

Monthly Committee of the Whole Board Meeting

Duluth Public Schools, ISD 709

Agenda

Tuesday, January 6, 2026

District Services Center

709 Portia Johnson Dr.

Duluth, MN 55811

4:30 PM

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **ROLL CALL**

3. **AGENDA ITEMS**

A. Strategic Plan Alignment

1) Advancing Equity - N/A

2) Supporting Every Student

a. 2026-2027 Course Changes

2

3) Improving Systems - N/A

B. Teaching, Learning, and Equity Board Summary Report

1) KEYZone

10

2) Check and Connect

15

3) Secondary Schedule Update

20

4) Credit Course Update

25

C. Budget Update - N/A

D. Other

4. **ADJOURN**

COW Agenda Cover Sheet

Meeting Date: January 6th, 2026

Topic: 26-27 High School Course Changes

Presenter(s): Julie Stauber, Jen Larva

Attachment: Yes

Brief Summary of Presentation or Topic (no more than a few sentences):

Proposal of the upcoming 26-27 high school course changes.

This Requires School Board Approval : Yes

26-27 Course Changes

3

High School

Action	Course Title	Content Area	Course Length	Credits	Description
Add	CITS American Sign Language 3	World Language	Year	1.0	American Sign Language 3 continues the study of American Sign Language (ASL) by developing students' intermediate communication skills. Building on the ASL 2 foundation, this course will expand vocabulary base in ASL. Includes an in-depth study of the principles of American Sign Language as used receptively and expressively in communication with deaf individuals. College Course Credit TBD with UMD.
Add	ProStart 3: School Cafe and Bakery SBE	CTE	Semester	1.0 Block	Designed for students who have a foundational understanding of the hospitality industry and wish to deepen their knowledge and skills. Students will focus on advanced principles of restaurant operations, customer service strategies, event management, while catering events, running the student cafe and bakery, and competing in the Minnesota ProStart Invitational. Operations may include managing budgets, coordinating complex events, and designing innovative guest experiences while exploring leadership roles within the culinary and hospitality industries.
Add	Outdoor Leadership	CTE	Semester	.5	This course prepares students to manage land and natural resources for outdoor recreation while promoting environmental stewardship. Students will learn to design sustainable programs and manage outdoor spaces that protect ecosystems, wildlife habitats, and provide enjoyable experiences. Topics include land use planning, sustainable resource management, and balancing ecological health with recreation demands. The course emphasizes responsible management practices, public education, and community engagement for the benefit of both wildlife and visitors.
Add	Social Studies 9	Social Studies	Semester	.5	Through the application of spatial concepts, students will explore human social organization and its impacts. Using geographic tools and methods, students will gain insight into the geographic considerations involved in everyday decisions and trends, including <i>immigration and citizenship and elections</i> . Students will also analyze the role of geography in current events and discuss its relation to civic engagement and participation.

Add	Intro to Business and Entrepreneurship	CTE	Semester	.5	Students will develop an entrepreneurial mindset; a mindset capable of critical thinking and problem solving in a fast-paced professional environment. Students develop core knowledge and skills needed for starting their own business venture or non-profit organization. Students will investigate the impact entrepreneurs have on the economy while exploring diverse pathways to entrepreneurship. They will engage in the discovery process to generate and validate new business ideas and develop a plan to market their business. The class examines entrepreneurial theory as well as real world situations. All Business and Marketing students have the opportunity to join and compete in DECA.
Add	Entrepreneurship 2: Small Business Development	CTE	Year	1.0	This course involves operating a school-based, startup, or simulated business including a school store. This course will build upon the innovation and entrepreneurial skills from the introductory class. Students will engage in business planning by researching, designing, and launching (or planning) a new venture. They will cover key areas like competitive analysis, product development, operations, financial analysis, and marketing strategy to gain essential business preparation skills.
Add	AP Business with Personal Finance	CTE	Year	1.0	Comparable to a college-level introduction to business course, students explore the business disciplines of entrepreneurship, marketing, finance, accounting, and management through real-world business applications, case studies, and project based learning. In addition, students learn and apply all the National Standards for Personal Financial Education created by the Council for Economic Education and the Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy. *This course satisfies the requirement for Personal Finance. Students do not need to take the semester course.
Add	Hospitality, Travel & Tourism	CTE	Semester	.5	Introduces a wide range of topics in the hospitality, travel, and tourism industry hotel and restaurant management, travel and tourism options, resorts and theme parks, restaurant and food service options, and events planning. Job shadowing, industry tours, student participation in simulations, and participation in DECA hospitality and tourism events are embedded within the course to help students align career pathway interests.
Add	Introduction to Graphic Arts & Design	CTE	Semester	.5	Curious about how to design logos, create digital art, or lay out a magazine? This entry-level course is your hands-on introduction to the world of Graphic Arts and Design. No experience is needed! You'll learn to apply artistic skills and computer techniques to create professional commercial concepts. We cover design basics like color theory and concept sketching while getting you started with industry-standard software like Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign. You'll learn to turn your ideas into digital artwork and understand the basics of commercial art business operations.
Add	Advanced Graphic Design & Commercial	CTE	Semester	.5	This advanced course is for students who want to apply their design skills to the commercial business world. Building on introductory knowledge,

