

**Monthly Committee of the Whole Board Meeting**  
Duluth Public Schools, ISD 709

Agenda

Tuesday, April 7, 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. Chronic Absenteeism

2

b. Duluth Head Start

13

c. Graduation Rates

72

3) Improving Systems

a. Child Nutrition Supper Meal Audit

73

**B. Teaching, Learning, and Equity Board Summary Report - N/A**

**C. Budget Update**

1) 2026-27 Preliminary Budget

92

**D. Other**

**4. ADJOURN**

## COW Agenda Cover Sheet

**Meeting Date: 04/07/2026**

**Topic: Chronic Absenteeism**

**Presenter(s): Elijah R.-Denfeld 11th grade, Emma N.-Denfeld 11th grade, Tammia B. - Denfeld 11th grade, Adrianna P.-Denfeld 10th grade, Kalista D.- Denfeld 12th grade.**

**Staff Supporters: Annie Parish, Camryn Joki**

**Attachment:**

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1NztVunh63xRyMIEqIrKQKf6WJhHM6aouUpmiSVBalaE/edit?usp=sharing>

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

**Our team plans to create a mentorship program with a personalized approach to students' unique attendance barriers. Students who are deemed eligible will take an intake survey to determine their struggles with absenteeism and find the mentor that they will most easily be able to connect with. Upon being matched, a mentor will utilize developmental assets and behavioral assets to establish a relationship. Mentors will then work with students to set goals based on their strengths and remove obstacles that hinder their ability to be present.**

**This Requires School Board Approval : No**

# **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 students attendance.
- Not every students reasons for absenteeism is 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](https://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?

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

## **COW Agenda Cover Sheet**

**Meeting Date: Tuesday, April 7, 2026**

**Topic: Duluth Preschool data, Duluth Preschool/Head Start self assessment, update on the Federal Head Start NOFO and FY27 transportation waiver**

**Presenter(s): Barbara Eckberg**

**Attachment: Duluth Preschool ppt data, FY27 transportation waiver, Duluth Preschool/Head Start Self Assessment**

**Brief Summary of Presentation or Topic (no more than a few sentences): The Duluth Preschool Coordinator Team has submitted the data to complete the most recent student data, program data in support of the program goals. The presentation will give an overview of the data informing the program self assessment, support of program goals, steps to support and increase staff capacity,**

**This Requires School Board Approval : Duluth Preschool/Head Start Self Assessment and FY27 Duluth Preschool/Head Start Transportation Waiver**

# **Committee of the Whole**

April 2026

## **Duluth Preschool 2025-26**

## 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.

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Working in partnership with staff, families, students and community.

### Belonging



Providing a welcoming and accessible environment where everyone feels safe, seen and heard.

# Successes and Changes

- Policy Council
  - Student Growth and Development
  - Coordinator Team
  - P-3 Initiative
  - Community Education
  - Retaining 150 State Funded seats through School Readiness and Voluntary PreK
- 
- Government Shutdown impacting (NOFO) Notice of Funding Opportunity Grant Timeline: 2025-2026 funding extension to August 1, 2026
  - Retirement/Staffing

# Recruitment and Enrollment

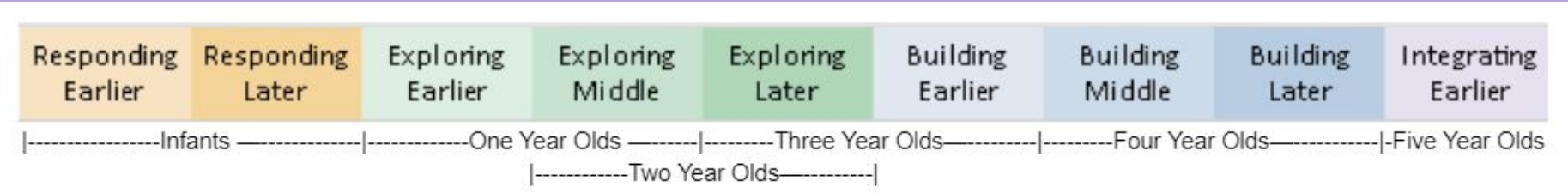
- Head Start Performance standard to maintain 97% enrollment [1302.15](#) for no less than 3 consecutive months
- Poverty guidelines released January 17, 2026 [2026 Federal Poverty Guidelines](#)
- Community recruitment flyers and contacts
- Ongoing work with internal partners: ECFE and ECSE
- March 1, 2026: Notification to returning families of Duluth Preschool acceptance and placement
- April 1, 2026: Notification to new families/children of Duluth Preschool acceptance and placement
- May 1, 2026: Notification to new families/children of Duluth Preschool acceptance and placement
- June 1, 2026: Notification to new families/children of Duluth Preschool acceptance and placement

# **DRDP Winter 2025-26**

Duluth Preschool

The DRDP is a continuum of skills from early infancy to Kindergarten. For our data, averages are based on:

- Responding Earlier-Responding Later = Infants***
- Exploring Earlier-Exploring Middle = 1 year olds***
- Exploring Middle-Exploring Later = 2 year olds***
- Exploring Later-Building Earlier = 3 year olds***
- Building Middle-Building Later = 4 year olds***
- Integrating Earlier = Kindergarteners***



**254 3-5 year olds enrolled at checkpoint cutoff**

**96% assessed**

**4% “Elected Not to Rate” (10 children-chronic absences)**

Head Start = 173 children

School Readiness = 60 children

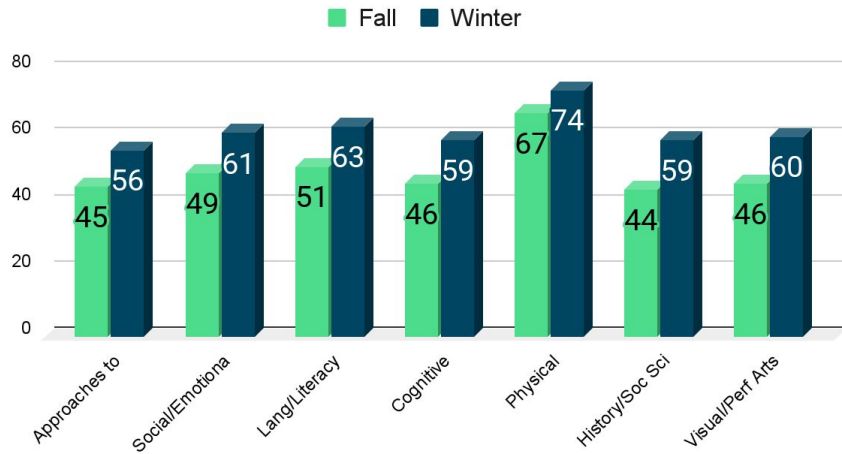
VPK = 21 children

**\*Only Head Start, VPK & School Readiness Classrooms have winter assessment data**

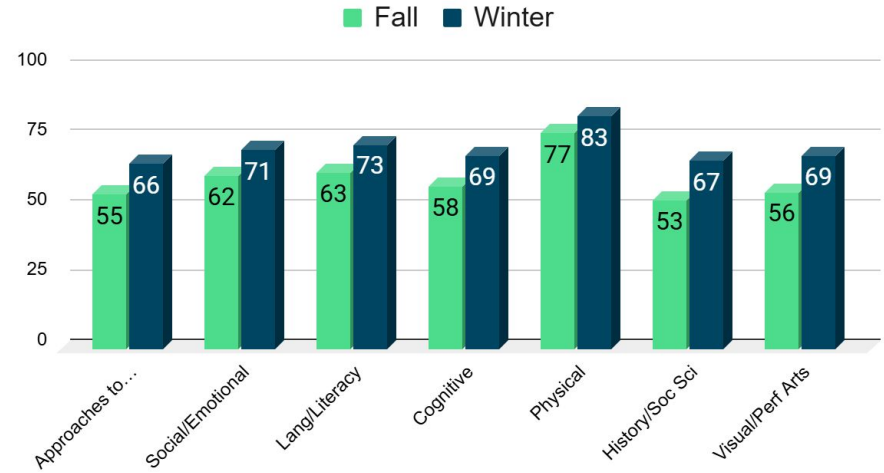
**\*\*One classroom did not complete the winter checkpoint due to staffing issues**

