schools (DPS) recognizes and appreciates the significant investments made by the Legislature to public education in 2023. We believe the 2024 Legislative Session is another opportunity to invest in public schools and continue the progress made in meeting the academic, social, and emotional needs of students and to ensure equitable outcomes for every student.

Supplemental education investments in 2024 will provide stability for DPS as federal pandemic era funding expires and enrollment fluctuates. DPS appreciates the notable funding increases in 2023, but our district, like so many others, is experiencing shortfalls that put progress made by students and teachers at risk.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

All numbers from MDE as of 10/12/24

Total Students	8,554
Free and reduced price lunch	3,674
American Indian	648
Asian	97
Hispanic	263
Black	348
Two or more races	562
White	6,631
Special Education	1772
Early Childhood Special Ed	200



## Duluth School Board

Jill Lofald, *Chair*  
Rosie Loeffler-Kemp, *Vice Chair*  
Amber Sadowski, *Clerk*  
Kelly Durick Eder, *Treasurer*  
Henry Banks  
Sarah Mikesell  
Stephanie Williams  
John Magas, *Superintendent*



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# Legislative Platform 2024

*Every Student. Every Day.*

## Legislative Priorities



## What does fully funding education look like?

The funding our district receives today is not enough to serve our students properly, especially with rising costs.

Fully funding education means every student can achieve at high levels and graduate on time.

It means the needs of all students are met regardless of zip code or economic status.

When students' daily desired experiences are met they succeed, which means positive growth for our state and city.

### Increased State Aid

We support an additional increase in the basic general education formula by an additional 2% for the 2024-2025 school year to address staffing shortages, Elementary and Secondary Education Relief (ESSER) federal funding running out, student and staff mental health supports, staff salary increases, decline in enrollments, and interrupted learning recovery efforts.

### READ Act

We support the allocating of additional resources and funding for professional development of staff who are mandated by the READ Act to be trained.

### Permanent Funding Streams

We support the creation of a permanent state funding stream for unemployment insurance for non-licensed school district employees and free school breakfast and lunch for all students, and requests that the Legislature fully fund the cost of programs.

### Cybersecurity

We support additional state funding for technology support to protect data and systems from increasing attacks on networks.

### LTFM Flexibility

We support the Legislature eliminating the cap on Long Term Facilities Maintenance Revenue, allowing districts like Duluth to address critical facility needs.

### CTE Support

We support a one-time investment in Career and Technical Education, allowing funds to be used for equipment, supply, and technology to support the CTE mission and helping to get students into the workforce.

### Operating Levies

Allow school board renewal of existing and future operating levies.

### Special Education Rebate

We support House File 336 (Kozlowski & Olson) & Senate File 423 (McEwen & Hauschild), reimbursing DPS \$1 million for a state formula error in FY16-FY19 which resulted in DPS filling a \$5.8 million funding gap.

### School Safety

We support a one-time allocation per pupil for school safety and supports allowing local authority for schools to increase safe school levy revenue to address concerns.

### Solar & Electric Vehicles

We support adding additional funding to the Solar for Schools Grant and increase the grant opportunity to 100% of total costs for a 40-megawatt array and help schools with federal matching dollars for EV charging stations at school properties.

# Superintendent Evaluation

## **Standard 2. School District Finances**

- Element 2.d. Bond and Levy Campaigns

## **Standard 3. Communication and Community Relationships**

- Element 3.f. Visibility and Approachability

## **Standard 6. Teaching and Learning**

- Element 6.b. School Improvement

*Mid-Year Review Scheduled for March 11th*

# Questions