

# Superintendent's Report

*July 18, 2023*



## 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

- Strategic Roadmap Reminders
- Referendum Updates
- Questions and Answers

# Strategic Roadmap

[Strategic Roadmap Video](#)

[Strategic Roadmap](#)

# Three-Year Operational Plan

[3-Year Operational Plan](#)

# Strategic Initiatives

## **Supporting Every Student**

Supporting Every Student - MTSS Academics

Supporting Every Student - MTSS SEB

## **Advancing Equity**

Advancing Equity - Action Card

## **Improving Systems**

Improving Systems - Capacity and Programming

Improving Systems - Business Services

Improving Systems - Recruitment and Onboarding

# Referendum Information

As you know, we have been preparing for the impact of the end of our ESSER funding as we monitored the state biennium budget. As we assess our current situation, we need to consider what it would mean if we do move forward with a referendum, as well as what it would mean if we do not. Tonight's information is intended to provide greater clarity for the board and public.

# Seeking a Two Question Referendum

One question would fund technology and critical programmatic supports for students to be described on upcoming slides.

The second question would focus on bond restructuring. This strategic move aims to optimize our financial resources, reduce debt burdens, and allocate funds more efficiently to support the district's long-term goals.

Through the bond restructuring referendum, we seek the support and engagement of our community in making informed decisions about the future of our school district. This process ensures stakeholders have a voice in shaping the financial stability and educational opportunities for our students.



# Impact of Referendum Passing

- Provide much needed resources to achieve the Desired Daily Experiences of our staff, students, and families and to support the three focus areas of our community-produced strategic roadmap: Supporting Every Student, Advancing Equity and Improving Systems
- Keep adequate 21st Century learning by maintaining programming and devices for students and staffing to support them
- Keep important teacher and social emotional support positions that would otherwise be reduced
- Implement a new high school schedule, focused on student academic and mental health needs, increasing graduation rates and college, career and community readiness.

# Impact Referendum Not Passing

1. There are currently 37 (full and part-time) ESSER funded positions. 24 (full and part-time) positions to be reduced due ESSER funding going away as of June 2024. We currently have funding for approximately 15 positions built into Fy 25 into the General fund, including Reading Interventionists, Math Interventionists, Guidance Counselors, remaining Digital Innovation Specialists, and MTSS positions
2. Without passing then the \$4 million technology built into the Fy 25 budget will be removed. We will have only \$250K per year to spend on technology. (That will not be sufficient to keep our student devices.)
3. Without passing then only the middle school programming will be budgeted.. \$1.5 mill will be removed (high school programming). The middle school funding will stay and schedule changes will take place in Fy 25.

# Additional Considerations

1. We have been able to bring student learning into the 21st Century with technology using temporary ESSER funding that ends after this year.
2. If we do not ask for a referendum we will not be able to move forward with improvements to the high school schedule to improve on student outcomes and increase graduation rates, both of which have disproportionate outcomes for historically underserved students.

# Additional Considerations

3. We are asking taxpayers for a modest investment in our schools to allow us to keep our modernized technology and supports.
4. A \$200,000 homeowner in Duluth would pay \$1.77 more in taxes per week (\$93 annually)
5. By lifting the financial burden placed on our budget due to having no replacement cycle for technology, we will be able to continue to invest in interventionists, counselors and other student supports critical to their success.

# Additional Considerations

6. We have been putting our financial house in order and want to keep it that way
  - a. Our fund balance is healthy, leading to an improved bond rating and reasonable financial cushion. Remember, a few short years ago our fund balance was nearly non-existent.
  - b. We moved out of an extremely outdated district office at HOCHS that had nearly \$50 million of deferred maintenance into \$32M new facilities with a much smaller financial footprint
  - c. We are seeking to sell properties that are no longer needed and use this funding to purchase a usable property to reduce the number of leases, saving roughly \$650K per year. This will reduce our lease levy authority tax needs by \$10 per year