# Head Start

### Head Start 3-5's 25-26

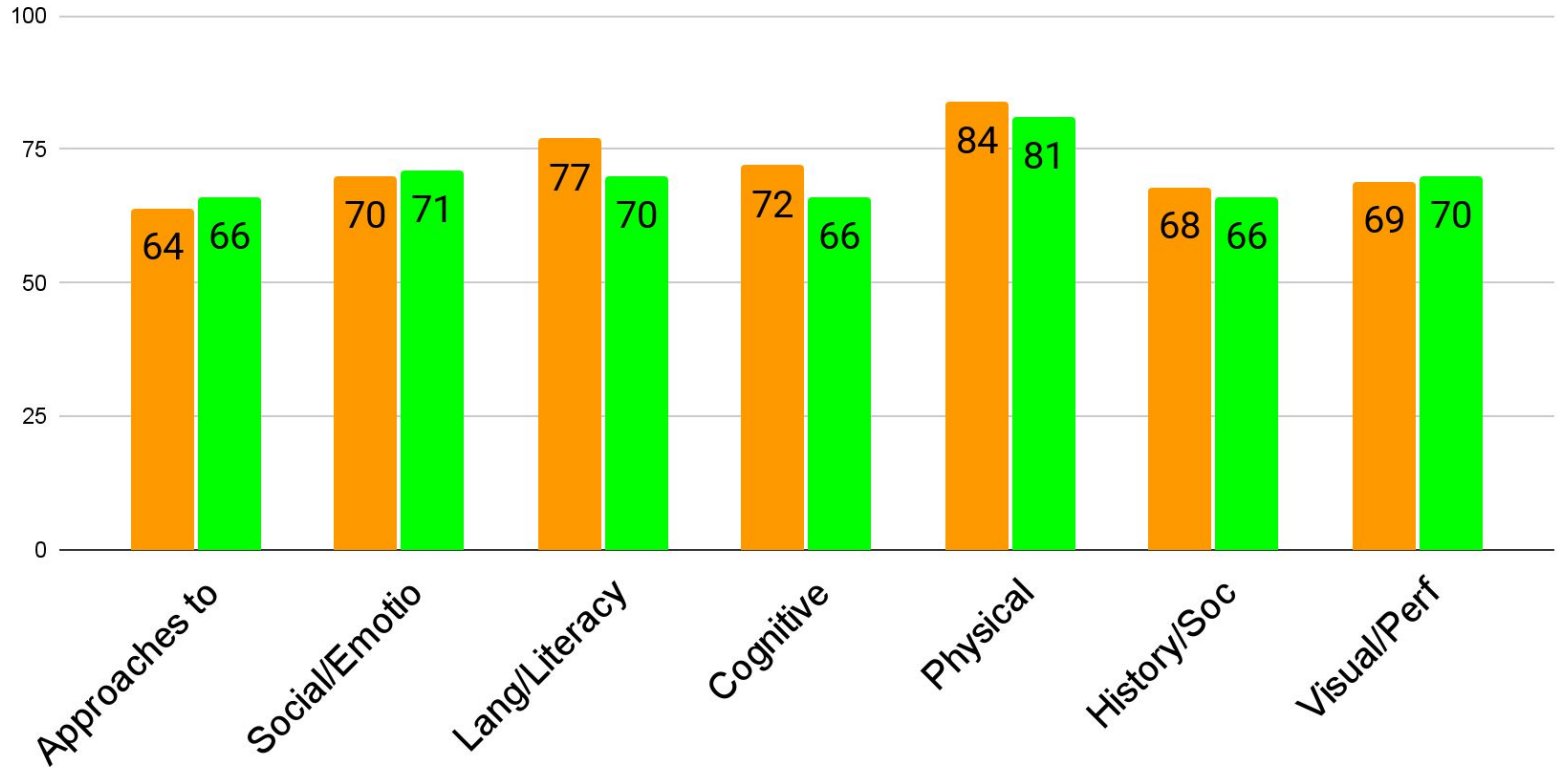


### Head Start 4YO's

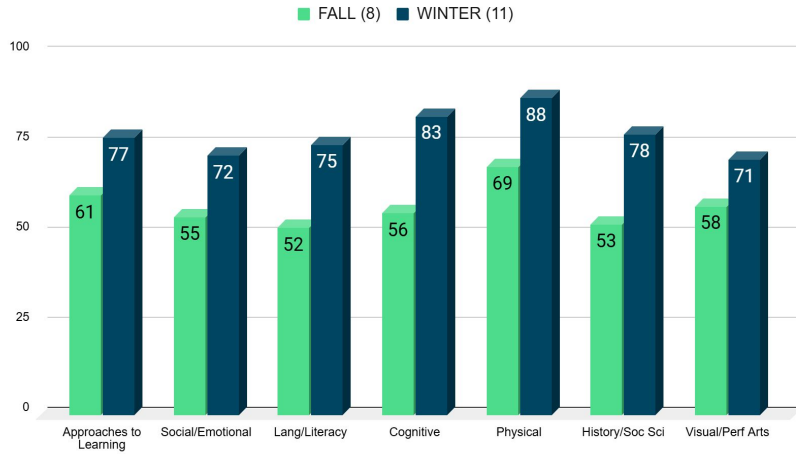


# Head Start Male/Female 4 YOs 25-26

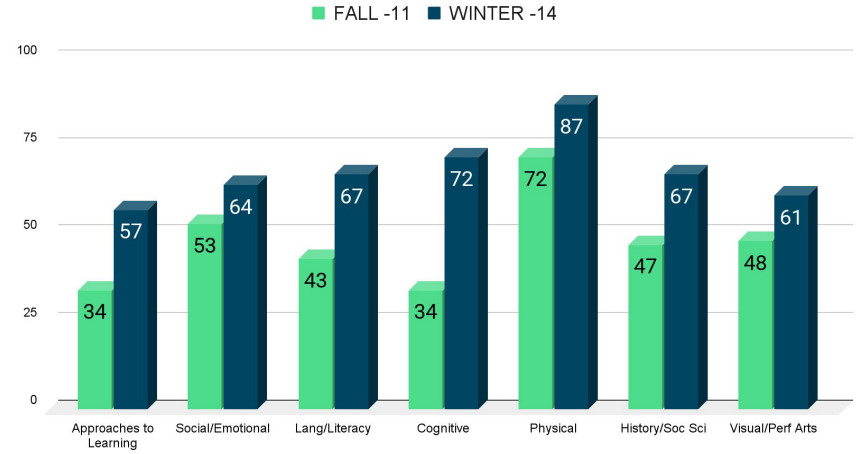