	Applications				<p>the class focuses on high-level digital production and commercial communication. Key skills include advanced illustration, complex print preparation, and foundational web page design. 5</p> <p>You will gain hands-on experience in the Graphic Arts Lab, mastering printing processes like sublimation and vinyl printing. Crucially, you'll learn essential business-making skills, such as contracts and pricing, needed to pursue a career in commercial graphic design.</p>
Add	Advanced Commercial & Business Photography	CTE	Semester	.5	<p>This advanced course takes your photography skills into the business world. After successful completion of the first two photo courses, you'll learn how to successfully run a commercial photography enterprise. The main focus is on real-world career applications. You will master advanced technical skills—like complex studio lighting and specialized printing preparation—while applying them to commercial and industrial projects (e.g., product and corporate photography). Crucially, you'll gain business-making skills including: developing professional contracts and proposals, pricing your work and managing clients, and building a professional portfolio and online presence. This class is your path to becoming a working professional through real project experience.</p>
Add	Moving Images - Animation	CTE	Semester	.5	<p>Moving Image—Animation courses explore the creative and conceptual aspects of designing and producing animated images for storytelling and multimedia presentations including dramatic narratives; artistic and experimental presentations and installations; and ambient, interactive, immersive and performance media. Topics may include motion graphics; compositing and visual effects; 2D and 3D animation; timing and spacing; aspect ratio; video editing; animation physics and expressions; pre- and post-production methods, tools and processes; animation presentation, transmission, distribution, and marketing; and contextual, cultural, and historical aspects and considerations.</p>
Add	Advanced Animation	CTE	Semester	.5	<p>This advanced course is designed for students with a foundational understanding of animation principles and production workflows. It focuses on specialized, high-level production techniques and the conceptual development of complex animated projects for professional and experimental contexts.</p>
Add	Digital Media Design & Production - Media Lab 1	CTE	Semester	.5	<p>Digital Media Design & Production is a student-run digital journalism and media production course. You'll be creating the media the school actually uses: weekly announcements, newsletters, podcasts, videos, and content for the student YouTube channel. You'll learn the full production pipeline — reporting, writing for the web and print, filming, podcasting, editing, and graphic design. Every week means real deadlines, real audiences, and real impact. If you want to tell stories, shape culture, and make stuff people actually watch and read, this is your class.</p>
Add	Advanced Production &	CTE	Semester	.5	<p>Advanced Production & Broadcast Journalism takes media production to a</p>

