

**Monthly Committee of the Whole Board Meeting (Rescheduled from 4/4/23)**

Duluth Public Schools, ISD 709

Agenda

Thursday, April 6, 2023

UnitedHealth Group Building

4316 Rice Lake Road

Suite 108

Duluth, MN 55811

4:30 PM

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **ROLL CALL**

3. **AGENDA ITEMS**

A. Action Items - Consent Agenda

1) Presentation Items Requiring Approval -

a. Headstart Grants

2

Headstart Director Sherry Williams

2) Resolutions - None

3) Other Action Items - None

B. Informational Items

1) Setting IV Update-Rescheduled to May 2nd meeting.

25

Special Services Director Jason Crane

2) Computer Science for Duluth and the National Center for Computer Science Education

37

Media Specialist Cindy Miller and Director of National Center for Computer Science Education Jennifer Rosatto

C. Other - None

4. **ADJOURN**



## **Transportation Waiver for Duluth Head Start**

- Voluntary PreK is required to provide transportation to and from school for 4 year olds
- Due to this, we are asking that 4 year old Head Start children also be allowed to ride the bus to and from school. We know transportation can be a significant barrier to accessing preschool for families experiencing poverty.
- We are asking to waive the following Head Start regulations:
  - Restraints 1303.71(d) and 1303.72(a)(1)
  - Monitors 1303.72(a)(4)
- Our Parent Policy Council supports this plan contingent on maintaining the following safety provisions:
  - Preschool children will wear reflective vests making them highly visible to the bus drivers and other staff, both to and from school
  - Preschool children will sit in seats closest to the driver
  - An adult must meet the children at the bus door at drop off, and must bring the child to the bus door at pick up. We encourage parents to establish communication with the driver.
  - If the adult is not the child's parent, it must be someone who the parent designates that may take the child home from the bus stop
  - All Head Start children must participate in a bus safety presentation on the first day of school
  - Riding the bus is voluntary, so parents may choose to self transport if they prefer
  - In order to utilize school district busing, parents sign an authorization form that releases students from the Head Start program to the transportation department of ISD709.

We appreciate your commitment to removing barriers for children whose families are experiencing poverty. Safely getting kids to and from school. We know establishing patterns of regular attendance is very important for school success, and we can directly correlate transportation increased attendance.

By signing below, you are acknowledging that you approve this waiver.

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Jill Lofald, School Board Chair

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Shandi Mickle, Policy Council Chair

## **Duluth Head Start Enrollment Reduction**

**We are requesting to convert two half day classes to full day classes for the following reasons:**

- 2 Half Day sessions have been severely under enrolled
- When these same classrooms had higher enrollment, there was also higher volatility in the numbers with families more likely to drop during the school year
- When families rank their choices for classrooms, they typically select Full Day
- Full Day classes allow the option of transportation to four year old students which eliminates the transportation barrier

**This conversion results in an Enrollment Reduction of 34 Head Start seats.**

- Staffing will remain the same, though there will be 34 fewer Head Start slots.
- According to our Community Needs Assessment, there are other options available for the 34 seats to be filled outside of the Duluth Head Start program

**This will result in Duluth Head Start receiving a higher cost per child.**

- We currently receive \$12,523 per child. With this reduction that would increase to \$14,764 per child. In MN, costs per child in Head Start programs ranges from \$9,781 to \$28,693.
- This cost per child is the number State Head Start dollars fund with, so any resulting increase, will result in an increase in State funding as well.

We ask that you approve this request.

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Jill Lofald, School Board Chair

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Shandi Mickle, Policy Council Chair



**Head Start COLA and Quality Improvement Supplemental Allocations:  
FY 24**

<b>Funding Type</b>	<b>Head Start</b>
<b>Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)</b>	<b>\$143,865</b>

The Cost of Living Adjustment will be used to cover the 7% fringe benefit increase as well as an increase of 2.5% salary increases.

Remaining funds will be used to offset increased operating costs in other budget areas, including supplies, contracted services, recruitment materials, and playscape maintenance.

<b>Funding Type</b>	<b>Head Start</b>
<b>Quality Improvement (QI)</b>	<b>\$63,397</b>

Quality Improvement funds will be used to hire 2 .4 Float Substitute teachers to cover absences and when not needed, to reduce the adult:child ratio in classrooms with challenging behavior.

**Quality Improvement:**

**\$63,397**

Mental Health needs are significant and we see a need to provide additional support Mental Health supports to classrooms. We propose hiring an additional .5 Social Worker to help cover increasing student caseloads and to provide Reflective Practice to any staff requesting it. We have contracted with a mental health consultant using American Rescue funds, but would like to make this a permanent position.

**Duluth Public Schools Federal Head Start Continuation Grant  
Fiscal Year 2024**

<b>Funding Type</b>	<b>Federal Head Start</b>
Program Operations	<b>\$2,569,026</b>
Training and Technical Assistance	<b>\$28,958</b>
Federal Funded Enrollment	<b>224, asking to reduce to 190 as we convert 2 half day classes to full day classes.</b>
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>\$2,597,984</b>

This is year three of a five year grant cycle.