Male Winter Female Winter



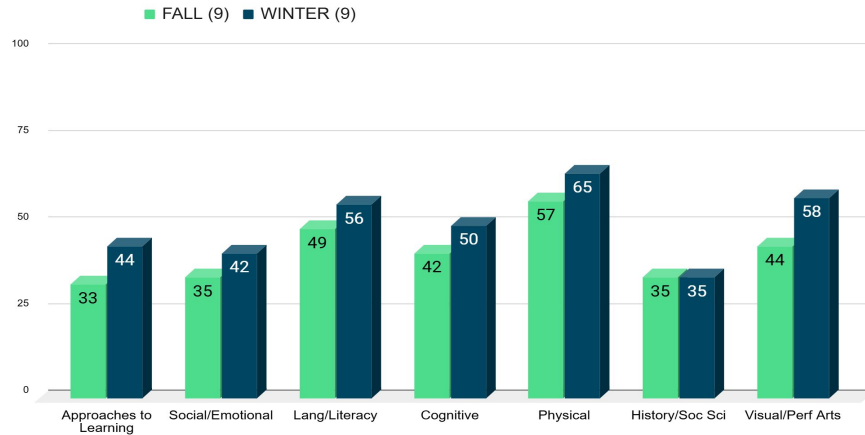
### Head Start Speech IEP 4 YO's



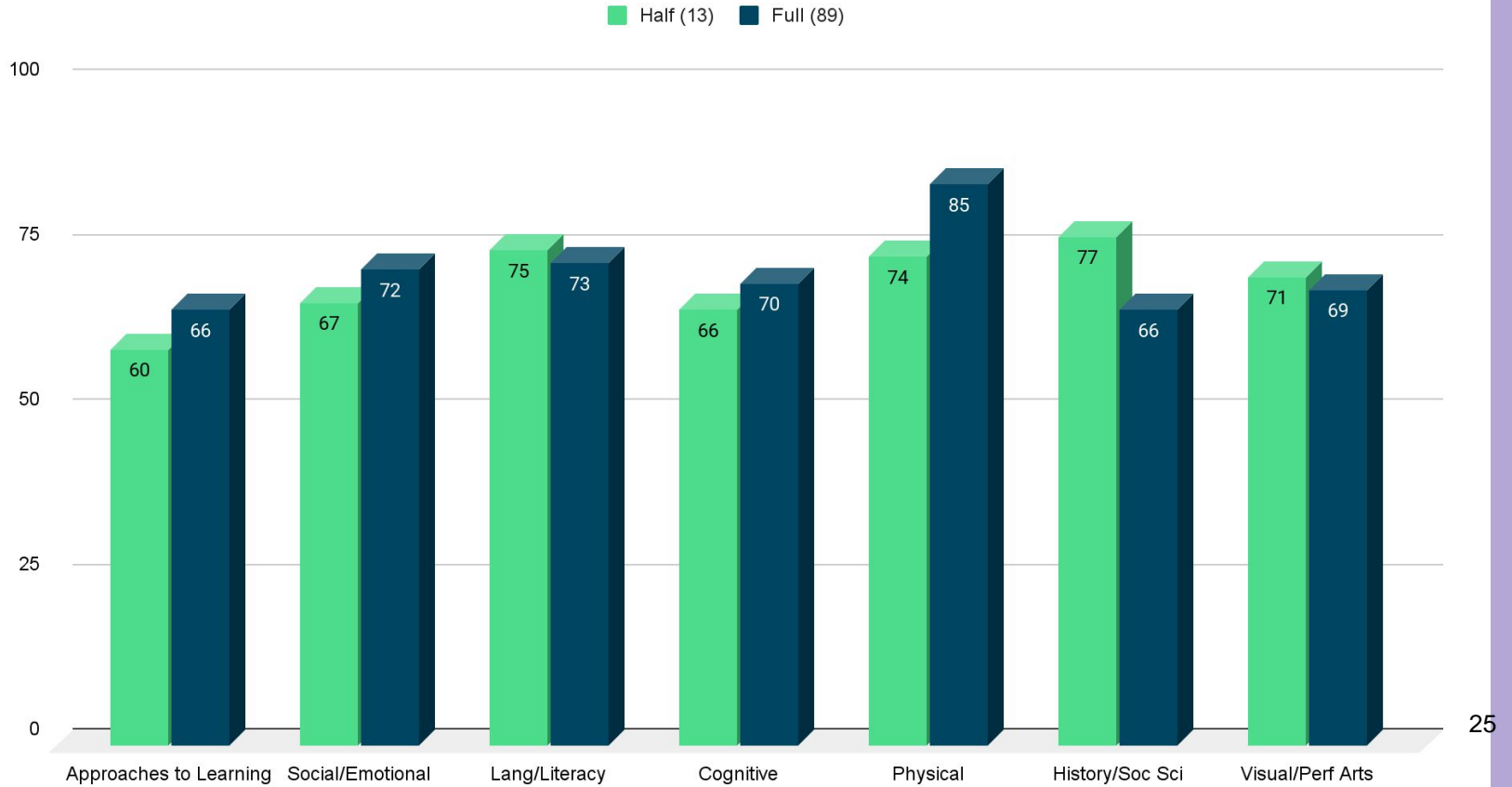
### Head Start Developmental Delay 4YO's



