

DASH to Success

Personalized Mentorship to Address Chronic Absenteeism

Denfeld After School Happenings (DASH), a program of Duluth Community School Collaborative, provides opportunities for students to collaborate with community partners to build programming that supports student attendance and enhances academic success.

Using a social emotional lens, DASH continuously incorporates quantitative and qualitative feedback from community partners. A youth leadership team, the DASHboard empowers students to think critically, gain leadership skills and develop and implement research-based programming for student success.

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.

Roughly one in three
Denfeld students are
chronically absent.



What is Our Program Idea?

To empower students to increase their attendance through connections that lead them to feel a sense of belonging at school. We plan to implement this strategy by starting mentor relationships for students in need to personalize their needs and goals while fostering youth-adult connections in schools.

We hope to seek mentor volunteers through already established community partnerships with Mentor North, local colleges and universities.

Why is this important?

- Loneliness is a determining factor in a student's attendance.
- Not every student's reasons for absenteeism are the same.
- Our school particularly suffers with chronic attendance issues.
- We find that students are in need of inclusion in their school communities.
- Young people are not the future, young people are right now.

What do we Hope to Achieve?

- Students feeling a sense of importance and belonging in their school communities.
- Improve attendance and academics.
- Build youth-adult relationships.
- Improving students developmental and behavioral assets.

How Will We Know it is Working?

- Our team will gather quarterly intake surveys to track students overall satisfaction with their attendance and our program.
- More quantifiably our attendance coordinator will monitor students attendance numbers (Tardies, Absences).
- Their grades will also be monitored.
- We will also ask the teachers evaluate students classroom participation.

Sources

- Brooks, A. C. (2026, January 22). How to help kids like school better. The Atlantic.
- Minnesota Report Card, rc.education.mn.gov/#mySchool/p--3. Accessed 30 Mar. 2026.
- Richmond, E. (2013, December 2). What does it take to get kids to stop skipping school? The Atlantic.



Questions?

- Any questions?
- Comments?
- Concerns?
- Feedback?