**Broad Grant Goals remain:**

- 1. High Quality Inclusion: Navigating Trauma**
  - a. Partnership with Early Childhood Special Education
- 2. Walking the Talk of Equity**
  - a. Oshki-Inwewin: A program that infuses curriculum with Ojibwe language and culture
  - b. Preschool Equity Team:
    - i. Sub Committee of Education Equity Advisory Committee
    - ii. Annual Book Studies for teachers with anti racism focus
- 3. Fostering Resilience with a Focus on Health and Wellness**
  - a. Nature Based Programming
  - b. YMCA Collaboration: Safety Around Water classes for 72 children annually; Family Day Passes for all Head Start families
  - c. Health and Wellness Focus for Families and Staff

**Differences between this year and last year’s Continuation Grant:**

**We will be asking to:**

- **Conversion from Half Days to Full Days at two sites:**
  - Half Day sessions have been severely under enrolled at two sites.
  - Most families prefer full day sessions.
  - Moving to Full Day sessions enable more 4 year olds to access transportation to and from school



- This results in an enrollment reduction of 34 spots. Reductions, if approved, do not result in decreased funding, rather an increase in the amount of funding we receive per child.
- **Asking to move to a four day week**
  - Teachers report feeling overwhelmed by challenging behaviors and lack of teaming and preparation time. Self-contained classrooms (similar to Setting III), with no access to specialists, with young children who need continuous adult attention, is very stressful. Currently our classrooms are in session every other Friday to meet the contract's requirement for prep time.
  - **Benefits for Teachers/Staff**
    - Time to team with ECSE and other EC staff
    - Engage in PLCs
    - Engage in Reflective Practice (facilitated by a Mental Health practitioner)\* *this is very common in the world of Early Childhood where secondary trauma and compassion fatigue are very real things.*
    - Engage in more effective Practice Based Coaching (time to meet with coaches)
    - Participate in individualized Professional Development
    - Allow time for 1:1 staff check ins that do not interfere with Planning Time
    - Supporting wellness in an authentic way
  - **Benefits for Families**
    - Family Engagement activities that teachers can be a part of
    - Having a consistent schedule alleviates any confusion with dates we are in or out of session.
    - Children also thrive with consistent routines.
    - Many daycares charge for full days whether you are there or not. We are currently in session approximately 2 Fridays/month.
    - Individual communication with families surrounding child goals (all children in Head Start must have individual goals, even those not on IEPs)

It is understood that ultimately the Office of Head Start will determine if the request has merit or not. Plan B will be to continue with 955.5 hours of programming per year. Moving to a four day week would reduce the dosage to 861 hours per year. Minnesota's minimum number of hours for kindergarten is 850 hours.

This has been wholeheartedly supported by our Parent Policy Council.

We ask that this grant application be approved.

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Signature of School Board Chair

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Signature of Policy Council Chair

## 2022-2023 Duluth Public Schools Head Start Self Assessment Report

### Purpose of Self-Assessment

Head Start Performance Standard §1302.102(b)(2)(i) indicates that a program must effectively oversee progress towards program goals on an ongoing basis and annually must conduct a self-assessment that uses program data, and professional development and parent and family engagement data as appropriate, to evaluate the program's progress towards meeting program goals, compliance with program performance standards throughout the program year and the effectiveness of the professional development and family engagement systems in promoting school readiness.

Head Start Performance Standard §1302.102(c)(2)(iv) indicates that a program must use information from ongoing monitoring and the annual self-assessment, and program data on teaching practice, staffing and professional development, child-level assessments, family needs assessments, and comprehensive services, to identify program needs, and develop and implement plans for program improvement.

Some questions that helped guide the process were:

- Is our program meeting the Head Start Performance Standards?
- Are our services responding to the changing needs of children and families?
- Are we doing what we need to do, or are we just doing things the way we have always done them?
- Are we achieving the goals we intended?

Duluth Head Start used a process for the self assessment that involved teams to determine success in the following areas:

1. High Quality Inclusive Classrooms: Navigating Trauma
2. Walking the Talk of Equity and Inclusion
3. Fostering Resilience with a Focus on Health and Wellness
4. Program Management and Quality Improvement
5. Parent, Family and Community Engagement, Enrollment, Transportation

### Program Strengths

**Duluth Head Start is a school based program** with a mission to create a strong learning community in order to achieve success in the classroom and beyond.

Located in seven of the nine elementary schools in Duluth, MN, we are spread across this 27 mile long city along the shores of Lake Superior.

We have been in our public schools since 1965 and are staffed with teachers and paraprofessionals who are part of the school district bargaining units. Being compensated as public school employees means we have very low staff turnover, and many of our teaching staff have advanced degrees. Being within a public school also gives us the opportunity to work together with our school district to align initiatives and collaborate with schools directly in finding the best ways to support children and families.

Our access to staff from various departments from Early Childhood Special Education, the American Indian Education Department, and the Office of Educational Equity help us to identify enriching ways to meet the needs of our diverse population.

Some of the challenges of this arrangement is that we don't always fit perfectly within the K-12 model. Elements of the union contract need to be viewed differently when looking at early childhood programs. Despite this challenge, our program does exceptional work preparing children for kindergarten, and helping to make sure kindergarten is ready for children.

## Methodology

The management team developed a self assessment plan with tasks and timelines. The Self Assessment team analyzed 5 areas:

1. High Quality Inclusive Classrooms
2. Walking the Talk of Equity
3. Fostering Resilience with a Focus on Health and Wellness
4. Program Management and Quality Improvement
5. Parent, Family, and Community Engagement; Enrollment; Transportation

Our Planning Team identified strengths and weaknesses of each area. We identified data sets that may be helpful in answering the questions we posed for each area. Teams included a management team member, a teacher, a parent, in some cases a community member with expertise in the topic. If a parent was not able to attend, we accessed parent perspectives in alternative ways - with phone calls and/or surveys.

## Key Insights

### **Progress on Goals:**

Program Wide Goals for 2021-22 included:

### **High Quality Inclusive Classrooms**

#### **1, Program Wide PLCs done collaboratively with Early Childhood Special Education**

**Academic:** Teachers and program staff will increase the ways in which curriculum/learning activities are implemented to support cognitive and language development in the area of Instructional Support from 64.57% to 80% as measured by the CLASS observation tool.