	Broadcast Journalism - Lab 2				professional level. Students step into advanced TV/video, film, and audio production roles — directing studio shoots, producing high-impact reporting, creating longer-form packages, and leading editorial teams. You'll explore 6 cinematic techniques, lighting setups, motion graphics, multi-camera production, and broadcast journalism standards. Additional topics include media law, station operations, FCC guidelines, the economics and influence of the media industry, and career pathways in audio/visual communication. Students will not only create their own programs — they'll run the show.
Add	Reading Acceleration	Elective	Semester	.5	This course provides personalized literacy instruction to level up literacy skills and improve reading and writing in all courses. Students will learn strategies to tackle new vocabulary and boost comprehension of complex texts.
Add Prerequisite	CITS Ceramics & Sculpture	Art	Semester	.5	Proposed Prerequisite: Ceramics & Sculpture 1
Title and Requirement Change	Computer Science 10	CTE			Proposed Title Change: Change from Computer Science 10 to Computer Science Proposed Change: Change from Required to an <i>Elective</i>
Title Change	Futures 9	CTE	Semester	.5	Proposed Title: Futures Seminar 9 This course will be adjusted and brought into the CTE Work Based Learning pathway.
Title and Description Change	College, Career, and Life Readiness 11	CTE	Semester	.5	Proposed Title: College, Career, and Life Seminar 11 This course will be adjusted and brought into the CTE Work Based Learning pathway. Proposed Description: This course is designed to provide students activities in preparing for their next step after high school. In addition to exploring all post-secondary opportunities, it allows students to analyze and investigate their personal strengths and abilities as they relate to career areas of interest and develop related career and academic plans. Students will learn and apply skills necessary to excel in the workforce in a variety of settings. This course meets the Career Seminar requirement to allow students to take Work Experience courses and earn high school credit for employment.
Title and Description Change	The Art of Photo and Cinema	Art	Semester	.5	Proposed Title: Photography and Media Arts 1 Proposed Description: Enhance your photo and cinema skills! This class offers you the opportunity to learn about and create works involving image

					composition, digital photo editing, movie editing, animation, sound, lighting, and special effects. You will learn to use Adobe Photoshop and video editing software to bring your creative ideas to life! No previous computer knowledge or skills are necessary.
Title and Description Change	Advanced Photo and Cinema	Art	Semester	.5	<p>Proposed Title: Advanced Photography and Media Arts</p> <p>Proposed Description: Enhance your photo and cinema skills! This class offers you the opportunity to learn about and create works involving image composition, digital photo editing, movie editing, animation, sound, lighting, and special effects. You will learn to use Adobe Photoshop and video editing software to bring your creative ideas to life! No previous computer knowledge or skills are necessary.</p>
Title and Description Change	Intro to Agriculture, Food & Natural Resource Sciences	CTE	Semester	.5	<p>Proposed Title: Sustainable Environmental Systems</p> <p>Proposed Description: This course explores environmental sciences in agriculture and natural resource management, focusing on sustainable practices that balance productivity and ecological health. Topics include soil and water conservation, climate change, biodiversity, pollution management, and agriculture's role in carbon sequestration. Students will examine technologies and strategies that promote resource efficiency and reduce environmental degradation, using case studies and practical applications to address current challenges and contribute to sustainable systems.</p>
Description Change	Art Across Medium	Art	Semester	.5	<p>Proposed Description: This one-semester course introduces learners to various visual art forms, including painting and sculpture. Students will learn key characteristics in artworks and understand art's historical role. Through hands-on activities, discussion, and research, learners develop an appreciation for art in daily life.</p>
Description change	Drawing & Painting 1	Art	Semester	.5	<p>Proposed Description: This hands-on introductory course requires no prior experience and is open to students of all levels. You will learn fundamental drawing and painting skills through projects focusing on observation, design basics, and color theory. The class actively explores various materials, including pencil, charcoal, ink, watercolor, acrylics, and digital tools, culminating in the technical skills needed to create effective visual art.</p>
Description Change	Advanced Drawing & Painting	Art	Semester	.5	<p>Proposed Description: This advanced studio course moves beyond basics to refine your artistic voice and</p>