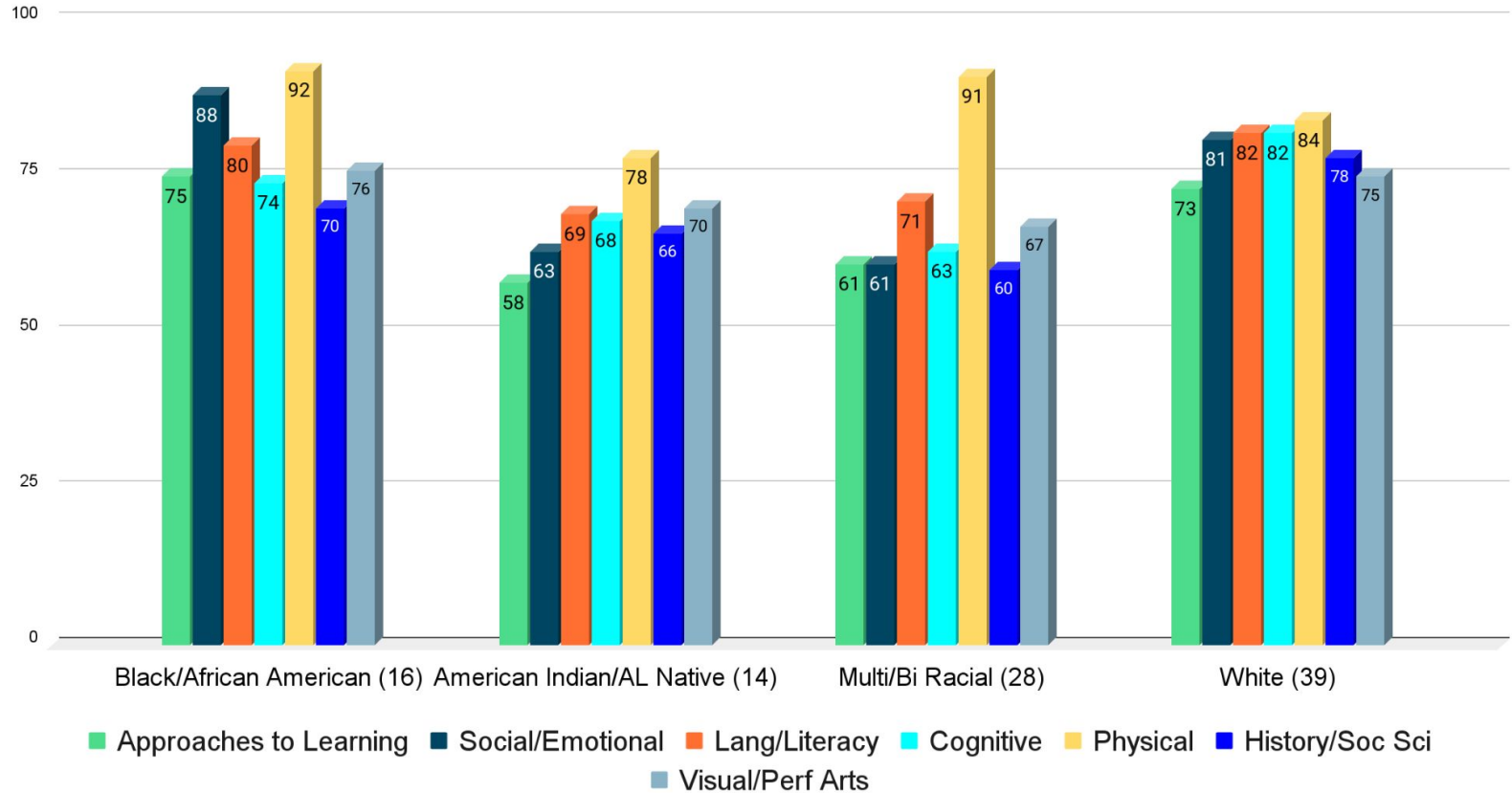
### Head Start Para Supprt (1-1 or shared) 25-26