2022: Collective Instructional Support Score was 75.76% with 6 teachers reaching at least 80%

**Social/Emotional/Behavioral:** At least 80% of teaching teams will collect data on behavior incidents.

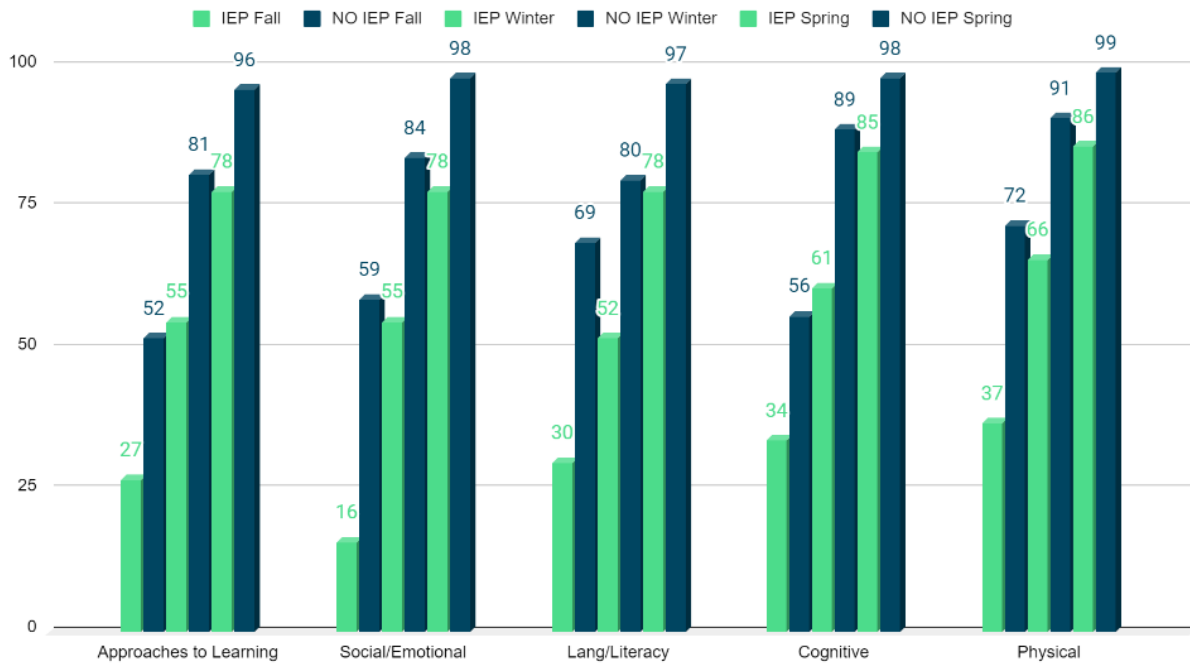
2022: More than 80% of teams completed Behavior Incident Reports.

While we clearly articulated PLC goals and tracked progress toward them in 2021-2022, we focused mainly on Safety and Strengthening Teams 2022-2023. This focus was driven by our Corrective Action Plan. Recognizing that a post pandemic reset was needed, the overall theme of the year was, "Creating a Culture of Restorative Practices". Preparing staff to have courageous conversations when something is occurring that does not align with best practices, is a safety element we believe is necessary to ensure the students we serve are receiving an optimal experience. The most vulnerable children in our community deserve the very best.

Moving forward, a renewed commitment to the PLC process will be implemented. Goals will be linked to Program Wide Goals, which will in turn, be linked to Duluth Public Schools Goals.

**2. Rate of Growth for Students on IEPs surpassed the rate of growth for students not on IEPs**

Head Start IEP/NO IEP 4 YO's



Students on IEPs experience incredible rates of growth in our classrooms.

### 3. Behavior Incident Report Data Tracking:

Boys are more than twice as likely to have Behavior Incident Reports reported.

#### Walking the Talk of Equity

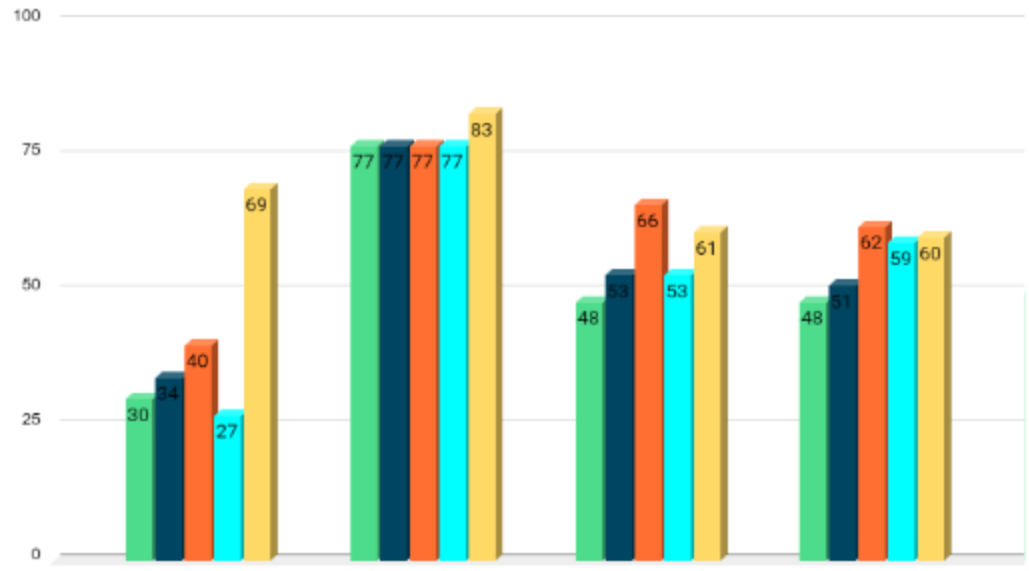
1. **Nature Play:** Nature Based preschools are the fastest growing type of preschool in Duluth. High tuition rates make them out of reach for families experiencing poverty. In our public school preschool we are providing this opportunity to *all* children.
2. **Oshki-Inwewin** In the 2021-22 school year, American Indian students were our highest performing demographic.

In the current year, we have had staffing changes occur in Oshki-inwewin. Despite those changes, we continue to have the expressed support of families who are grateful for our commitment to this program. Parents articulate having a community of people with shared cultural identity is very important to them.

