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# **Duluth**

## **Public Schools**

*Every Student. Every Day.*

# Superintendent's Report

*January 23, 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
- Negotiations Update
- Referendum Update
- Legislative Advocacy Update
- Additional Updates

# Negotiations Updates

Duluth Federation of Teachers negotiations are well underway. We have met multiple times in the past two months and will meet with our larger negotiations team on Thursday. We are hopeful that this continued progress will result in a new contract in the coming weeks.

# Referendum Overview

During our November Referendum, vote totals stood at 15,867 in favor and 13,205 against for Question One, and 14,431 in favor and 14,720 against Question Two, failing by 289 votes. We are deeply grateful to our community for recognizing and supporting the needs of our students.

The rejection of the technology levy will significantly limit how quickly the district is able to implement planned improvements for classroom technology, student and staff devices, and cybersecurity upgrades. We also have significant replacement needs for our Career and Technical Education resources, including 75 year old equipment with no replacement cycle.

# Referendum Overview

We have shared supporting information with the board and public in a variety of meetings, including the Committee of the Whole meeting on January 9th and 16th, to ensure that they are well informed about our potential ask. Our January 9th meeting focused on our district financial needs and included a presentation from Baird. Our January 16th meeting included presentations from our technology and CTE departments, input from teachers and administrators, as well as a board dialogue on the amount of the potential ask.

Later in our meeting, we are asking the board to move forward with a resolution for a referendum on May 14th, 2024.

# Referendum Next Steps

If the board chooses to move forward with the May referendum, we will begin a robust public information campaign to ensure that voters are well informed regarding this ask, including its impacts on student learning, district finances and local taxes.

This effort would begin with a press release after the board meeting, pending board decision on the resolution and referendum amount.

# Legislative Advocacy Update

Administration and board representatives met with Jeff Anderson, our contracted lobbyist from the Costin Group, to begin a draft of our 2024 Legislative Platform.

We hope to hold a Committee of the Whole Legislative Priorities meeting on February 8th to review this draft, as well as to hold a meeting with our local representatives on February 9th.

Among the points we are advocating for would be an additional 2% allocation to the per pupil funding for next year and permanent funding streams for unfunded unemployment insurance and universal free meals.

# Additional Updates

- MSBA Conference
- Spirit Valley Wellness Center
- Board Work Session
- Citizens in Action - January 27th
- Other

# Questions