## Winter: Head Start 4YO's Half and Full 25-26

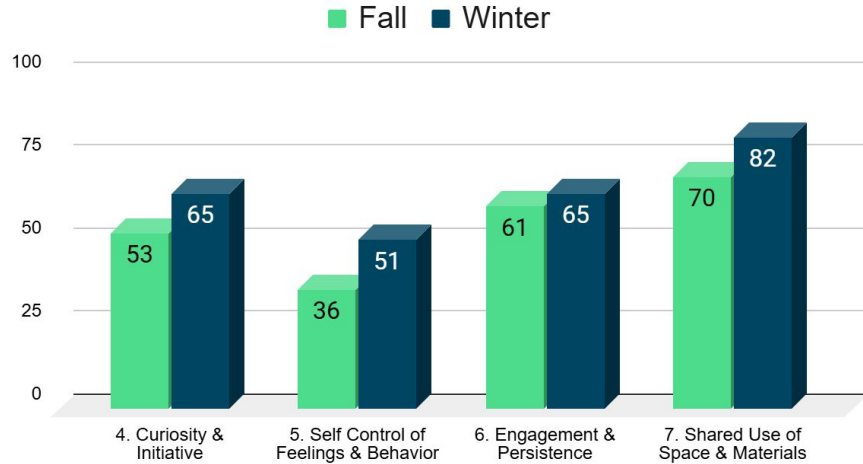


## HS 4 YO's by Race: WINTER 25-26

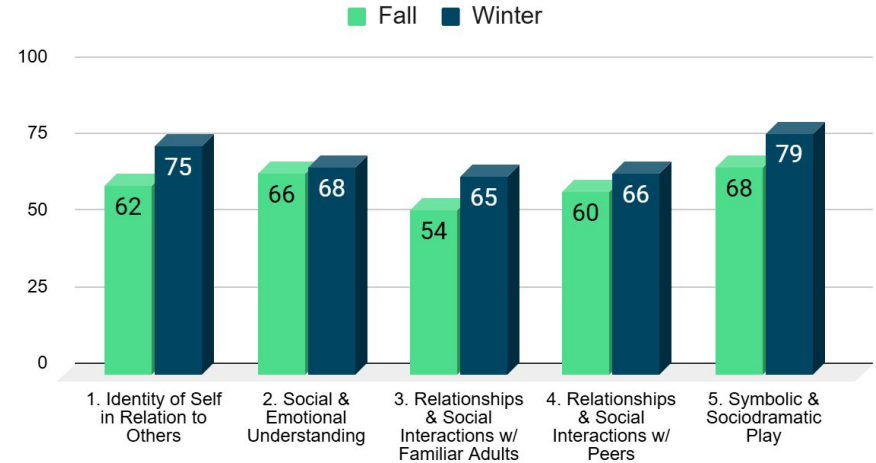


# DRDP Domains by Objective 4 YOs

## Head Start 4 YO's Approaches to Learning-Self Regulation

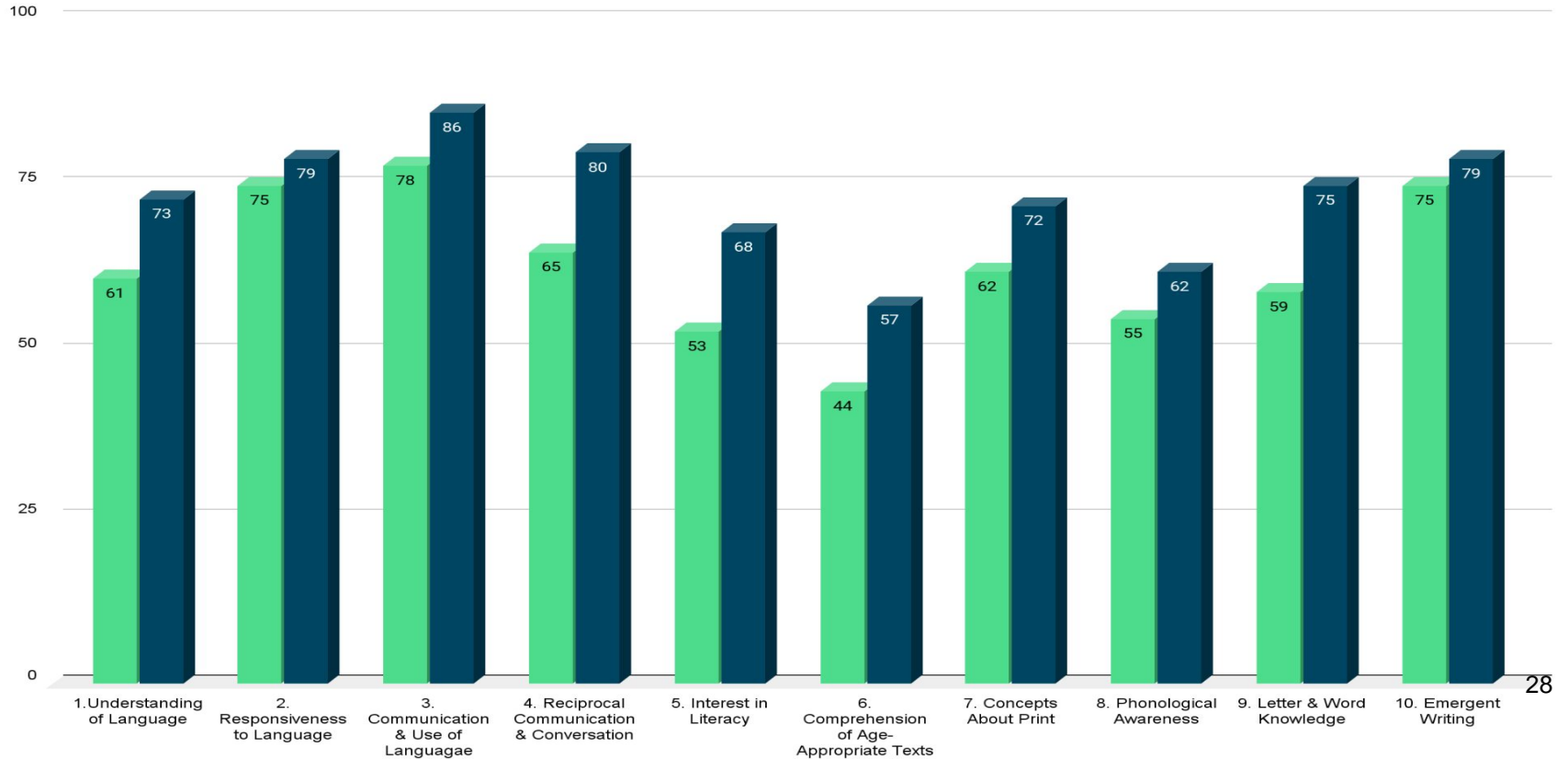


## Head Start 4YO's Social & Emotional Development



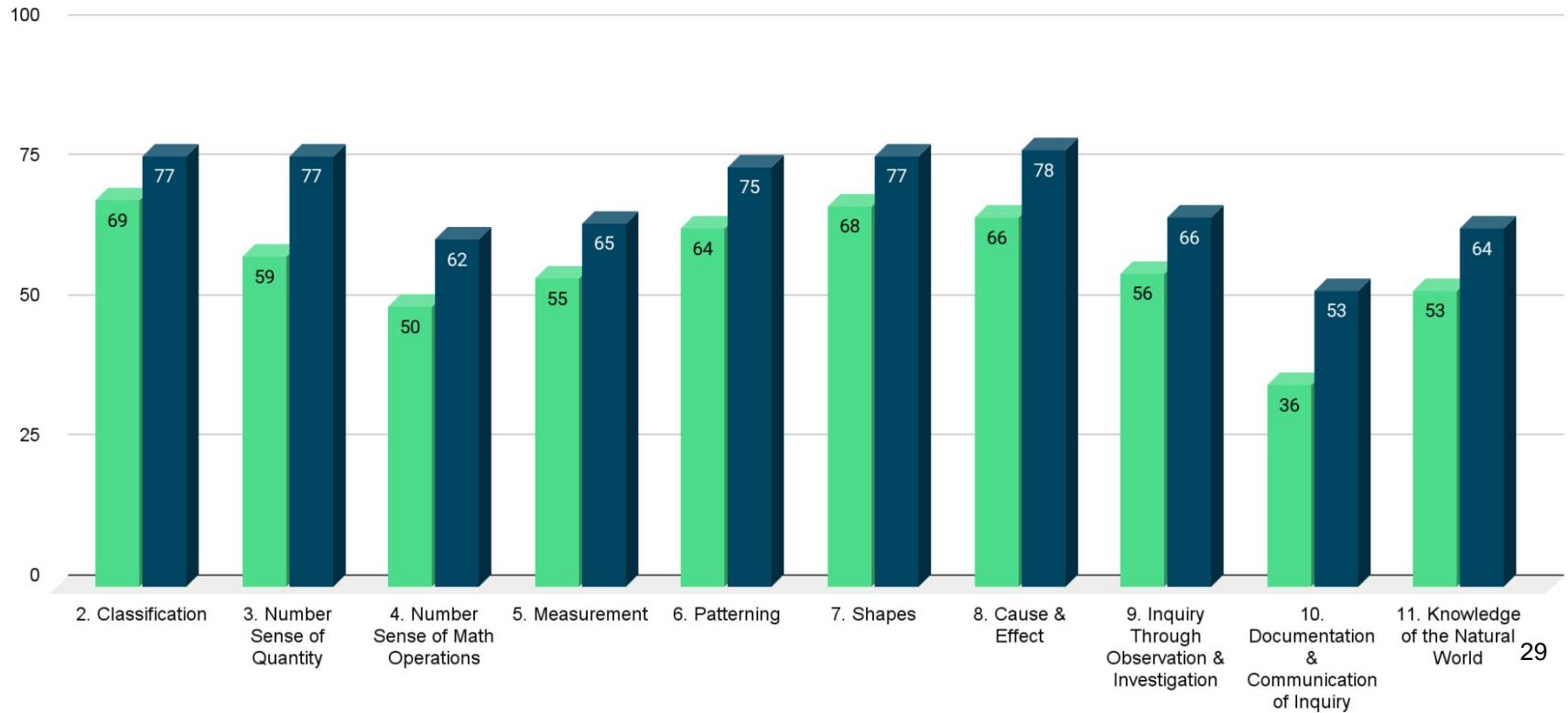
# Head Start 4 YO's Language & Literacy Development

