

Duluth Public Schools – 2022 Legislative Platform

Construction Sales Tax Exemption: Support legislation exempting materials and supplies used in and equipment incorporated into the construction of the district's administrative and transportation facility. Legislation exempting materials and equipment from state sales tax for school projects in Duluth, Ely, Hibbing, and Rock Ridge public schools will be introduced in the 2022 legislative session.

Increased State Aid for Public Education: State aid for public education funding has not kept up with inflation. To help Duluth Public Schools compete in a challenging labor market and to meet student needs, we request that the state significantly increase and stabilize funding for Minnesota's local public education systems. We also support linking the basic education funding formula to annual increases to inflation.

Special Education: Continue to freeze special education cross-subsidies in place for each school district. Support a single special education formula that is stable and equitable, and consistent. Duluth Public Schools continues to request that the state of Minnesota help cover the district's special education losses of \$5.8 million dollars between FY16-FY19.

Compensatory Revenue: Allow school districts to use 2019 compensatory pupil counts to address impacts brought on by the COVID pandemic. We also support allowing for additional options to meet free and reduced-price lunch eligibility, which is the primary factor in determining compensatory revenue.

Operating Levies: Allow school board renewal of existing and future operating levies. Long Term Facilities Maintenance (LTFM): Remove the per pupil limit and broaden the eligible uses.

Reduce Mandates: Cease adding new unfunded mandates and fund current mandates already in law.

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.