					build a professional portfolio. You will work independently on personalized, contract-style projects involving complex narratives, expressive themes, and commercial challenges. Combining in-depth research and critical thinking, the final goal is a strong collection of art suitable for college applications, exhibitions, or professional submissions.
Description Change	Ceramics & Sculpture	Art	Semester	.5	Proposed Description: Students will learn clay handbuilding skills, such as pinch, coil, and slab construction. Develop a comprehensive understanding of glaze chemistry and application methods to achieve desired surface effects. Design and execute both functional objects (e.g., bowls, mugs, containers) and non-objective or figurative sculptural pieces using other materials. Students will analyze historical, cultural, and contemporary ceramics materials, terminology, styles, and techniques, developing an appreciation for the vast history and diverse applications of the medium.
Delete	Civics	Social studies	Semester	.5	No longer meets standards
Delete	International Studies	Social Studies	Year	1.0	No longer meets standards
Delete	Graphic Arts 1, 2, 3	Art	Year	1.0	Replacing with updated program offerings.
Delete	Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	AFNR	Semester	.5	Adding Ecological Systems for a Sustainable Future to replace AFNR
Delete	Business Management, Leadership and Coaching	Business & Marketing	Semester	.5	Replacing with updated program offerings.
Delete	Intro to Baking & Pastry	Hospitality Careers: Culinary	Semester	.5	Replacing with updated program offerings.
Delete	Intro to Business & Marketing	Business & Marketing	Semester	.5	Replacing with updated program offerings.
Delete	Starting Your Own Business - Entrepreneurship	Business & Marketing	Semester	.5	Replacing with updated program offerings.

COW Agenda Cover Sheet

Meeting Date: January 6, 2026

Topic: Board Summary Report KEYZone

Presenter(s): Melissa Fanning and Kate Corbett

Attachment: Yes

Brief Summary of Presentation or Topic (no more than a few sentences):

The focus remains on promoting learning, building life skills, and ensuring year-round fun and support for all participants.

This Requires School Board Approval : No

Summary Report – K.E.Y. Zone Program

Lake Superior YMCA (Formally Duluth Area Family YMCA)

Community Services Branch

A Program of the Duluth Community Education

Reporting Date: January 6, 2026

Mission

K.E.Y. Zone provides a safe, supportive, and engaging environment where youth in grades K–5 can learn, grow, and thrive. The program offers educational support along with enrichment in STEM, environmental education, arts and crafts, cultural activities, youth leadership, and community collaboration. Programming is available during the school year, summer, and school breaks, including day camp opportunities. The focus remains on promoting learning, building life skills, and ensuring year-round fun and support for all participants.

History

Beginnings: 1991 – The Start of School’s Out Programs

The YMCA launched before and after-school programming in 1991 through partnerships with Homecroft, Lakewood, and Lester Park Schools called School’s Out. Initially supported by grant funding, the program transitioned to a fee-based model with scholarship support. From its inception, the program emphasized affordable, safe, and enriching opportunities for youth. ISD709 provides a school aged care called Kid Connection in the other elementary schools.

Expanding Through Partnership: 2004 – 21st CCLC Grant

In 2004, the YMCA secured a 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC), strengthening partnerships with ISD 709, local colleges, and the Grant Community School Collaborative. Programming operated at Nettleton, Lowell, and Grant Schools, focusing on developing 21st-century skills, improving academic achievement, and building school and community connectedness.

Growth and Collaboration: 2012 – Second 21st CCLC Grant

A second 21st CCLC grant in 2012 further strengthened collaboration between Duluth Public Schools and the YMCA. Programs served students at Stowe, Laura MacArthur, Piedmont, Myers Wilkins, Lowell, and Lincoln Middle School through Kid Connection, Schools’ Out, and Excel Targeted Services. Strategic planning efforts between ISD 709 and the YMCA led to the launch of K.E.Y. Zone.

K.E.Y. Zone Structure:

2012 – Spring 2024: The District and the YMCA operated under a shared staffing model, with the District overseeing billing and registration functions and the YMCA providing program staff and supplies. Net revenues were shared between both organizations.

Summer 2024 – Present: The YMCA assumed full responsibility for staffing, billing, and registration, while maintaining a revenue-sharing arrangement with the District.

School Year Programming: Programming includes academic support and enrichment experiences, offering youth opportunities to engage in structured activities from 2:15 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Summer and Break Days: Programs operate from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., offering full day, engaging experiences for youth when school is not in session.