■ Fall ■ Winter

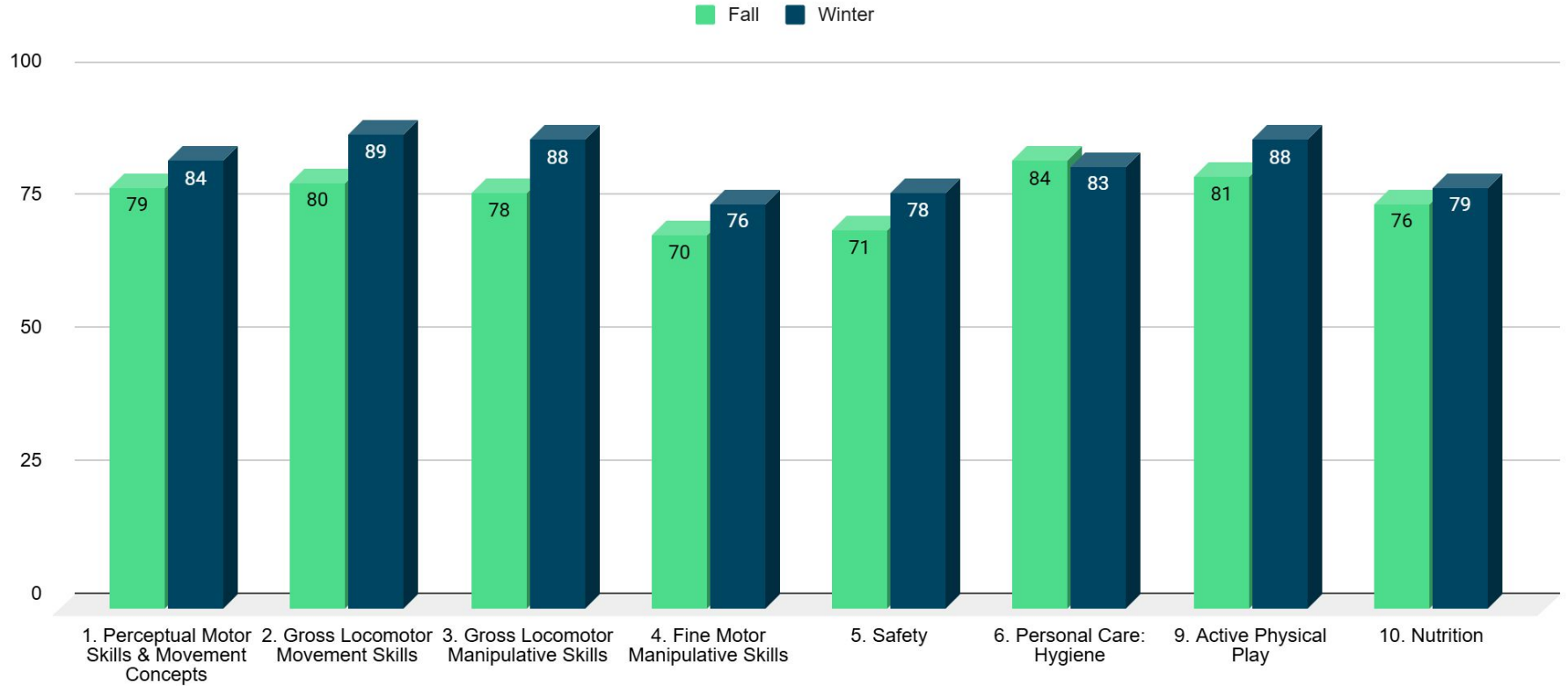


## Head Start 4 YO's Cognition, Including Math & Science

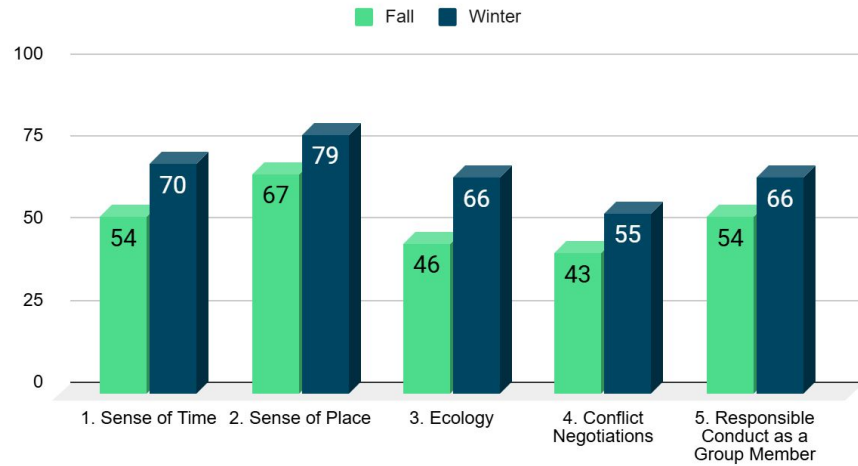
■ Fall ■ Winter



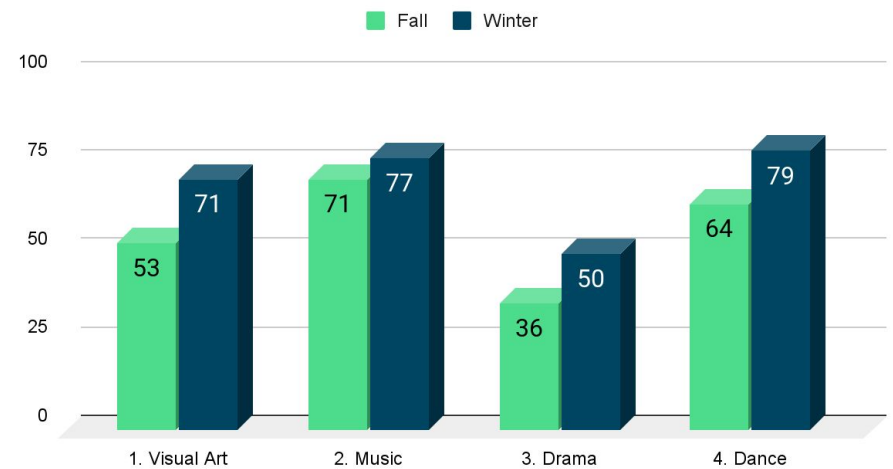
## Physical Development and Health



## History-Social Science



## Visual & Performing Arts

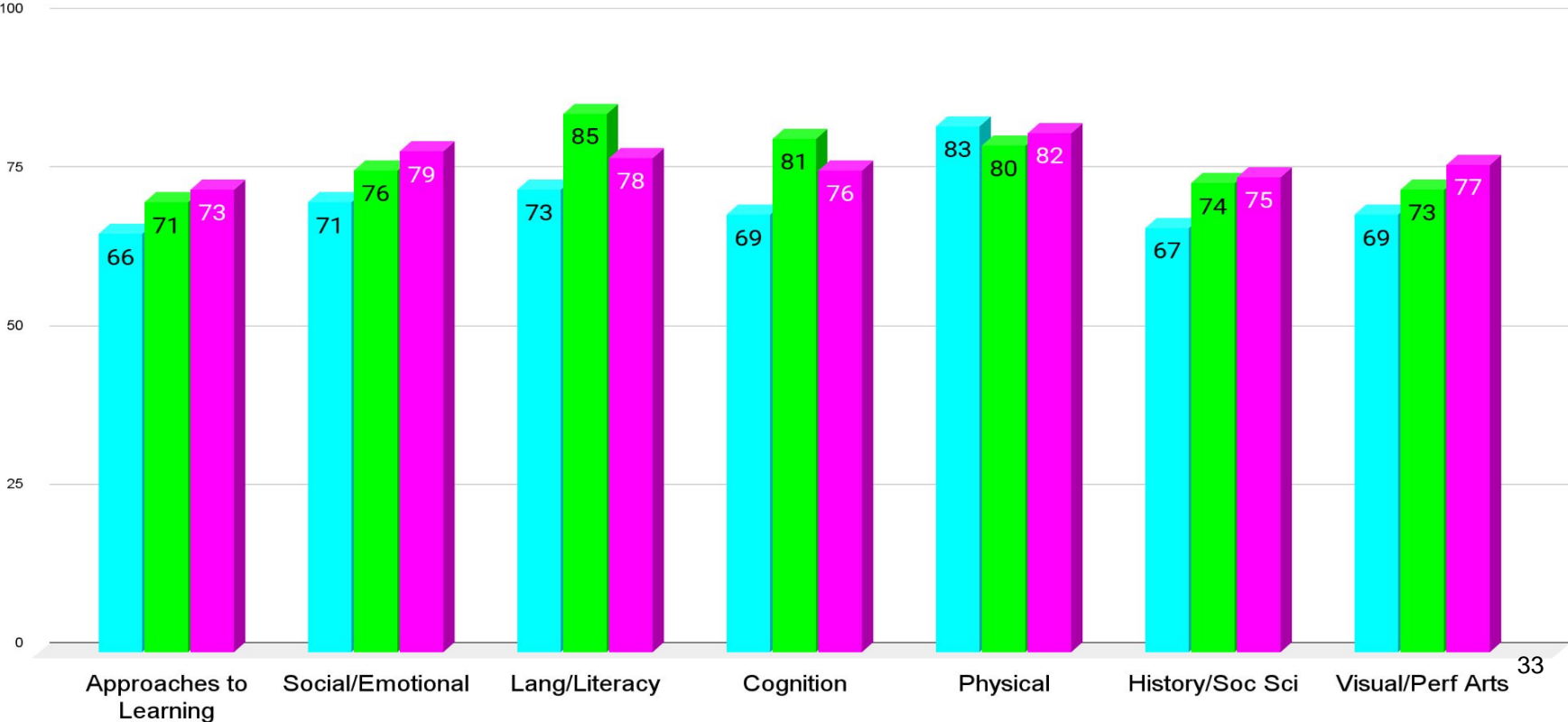


# Program-Wide

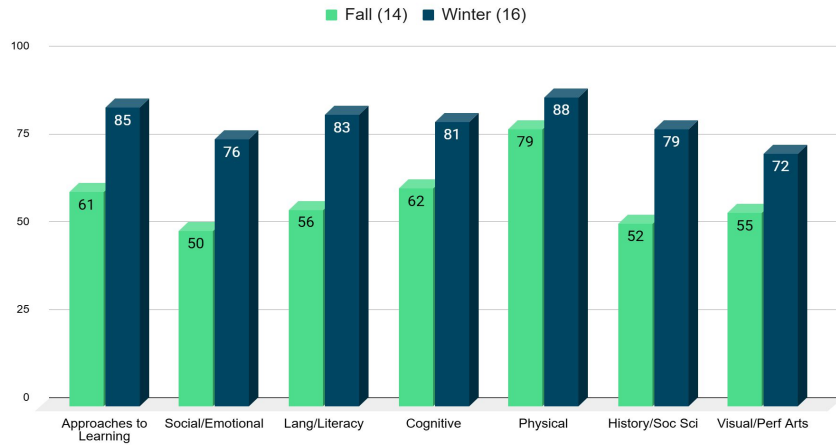
VPK/SR/Head Start

Program Comparison 4 YO's WINTER 25-26

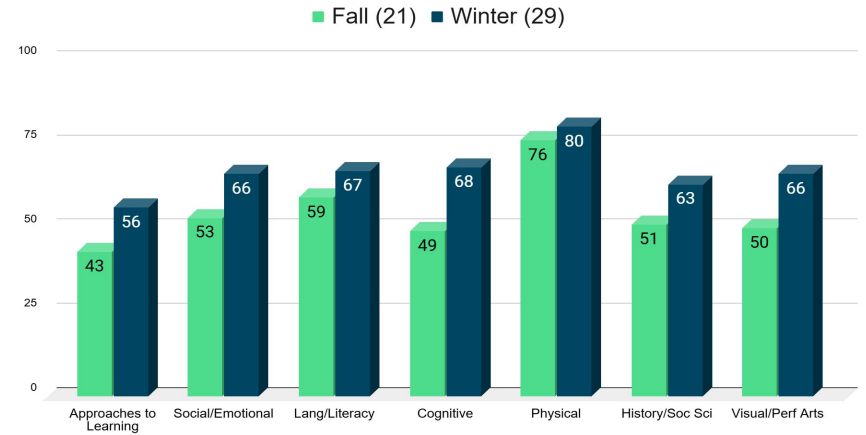