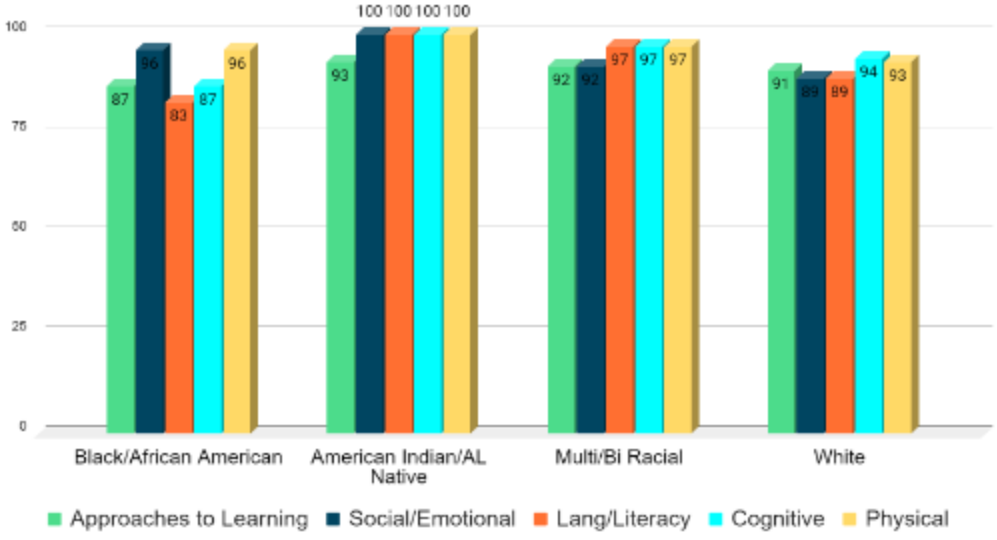


## Head Start 4 YO's by Race **Fall**

UPDATE



## Spring



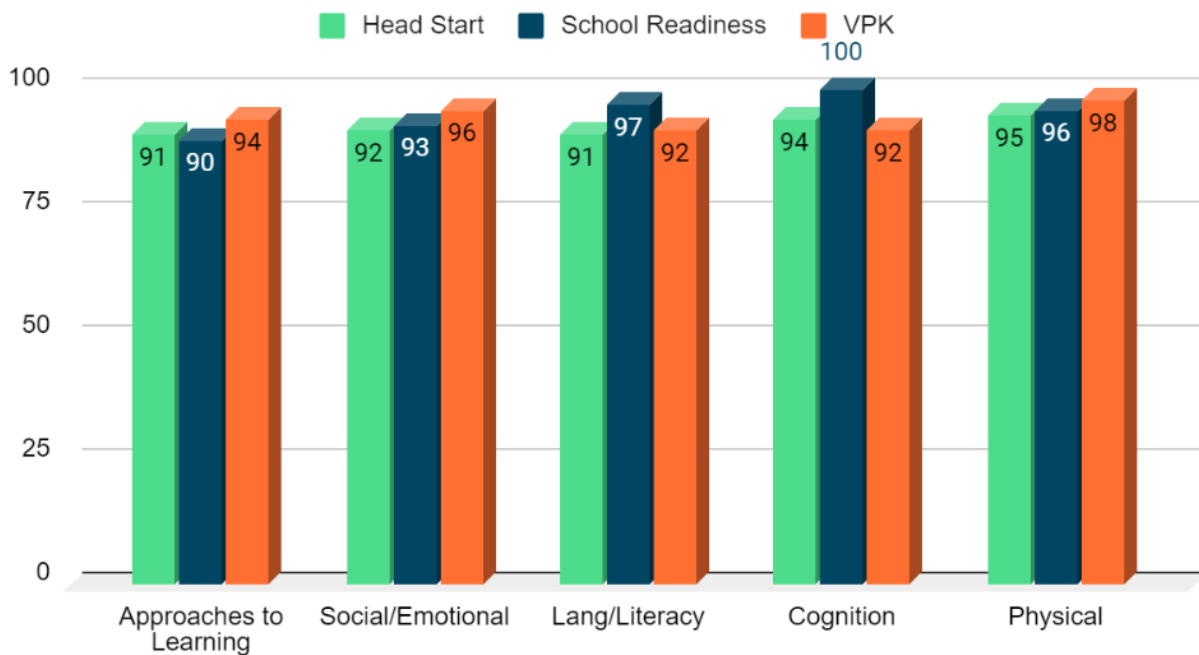
Success of this program is currently based on student achievement, but family testimonials of feeling welcome and honored are measures not to be denied. We would like to expand some common Ojibwe words and phrases throughout our program.

3. **Equity Team:** Our Equity team has merged with the Office of Educational Equity Advisory Committee as a subcommittee.

- We continue to offer annual book studies for teachers on anti racist ideals.
- Our classrooms are required to do Cultural Sharing.

**School Readiness** Measures at 85% or higher for all four year olds across all funding streams. \*School Readiness must always be included as a Grant Goal

### Program Comparison 4 YO's Spring



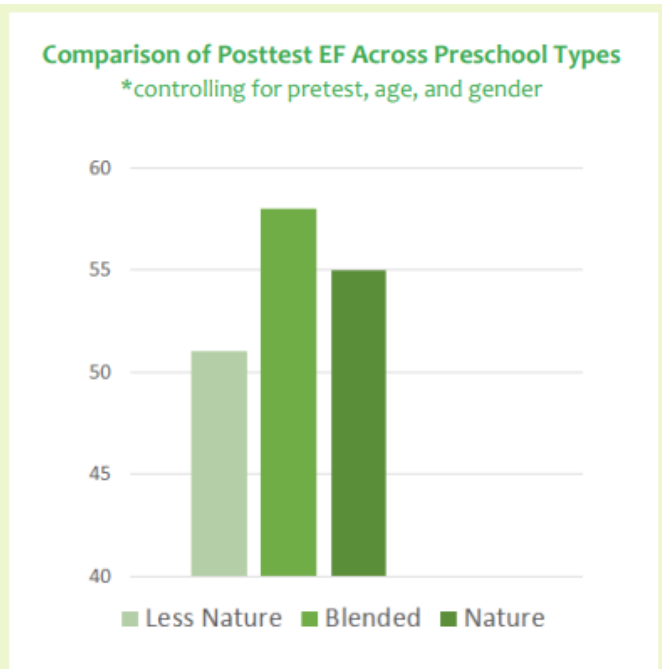
**First six weeks of school.** We have focused on setting the stage for optimal learning in the first six weeks of school. This may include modifying the environment to meet identified needs of current students, or gradually increasing stamina /scaffolding for a variety of situations.