Enrollment

School Year Enrollment

- Total enrolled: **934**
- Waitlist: 9
- Site totals:
 - Congdon: 190
 - Homecroft: 115
 - Lakewood: 46
 - Laura MacArthur: 28
 - Lester Park: 177 (WL 1)
 - Lowell: 160
 - Myers Wilkins: 110 (WL 6)
 - Piedmont: 78 (WL 2)
 - Stowe: 30

Summer Enrollment (3 locations)

- Average enrollment: **450** youth

Staffing

The program is supported by a strong team of youth-focused staff:

- 12 leadership staff
- 150 frontline staff
- Workforce composition: 90% college/high school-aged and 10% older adults

The program complies with Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) requirements, including fingerprint-based background checks, strict ratios (1:15 or fewer), maximum group size of 30, and no combining with other programs—ensuring eligibility for CCAP. Staff maintain CPR/First Aid certification, complete 6 hours of pre-service training before working independently with youth, and 32 hours of annual training.

School District Partnership

YMCA Provides:

- Staffing and training
- Billing, registration, and financial assistance
- Budget and HR management
- DCYF certification oversight including Childcare County Assistance
- Program structure and goals
- Grant funding

District Provides:

- Space
- Maintenance
- Printing and device services
- Badge access
- Wi-Fi access
- Building Safety

Impact / Highlights

- **Run Club (September- October):** An inclusive, high-energy enrichment activity designed to help youth build healthy habits, develop confidence, and stay active through fun running-based challenge
- **Lights On Afterschool (October):** Celebrated as part of a national recognition of afterschool programming.
- **Guest Reading Month (February):** Community members served as guest readers.
- **Career Week (March):** Professionals shared insights on careers and life skills.

- **Cooking Club:** Hands-on learning experience promoting healthy habits, supported by local businesses.
 - **Grant Funding:** Secured multiple grants to support outdoor education, STEM, cultural enrichment, youth philanthropy, and food access initiatives.
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Thank You

Thank you for the ongoing partnership and collaboration in support of youth and families in our community. Together, we provide high-quality programming that ensures positive outcomes for those we serve.



COW Agenda Cover Sheet

Meeting Date: January 6, 2026

Topic: Board Summary Report Check and Connect

Presenter(s): Sarah Laulunen

Attachment: Yes

Brief Summary of Presentation or Topic (no more than a few sentences):

The program aims to build sustainable systems that promote equity, engagement, and academic success.

This Requires School Board Approval : No

Teaching Learning and Equity Department/Program Board Summary Report

Report Identification

Field	Information
Department/Program Name:	Check & Connect District Wide
Report Title:	Check & Connect
Report Leader:	Sarah Laulunen- Check & Connect Coordinator
Date Submitted:	November 19, 2025
Date of Board Meeting:	December 2, 2025

Check & Connect Program Report

I. Program Purpose

The Check & Connect program strengthens student engagement and reduces absenteeism, academic failure, and dropout rates through on-going mentoring and individualized support. By building strong relationships among students, families, and schools, the program ensures each student stays connected to their education and is supported in achieving academic and behavioral success.

Using data-informed strategies and consistent mentorship, Check & Connect promotes persistence, accountability, and equitable outcomes, particularly for BIPOC students at risk of disengagement.

II. Program Objectives & Goals

The program aims to build sustainable systems that promote equity, engagement, and academic success.

- Strengthen student attendance and engagement through consistent mentor relationships.
- Identify early warning signs of disengagement and intervene promptly through MTSS teams
- Support students in achieving individualized academic and behavioral goals.
- Collaborate with educators and families to ensure a unified support network.
- Reduce course failures and increase graduation rates among BIPOC students.
- Build capacity to use Check & Connect data for continuous improvement and equity-driven decision-making.

III. Key Actions & Activities

This year we have 8 total mentors-

- 5 of 6 positions are currently filled at Denfeld High School. The 6th position is being offered to a candidate (as of 11/20/25).
- 2 of 2 positions are currently filled at East High School.

1. Student Monitoring & Support

- Mentors are trained in the use of the Check & Connect model.
- Mentors are trained in ACE's and Functions of Behavior.
- Mentors are trained in Motivational Interviewing alongside county social workers.
- Mentors participate in monthly case consult.

2. Relationship-Building & Family Outreach

- Mentors are trained in individualized interventions and relationship building techniques.
- Mentors are trained in techniques utilized within home visit models and supported through modeling.

- Mentors participate in truancy court, evaluation result meetings and other community appointments to support caregivers.