■ Head Start (102) ■ School Readiness (39) ■ VPK (19)



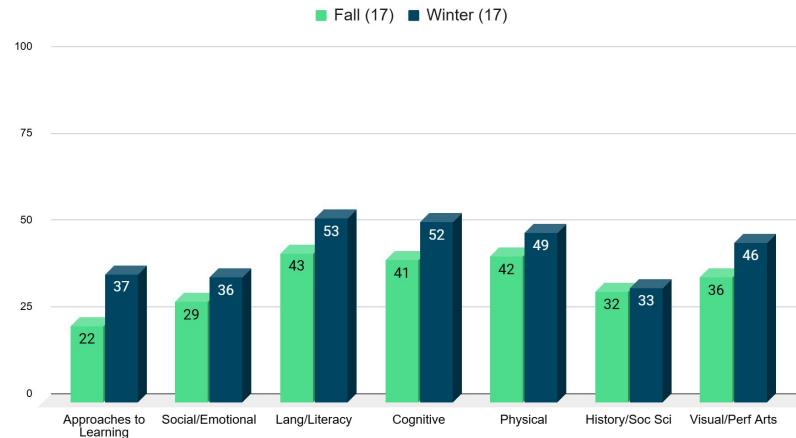
Program Speech IEPs 4 YO's 25-26



Program Developmental Delay IEP FALL 25-26 4 YO's

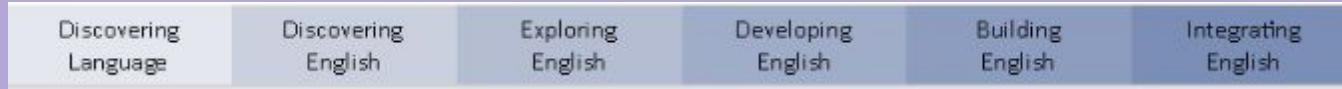


Program Para Support (1-1 or shared) IEP 4 YO's 24-25

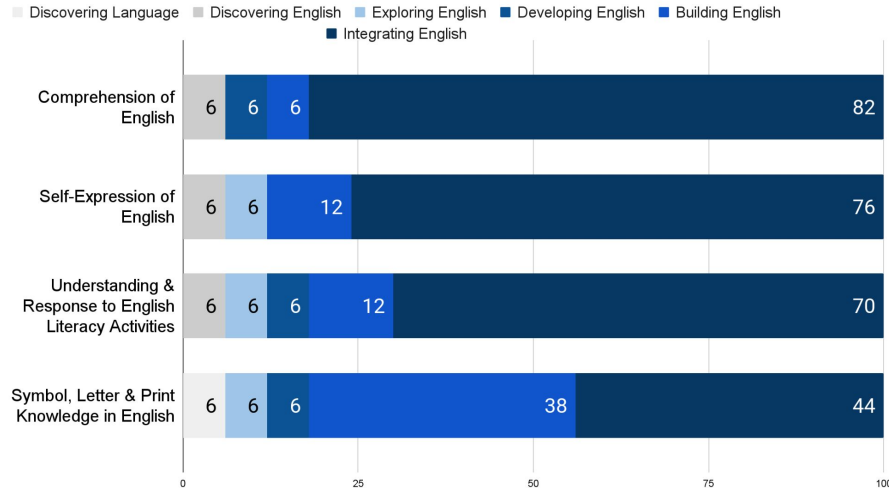


# Dual Language Learners

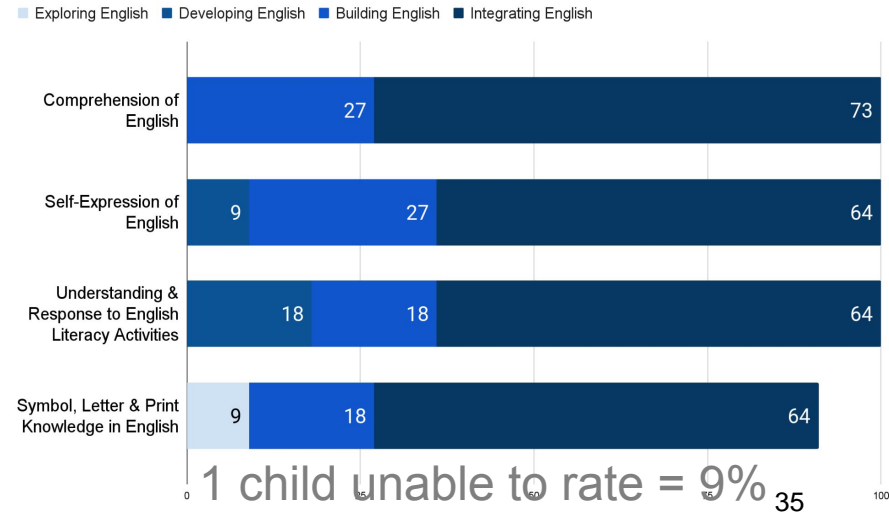
Home languages:  
Portuguese, Spanish, Ojibwe, Vietnamese,  
Dutch, Tibetan, Hausa, Russian,  
Swahili/Kiswahili/Nandi



