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Duluth

Public Schools

Every Student. Every Day.

Superintendent's Report

February 24, 2026



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

- 2026 Student Representative Reports
 - Osiris Garcia Henderson- ALC
 - Tamia Bowles - Denfeld
 - Kalina Mattila - East
- Budget Reduction Update
- Legislative Update
- Litigation Update
- Other

Budget Update

The Current Challenge (The “Why”)

Navigating a \$4 Million Funding Gap: State funding and legislative mandates are not keeping pace with rising operational costs.

- **Key Cost Drivers:**
 - Health Insurance Premiums
 - Transportation Logistics
 - Special Education Services (Unfunded Mandates)
 - Other Costs
- **The Bottom Line:** To maintain fiscal health, we must optimize our resource allocation and reduce spending for the upcoming school year.

Budget Reduction and Realignment Guiding Change

Principles Over Politics for Greater Transparency: Open, honest communication with the board, staff, and families.

- **Student-First Focus:** Using a "Guiding Change" rubric to ensure decisions are filtered through student needs.
- **Efficiency:** Evaluating long-standing practices to consider modern, cost-effective alternatives.

Budget Reduction and Realignment Guiding Change

- **Focus on the Classroom:** We will do everything we can to protect your child's daily learning experience.
- **Fairness and Equity:** We will continue to provide extra resources to the students who need them most.
- **Mental Health and Support:** We will maintain essential academic and mental health services for our students.
- **Smart Spending:** We are looking at all our long-standing programs and practices to find ways to save money and work more efficiently.

We Want to Hear from You!

We value your voice in our school community. We will host two public meetings to explain the budget process and answer your questions:

- **March 11:** Denfeld High School Cafeteria at 6 p.m.
- **March 16:** East High School Cafeteria at 6 p.m.

We will also host two staff meetings to explain the budget process, review the data, and answer your questions:

- **March 9:** East High School Auditorium at 3:45 p.m.
- **March 10:** Denfeld High School Auditorium at 3:45 p.m.

Legislative Update

Legislative Updates

- We met with our local legislative representatives on January 27th and attended the Association of Metropolitan School Districts Legislative Preview on February 6th
- We plan to participate in the MSBA/MASA Day at the Capitol on March 9th
- We also plan to participate in Duluth St. Louis County Days on March 18th and 19th.

Legislative Updates

- Continued advocacy for improved funding is paramount to our district and others around the state.
- Increases in state aid, fully funding state mandated programs, and increasing the special education cross subsidy to fund true costs of educating all learners is needed.
- We are also seeking funding for the Duluth Promise, student mental health, and expanding the diversity of our workforce are among our main priorities.

Litigation Update

Litigation Updates

- We have joined in a lawsuit against the federal government, suing for a return of protected status to schools related to immigration enforcement. This guidance was in place for several decades and ensured that schools were a safe location for learning.
- Fridley Public Schools and Education Minnesota are also plaintiffs in the lawsuit, which was filed in court yesterday.
- We are also seeking damages for the time and resources put into planning for potential immigration enforcement within our schools.
- We are also taking this stand to support our neighbors, the schools in the metro area, as well as those around the country.

Questions