**Play Based Learning** We believe that leaving ample time for play and supporting children's ability to engage in play is paramount in the successful learning equation.

**Fostering Resilience with a Focus on Health and Wellness**

**Nature Play**

- 100% of families believe it is good for kids to spend time in nature
- Study with UMD reveals spending some time in nature increases student's Executive Functioning. *Growth rates were so high it is believed that time in nature may help to close achievement gaps experienced by students with lower SES.*
- 23% of Behavior Incidents happen outside, and, of these only 10% happen in the Playscapes. 77% of behavior incidents happen inside.



\*Duluth Preschool is the Blended class

### **Partnership with YMCA**

Each year, the YMCA offers 4 of our full day classrooms an anti drowning program called, “**Safety Around Water**”.

72 children participated in these classes in 2021-2022 and a different 72 children participated in 2022-2023.

### **Head Start Days at the Y and Family Day Passes**

In 2021-22 we had several Head Start Days at the Y on Saturdays. They each had 3-4 families in attendance. While the numbers are low, the impact was great. We worked to streamline scholarships for our families.

In 2022-23 the Y provided our program with Family Day Passes for all Head Start families.

### **Creating a Culture of Safety**

We have spent much Professional Development time on looking at how staff as individuals and as teams respond to challenging behaviors.

We have also developed a monitoring system to ensure that all elements of Active Supervision are in place in every classroom.

### **Health and Wellness for Staff**

Teachers have been feeling overwhelmed. They are requesting more time to team, plan, and engage in reflective practice.

Restorative Practices were the focus of 4 staff training sessions. These equip teams with skills to help them have courageous conversations in order to strengthen the health of our program as a whole.

## Program Management and Quality Improvement

**Ongoing monitoring.** Following our Corrective Action Plan, we have added some checklists to use when visiting classrooms to provide feedback for what is in place, and what needs to be reinforced. We have also created a checklist to prepare us for OHS monitoring that will likely happen next year.

**Self Assessment Process** Our process for self assessment is deeply considered each year. Again this year, some changes have been identified that will make the process feel more logical and streamlined.

## Family Engagement, Enrollment, Transportation

**Under Enrollment:** We have not reached full enrollment this year. Suspected reasons are:

1. Half Day Sessions: Families are asking for full day classes. In two of our sites, the half day classes are at half capacity.
2. Teachers asking for no additional students to be added due to challenging behaviors in their classrooms.
3. Larger systemic issues that impact enrollment are lack of transportation for 3 year olds and at the mid-day for half days, and lack of wrap around childcare.

### **Family Engagement:**

With many schools not allowing preschool parents to escort children into schools, family advocates have lost some connecting points with families.

Family Advocates are working on ways to both engage and better document our connections and impacts with families.

### **Transportation:**

We have had an instance where students were dropped off without an adult present, and are working with the transportation department to make sure systems are in place to prevent that from happening in the future.

## Recommendations

The following five program wide recommended course corrections and areas are noted for continuous quality improvement.

1. We will use ongoing monitoring tools to track safety and compliance.
2. We will train PLC+ teacher leaders to guide PLCs.
3. Continue to increase data capacity in all areas, including PFCE and Self Assessment process.
4. We will seek to convert 2 half day classrooms to full day classrooms and to explore potential wrap around care.
5. We will continue our commitment to Restorative Practices to keep our teams strong and able to have the courageous conversations necessary when committed to a high quality, inclusive, and equitable program.

**Annual Self Assessments require Governing Board and Policy Council Approval.**

Signatures below indicate this document was approved by each of these entities

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Jill Lofald, School Board Chair

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Shandi Mickle, Policy Council Chair

**Duluth Public Schools Head Start Program**

**FY 24 State Head Start Application**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Funding Level</b>	<b>State Funded Enrollment</b>
<b>Families in Transition</b>		<b>12 EHS (Early Head Start: pregnant mothers to age 3) 5 HS (Head Start: 3 &amp; 4 year olds)</b>
<b>Home Base Head Start</b>		<b>6 HS 4 EHS</b>
<b>State Grant Total</b>	<b>\$400,030</b>	

**The State Head Start Grant fully funds the following positions:**

- 2 Families in Transition Teacher/Advocate positions that each serve 6 Early Head Start and 2-3 Preschool age children
- 1 Home Base teacher that will serve a mix of Early Head Start and Head Start aged children.

**This grant also partially funds the following positions:**

- 1 Business manager
- 1 Clerical staff
- Program director
- 5 Service Coordinators
- 1 Recruiter

In addition, the grant pays for supplies, food, transportation contracts, mileage, travel, dues and memberships, printing, conference registration and associated costs, a required small insurance policy for each Head Start child, and Indirect Charges paid to ISD709.