3. Staff & Community Collaboration

- Mentors meet regularly with building teams to collaborate about student success.
- Mentors sit on building MTSS teams to assure criteria is utilized to determine C&C rosters.
- Mentors participate in local multi-disciplinary SARB meeting to address attendance concerns

4. Data Analysis & Communication

- Mentors are given regular fidelity checks to assure the program is fully implemented.
- Reports are generated to show growth in student success.

IV. Outcomes & Results-

During the 2024-2025 School Year 27 of 28 Check & Connect Students Graduated with 1 remaining student entering the Bridge Program.

We are currently serving 78 Students at Denfeld High School.

- 68% of Students are BIPOC Students
- 32% of Students are Caucasian
- 24% of Students are receiving SPED services.
- Staff at Denfeld have provided over 21,000 minutes of intervention in quarter 1 of the 25-26 school year.
- Staff at Denfeld have spent over 6,800 minutes connecting with families/caregivers.
- Staff at Denfeld have supported students in completing 13.5 credits worth of credit recovery during quarter 1 of the 25-26 school year.

We are currently serving 27 Students at East High School.

- 22% of Students are BIPOC Students
- 78% of Students are Caucasian
- 17 of the 27 enrolled students are using Check & Connect as an SRBI instead of an initial SPED evaluation.
- Staff at East have provided over 9,000 minutes of intervention in quarter 1 of the 25-26 school year.

- Staff at East have spent over 2600 minutes connecting with families/caregivers during quarter 1 of the 25-26 school year.

V. Next Steps

1. Data Systems & Evaluation (Q1–Q2 2025)

- Explore the use of EduClimber as an integrated dashboard to monitor attendance, academic, and behavioral data in real time.
- Conduct quarterly reviews with disaggregated analysis to refine interventions.

2. Family & Community Engagement (Ongoing)

- Strengthen partnerships with community organizations such as the Valley Youth Center, Lincoln Park Collaborative and Neighborhood Youth Services and expand outreach to BIPOC families.

VI. Future Focus:

1. Equity & Access: Sustain improvements in BIPOC student outcomes.
2. Sustainability: Secure ongoing funding and mentor capacity.
3. Policy Alignment: Embed Check & Connect outcomes within district equity frameworks.

COW Agenda Cover Sheet

Meeting Date: January 6, 2026

Topic: Board Summary Report Secondary Schedule Update

Presenter(s): Jen Larva

Attachment: Yes

Brief Summary of Presentation or Topic (no more than a few sentences):

The core objective is to have a schedule that supports student and teacher needs and allows for intervention, student agency, and belonging.

This Requires School Board Approval : No

Teaching Learning and Equity Department/Program Board Summary Report

This report is designed for Department or Program Leaders to provide a concise, high-level overview of their area's status, activities, and future plans to the School Board.

Report Identification

Field	Information
Department/Program Name:	Secondary
Report Title:	Update on MS and HS schedule
Report Leader:	Jen Larva
Date Submitted:	November 21, 2025
Date of Board Meeting:	December 2, 2025



Summary Report

I. Program Objectives & Goals

The core objective is to have a schedule that supports student and teacher needs and allows for intervention, student agency, and belonging.

II. Key Actions & Activities

Action 1: High School Schedule Committee Work (Last Year)

- A new committee was formed last year to propose changes to the high school secondary schedule.
- The committee discussed various options and recommended altering the schedule on two days a week.
- The proposed alteration would shorten the regular periods and add a 35-minute "Connection" period on each of those two days.
- The recommendation was shared with DFT leadership and Senior Leaders.
- No changes were made for the 25-26 school year.
- **Data Point:** Students and families have expressed displeasure with the current 7-period day due to the loss of the "WIN" (What I Need) period from the previous 6-period day.

Action 2: Student Survey Administration (October/November 2025)

- A student survey regarding the 7-period day was administered, asking questions about the choices students are making.
 - Only 356 students took the survey.
 - Students who don't have 7 classes reported it was often due to lack of space in electives.
 - Many students are not taking 7 periods because the homework load is too much.
 - Some students have reported to counselors that they don't need 7 classes and would choose to have a study hall. They appreciate the flexibility of not having a 7th class.
- Students taking the survey were asked about the types of electives they would like to see offered.
 - **Medical/Health Sciences:** Many students requested more medical field courses, health-science based courses, EMT/EMR training, and forensic science.
 - **Computer Science and Technology:** Interest was high for computer science, coding/programming, cybersecurity, digital animation, and engineering/Solidworks.
 - **Arts and Music:** Respondents frequently mentioned more art, advanced art, digital art, music, music theory, music production, choir, photography, and theater.
 - **Practical Life Skills and Trades:** Students desired classes useful for real life, including cooking/culinary, sewing/knitting, welding, construction/woodworking, drivers ed., and financial/complex topics (insurance, investing).

