



Legislative Platform 2020



Duluth Public Schools ISD 709 Profile

ISD 709 serves approximately 9,660 students in early childhood programs through grade 12. The district provides services to adults of all ages through the Area Learning Center and Community Education.

- 2 high schools
- 1 online high school
- 2 middle schools
- 9 elementary schools
- Birth to Age 5 programs
- Community Education for all ages
- 1 transportation office/bus garage
- 1 Area Learning Center with Adult Basic Education and offices for district administration and support staff
- Providing educational services and support to 8 alternative schools and community support programs

Total students (Grades K-12).....	8,450
High school students (Grades 9-12)	2,904
Middle school students (Grades 6-8).....	1,770
Elementary students (Grades K-5).....	3,776
Birth to Age 5 programs.....	854*
Receiving free/reduced price lunch (PreK-12)	3,476
Students of color (PreK-12)	2,018
Receiving special education services (PreK-12)	1,598

**All numbers from MDE as of 10/1/18 except Birth to Age 5 programs these are FY19.*

3 schools with Full-Service Community Schools model; 6,700 students provided with school breakfast and lunch per day; 9,000 students provided with transportation services (includes non-ISD709 schools); Maintain 2,477,826 square feet of building space and 346 acres of school grounds

Thank you for supporting these important issues during the 2020 legislative session. In the Duluth Public Schools we strive to reach every student every day. We all play a role in helping the young people of our community to be successful. Your efforts help to improve our schools, our community, and our future.

Duluth School Board

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ISD 709 **Duluth Public Schools**

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Legislative Priorities

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 request, 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. While the Legislative commitment of a 2% increase in FY20 and FY21 helps, it can't make up for years of budget cuts in critical areas.

Many districts are still forced to make reductions or delay implementation of key programs and foundational priorities 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
- Replacement of snow removal equipment
- 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 to 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.