We ask that this grant be approved.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of School Board Chair

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Signature of Policy Council Chair







**S.T.E.P.S**  
**Success Through Empowerment and**  
**Positive Support**

# STEPS Program Purpose

- *Duluth Public School District offers a Setting IV for students displaying significant behavior and unmet mental health needs. In this environment, the students will continue to receive their core instruction in a highly structured, supported classroom setting as behaviors are re-shaped using replacement behaviors. It is in this environment that unmet emotional needs will be discovered and addressed.*
- *Upon acquiring new skills and demonstrating successful integration of the acquired skills, the student and the home school site will be supported by the development of a transition plan for reintegration to the home school.*

\* Larry K Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, & Steve Van Bockern, Reclaiming Youth at Risk; Futures of Promise, 3rd

# Program Components

- *Students will have a comparable school day to ISD 709 schools.*
- *Students will have access to their curriculum and specials.*
- *Elementary and Secondary classrooms*
- *Social Emotional components*
- *Access to Mental Health options -On-site social worker*
- *ISD-709 transportation will be provided*
- *Partner with Northwoods*

# Staffing and Program Capacity

- 2 teachers (elementary and secondary)
- 3 paraprofessionals
- 1 social worker
- 1 Assistant Principal oversight
- 3 classrooms-1 for each level and a cool-down room
- 8 students maximum at each level

# **“SUCCESS THROUGH EMPOWERMENT & POSITIVE SUPPORT”**

## **REFERRAL REQUIREMENTS**

Prior to submitting a referral, it is expected that a building team (case manager, social worker, school psychologist, school administrator, general education teacher) has met regularly to review and update/adjust programming, interventions and support for the student. It is advisable to include a TOSA to support the building team before submitting a referral.

# STEP 1

- Read through the Setting IV [Purpose](#) and the Steps needed for referral to help consider if your student's needs can be met with the program
- Contact Martha Lippitt to inform that your team is considering this referral and/or for any questions you may have during the data collection process
- Collect the required data described in Step 2 and submit

## STEP 2

Submitted documentation will include:

- Baseline data sheets addressing the behavior(s) must be completed for two weeks prior to new PBSP
- The most recent special education evaluation
- Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) that was completed within the last year,
- Copy of Diagnostic Assessment (if applicable)
- The identified behavior(s) incorporated in a Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP).
- Details of interventions tried and what worked and what didn't work
- Most recent IEP documenting setting 3 services
- 4 weeks of data collected after implementing new PBIS
- Identification of the target behaviors that have been addressed through the PBSP
- Identification of subjects or activities that the student enjoys and feels successful doing

# Steps 3 + 4

## **STEP 3**

- Submission of the completed referral packet to Special Services, Att: Martha Lippitt

## **STEP 4**

- Contact Martha Lippitt by email or leave a message at 218/336-8751 to schedule a time for an observation of the student. After the observation Martha will set up a meeting with the team to review all the current data collected on the student and next steps.

The packets will be reviewed by the Setting IV team. Case managers will be notified of STEP team decisions.



# Intake Process

- Data Collected
- Packet submitted
- Observation of student and building staff discussion
- STEPS team review