- **Languages and Social Studies:** Requests included more world languages (Mandarin, French, Italian, Latin, Polish, Russian, Portuguese), Latin American history, Global Religions/Philosophy, and Anthropology.

Action 3: Site-Level Opportunity Day Schedules

- Sites developed with their department teams a schedule to address the current monthly Opportunity Days, building in time for students to engage with clubs as well as receive teacher support.
 - **East High School Principal Input:**
 - East has chosen to shorten regular class periods on PAWS days to allow for dedicated time for all students and staff to meet the needs of opportunity days. Currently this format allows two 40 minute PAWS opportunity periods during those days.
 - Department Chairs and administrators are unanimous in the opinion that this is a more manageable structure throughout the day. We continue to meet with POV students to build understanding there are many factors to consider.
 - **Denfeld High School Principal Input:**
 - We follow the regular 7 period schedule. Students sign up for clubs and activities.
 - Teachers complete a spreadsheet for any student who is currently failing during the quarter. Information gathered includes conferencing with the student, communication with the parent or guardian, and the conditions offered to help the student earn a passing grade.
 - The priority for scheduling students is academic with secondary options for clubs and activities.

Action 4: Middle School Schedule Review

- The MS schedule committee met last spring.
- Staff survey data was reviewed regarding the current middle school schedule.
- The committee decided that no changes to the schedule would be considered until the 2027-28 school year.

Action 5: Middle School Model Presentation

- Four committee members were accepted as presenters to the national AMLE conference to share our journey in adopting a middle school model.
- The model centers on four identified cornerstones: Advisory, Enrichment, Intervention, and Teaming.
- This work led to the modified block schedule, which includes Advisory and AREA (Academic, Relearning, Enrichment, and Activity) time embedded twice per week with "skinny" and "Block" days.

- Brian Kazmierchek, Kristin Paschen, Morgan Costley and Jen Larva presented during a breakout session at the conference in Indianapolis in November.

III. Outcomes & Results

High School Recommendation: The committee's recommendation for the two-day "Connection" period was made to the District's Federation of Teachers (DFT) president and Senior Leaders. No action was taken on the recommendation. The committee has not met this year due to the lack of contractual flexibility that would allow for a new schedule option. We will continue to consult as contract negotiations commence for the new contract period.

- **Impact:** Students currently have limited access to teachers for completing work, making up tests, or receiving interventions, and cannot engage in as many clubs as desired.

HS Student Survey: The results of the student survey were reviewed with counselors and principals at a meeting on November 21.

Middle School Outcome: Based on the staff survey data reviewed last spring, the committee determined that the Middle School would continue with the current schedule for a full three years before considering another schedule change.

IV. Next Steps

Next Step 1: Reconvene committee as contract negotiations commence.

- Any alterations to the 7 period day must be done in collaboration with bargaining units prior to or concurrently with negotiations.

Next Step 2: MS Committee Check-in (Mid-Year)

- The Middle School committee will meet mid-year to determine if staff should be surveyed again this spring to address any current concerns.

V. Future Focus Area: Addressing Secondary Teacher Recruitment and Student Loss

- Analyze the crisis of having qualified teachers to teach College in the Schools (CITS) courses.
- Consider an alternative schedule that allows for an "office day" for teachers/students that better aligns with a college schedule.
- Address the loss of students to Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO).

COW Agenda Cover Sheet

Meeting Date: January 6, 2026

Topic: Board Summary Report Credit Course Update

Presenter(s): Jen Larva, Julie Stauber, and Danette Seboe

Attachment: Yes

Brief Summary of Presentation or Topic (no more than a few sentences):

To ensure a relevant, rigorous, and equitable course catalog that aligns with academic standards and provides diverse pathways for student success in post-secondary education and careers.

This Requires School Board Approval : No

Teaching Learning and Equity Department/Program Board Summary Report

Report Identification

Field	Information
Department/Program Name:	Curriculum and Instruction
Report Title:	Credit and Course Updates
Report Leader:	Jen Larva, Julie Stauber, Danette Seboe
Date Submitted:	November 21, 2025
Date of Board Meeting:	December 2, 2025

Summary Report

I. Program Objectives & Goals

To ensure a relevant, rigorous, and equitable course catalog that aligns with academic standards and provides diverse pathways for student success in post-secondary education and careers.

II. Key Actions & Activities

Action 1: Departments and Content Specialists Submit Course Recommendations

- *Description:* Departments, in collaboration with Content Specialists, conducted an annual review of current offerings, standards alignment, and student needs, resulting in formal submissions for new courses, course revisions, and credit changes (e.g., x new courses proposed, y credit changes requested).

Action 2: Course Recommendations Presented to Director, Principals

- *Description:* Course proposals were reviewed by the Secondary leadership team that includes the Director of Secondary Education, MnMTSS and Curriculum and Instruction Coordinator and School Principals to ensure operational feasibility, resource alignment, and consistency across schools. Feedback was gathered and incorporated.

Action 3: Course Recommendations Presented to Counselors

- *Description:* Recommendations were shared with school Counselors to inform their upcoming work on registration, student advising protocols, and graduation requirements. This step ensures accurate communication to students and families.

Action 4: Review of District-Required Semester Courses

- *Description:* A review was conducted on the four district-required, non-state-required semester courses (9th Grade Futures, Computer Science 10, College Career and Life Readiness (grade 11), and Personal Finance (grade 12) implemented with the 7-period day schedule. Meetings were held with principals and counselors to discuss course retention, elimination, and necessary curriculum adjustments.
- *Key Proposal Status:* We will be proposing at the board Committee of the Whole meeting that the District retain current graduation credit requirements (total number of credits required) but no longer require Computer Science 10, instead offering it as an elective choice option. All secondary teachers will be responsible for teaching computer science standards as it is appropriate to their content area. Professional development will be ongoing.
- *Further Development:* We are implementing changes to the 11th grade College, Career and Life Readiness (CCLR), altering the frameworks to move it into our CTE Work Based Learning. State CTE leaders were consulted to determine the feasibility of moving this course into our Work Based Learning pathway as a seminar course. This change was strongly supported by state leaders, principals, and counselors. Altering the course to add the frameworks for the work seminar will result in the course meeting the requirements for the Work Based Seminar. As a result, all students can move into credit bearing Work Based Learning or Work Experience courses upon successful completion without the need to take the seminar concurrently. The official recommendation will be brought to the board at the January meeting.

III. Outcomes & Results

Area 1: Past board supported culturally responsive courses have been successfully created, offered, and scheduled based on student interest.

Course Title	School	Status/Planned	Student Requests
Ethnic Studies	Denfeld	Running 2nd semester	21
	East	Not running this year	0
	AEO	Running one section	N/A
Global and Indigenous Sports	Denfeld	Running	52
	East	Not running	0
CITS Annishinabe of Lake Superior	East	Running	19
	Denfeld	Planned for 2nd semester (pending qualified teacher)	20
African American Literature	Denfeld	Running 1 section first semester	26
	East	Not running	0
Diverse Perspectives	Denfeld	Running one section	46
	East	Not running	3

Area 2: Standards Integration

- Reading and writing standards have been infused into all content standards.
- Similarly, Native American standards are now infused into state content standards.

IV. Next Steps

- **Next Step 1: Formal Board Action (Course Catalog)** Request formal Board approval for the finalized list of new courses, revisions, and credit updates at the January Committee of the Whole Meeting.
- **Next Step 2: Finalize Course Catalog Document** The final draft of the 2026-2027 Course Catalog will be completed before the student enrollment window.
- **Next Step 3: Registration Kick-off** The finalized course catalog and registration information will be sent home to secondary families in January

V. Future Focus Focus will shift to successful implementation of the new curriculum and supporting the registration windows (IC open for students: January-February 2026 for MS and HS).