If appropriate for enrollment an IEP/Intake meeting will be scheduled

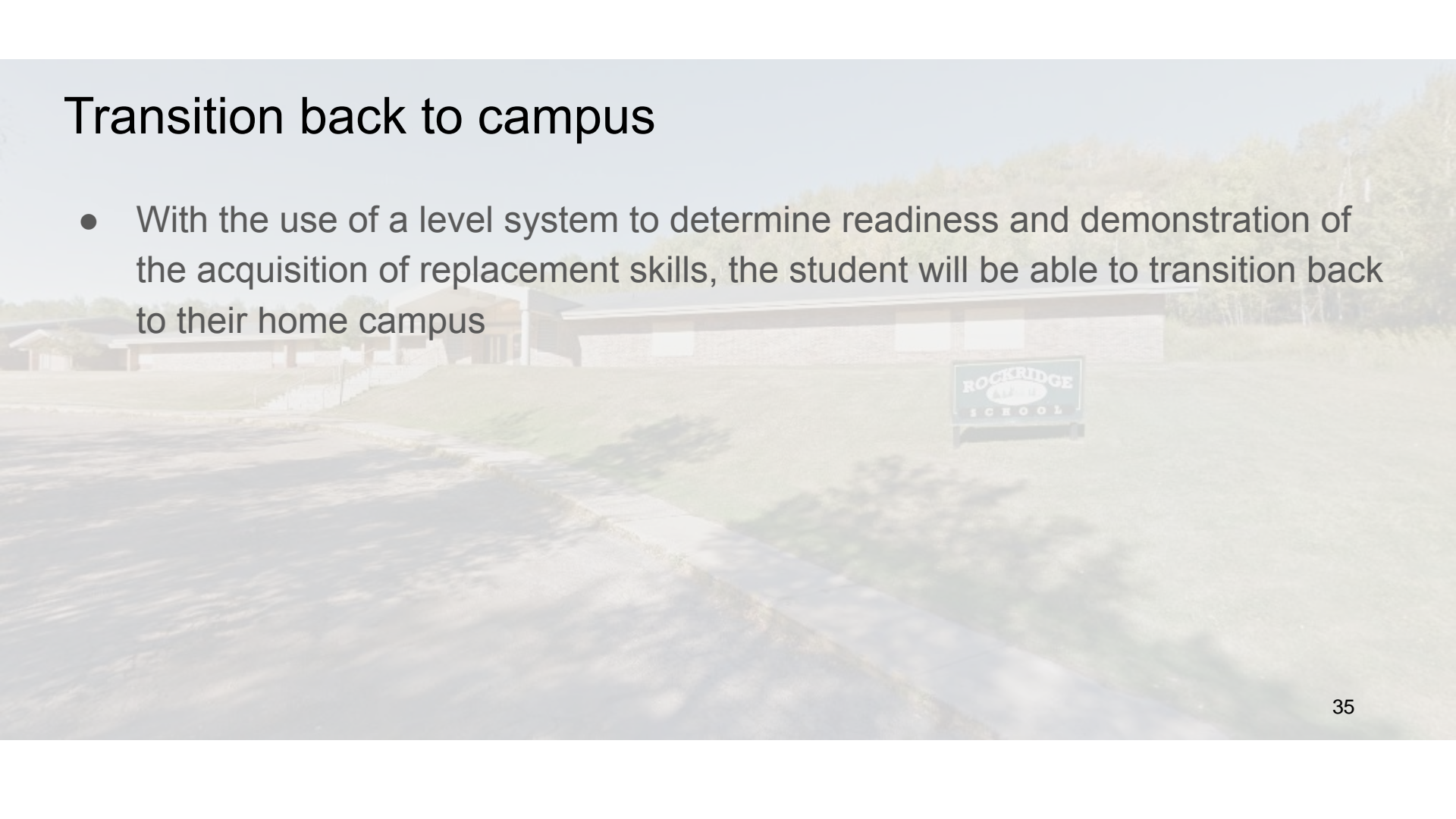
# Curriculum

- Social Emotional Learning activities and the culture of the STEPS program will be based on the ideals of the Circle of Courage\*.
- Additional support will stem from the use of strength based curriculum activities, and support from Cognitive Behavior reshaping
- Online curriculum, as appropriate and available, will be provided through Academic Excellence Online

\* Larry K Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, & Steve Van Bockern, Reclaiming Youth at Risk; Futures of Promise, 3rd.

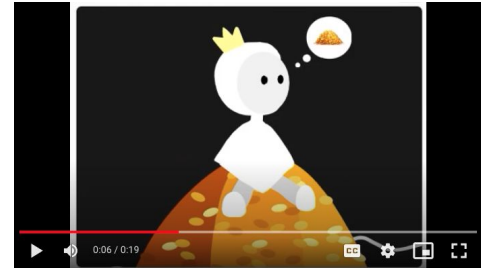
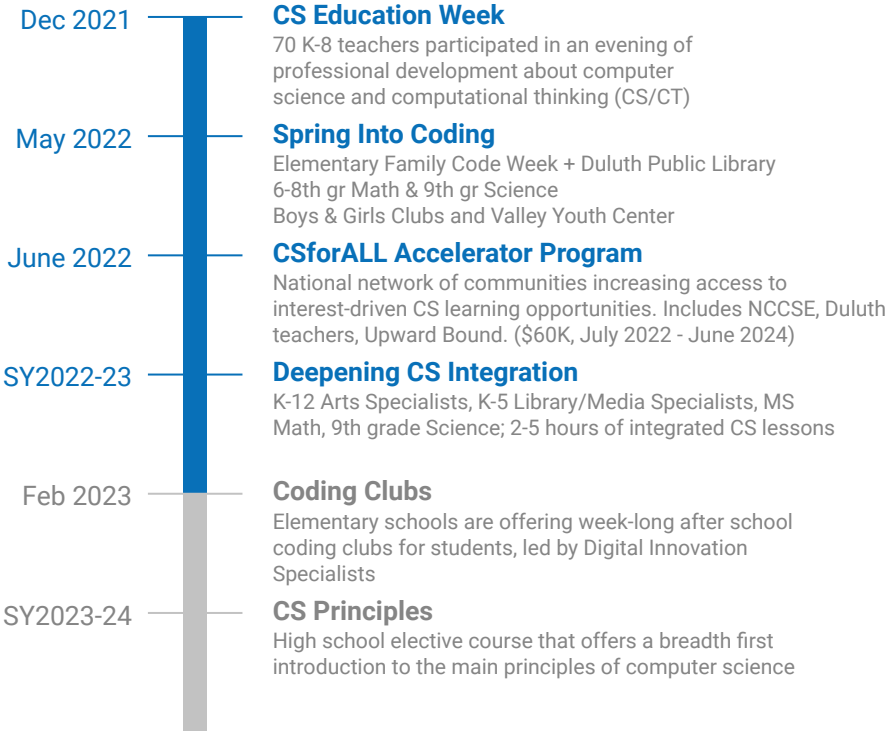
# Transition back to campus

- With the use of a level system to determine readiness and demonstration of the acquisition of replacement skills, the student will be able to transition back to their home campus



# What should happen now?

- Sites should be considering the return of any students attending on home-based instruction in an effort to collect the needed data for a placement at STEPS
- Residential and Day Treatment Students should proceed with transition back to their home schools
- Site team should reach out to Martha Lippitt with any questions, but to also make her aware of students under consideration for a placement.
- Procedure documents are available on the Special Services HUB

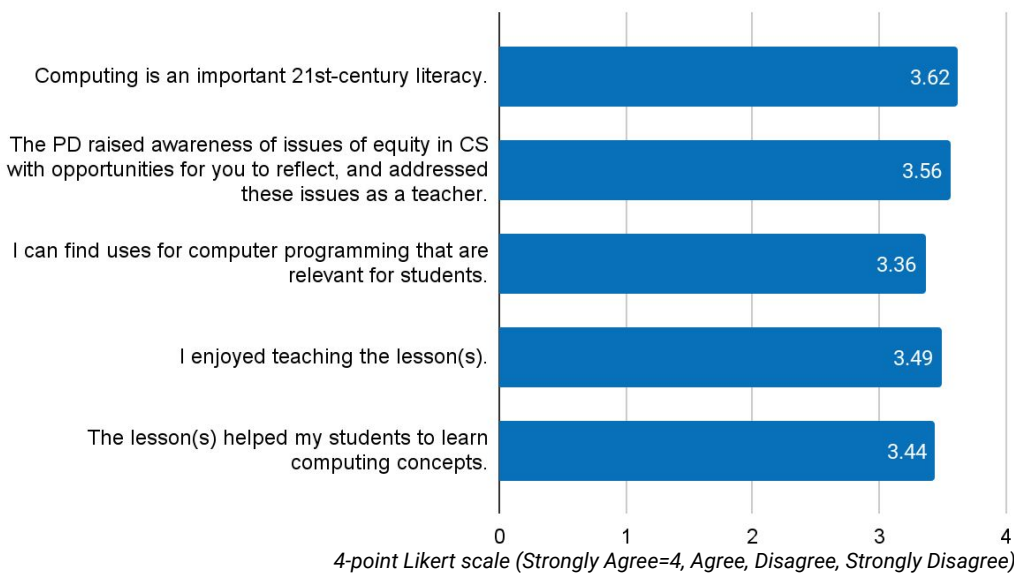


Students in Trinh Tran's art class at Ordean East Middle School developed characters, stories, and comic strip animation using Scratch coding.

### Students' Favorite Thing (Math/CS):

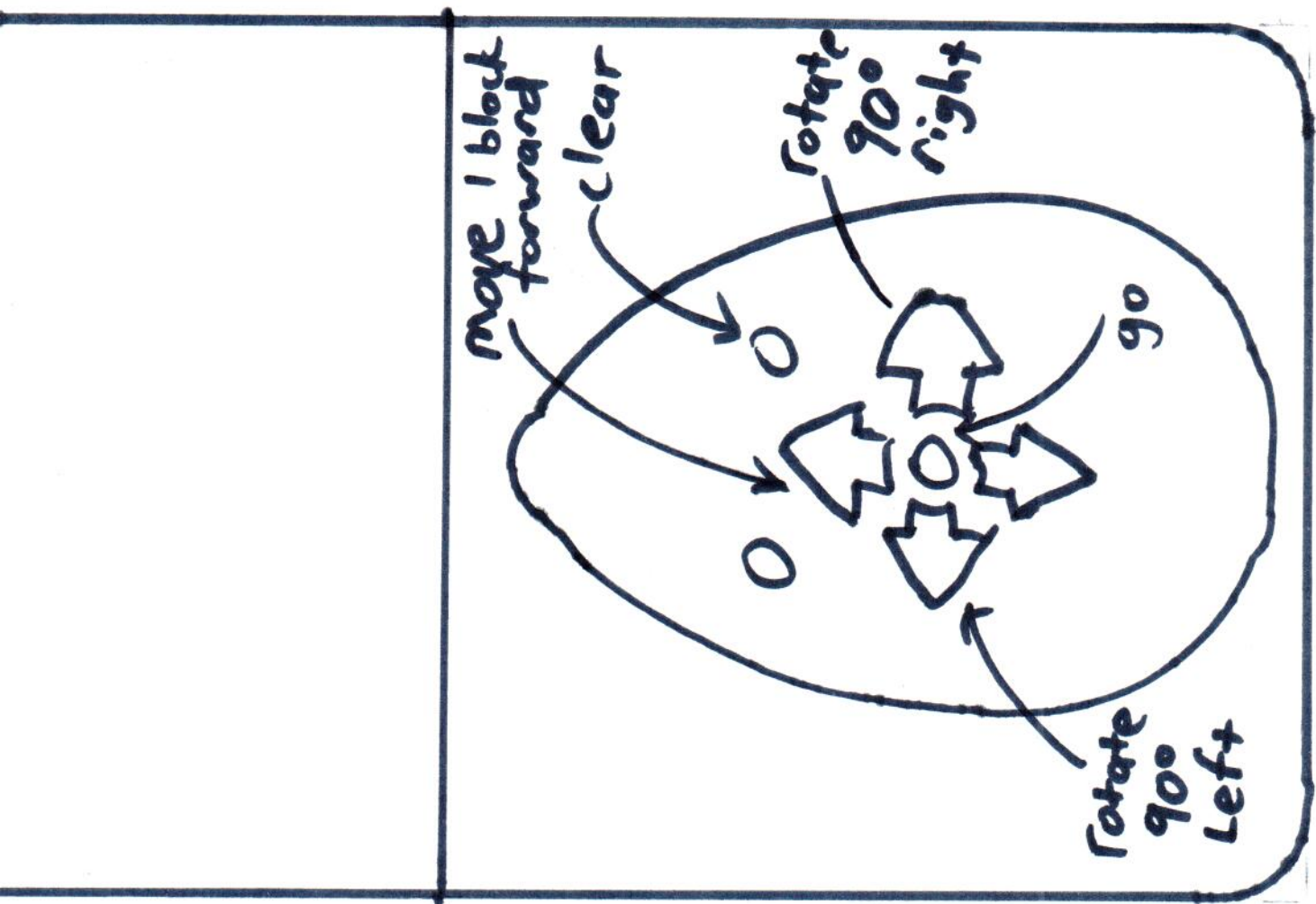
- "My favorite thing was learning about how to code different things, because we don't do that sort of thing often."
- "it gave me an opportunity to work on code which is something I hope to do as a profession."
- "I liked the abstract thinking involved with the unit."
- "I liked putting to code into the computer and actually seeing that it worked."
- "Learning a new method/way of doing math."

### Selected Teacher Survey Responses



### Teachers: Students enjoyed...

- "Students enjoyed the Code and Go Mouse because if something didn't go right, they could try again..."
- "They were very engaged in the problem solving aspects of the lesson, I was surprised to see how they persevered to get problems solved!"
- "I think the students who enjoyed the lesson the most enjoyed the ability to experiment."

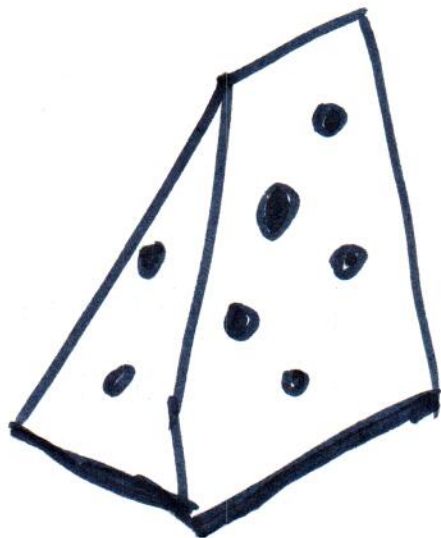


→ ①

START

### Directions:

1. Combine sheets with a partner. (#2 sheet)
2. Plan the sequence of steps to get the mouse to the cheese.
3. Try your program!



FINISH

② ←