DLL-FALL 25-26 (16 students)

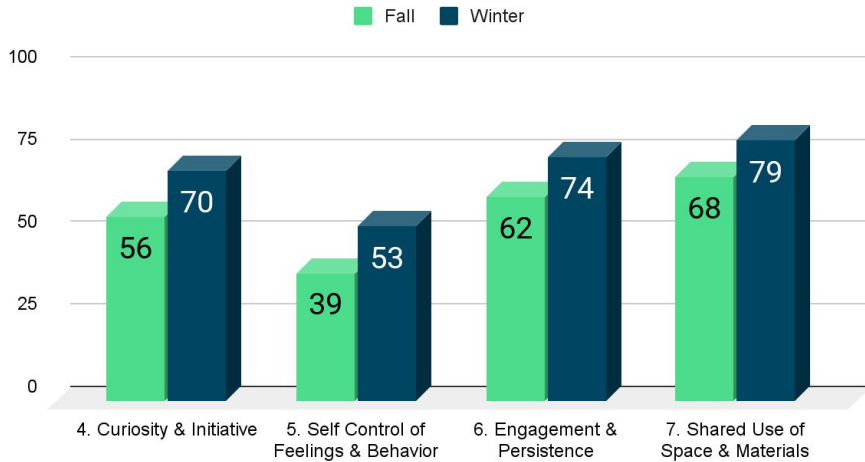


DLL-FALL 25-26 (11 students)

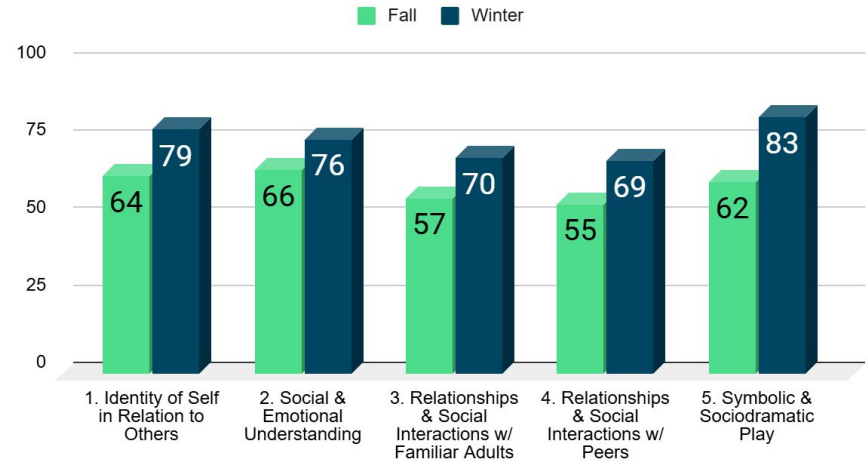


# Domains by Objective: 4 Year Olds Program-Wide

## Approaches to Learning & Self Regulation

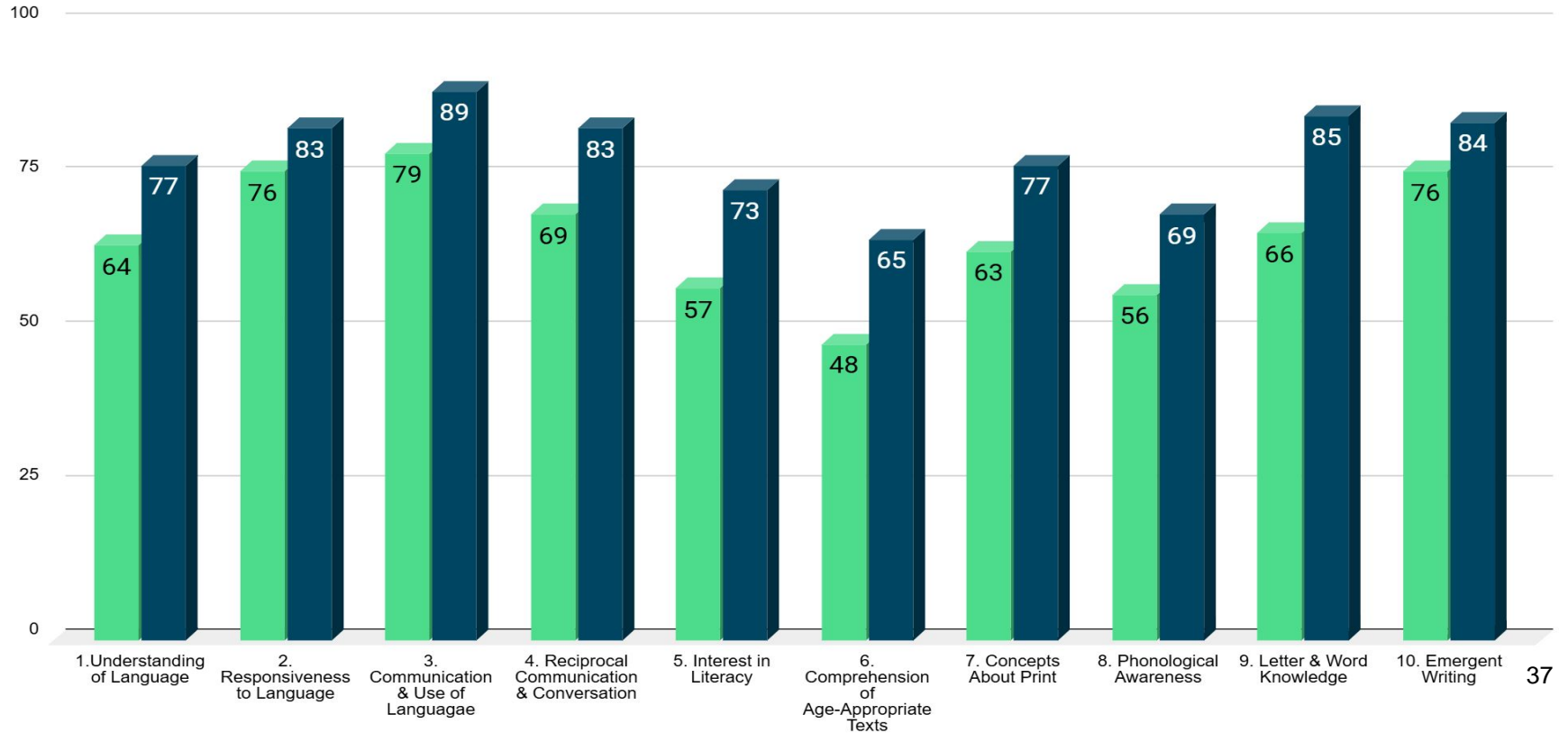


## Social & Emotional Development



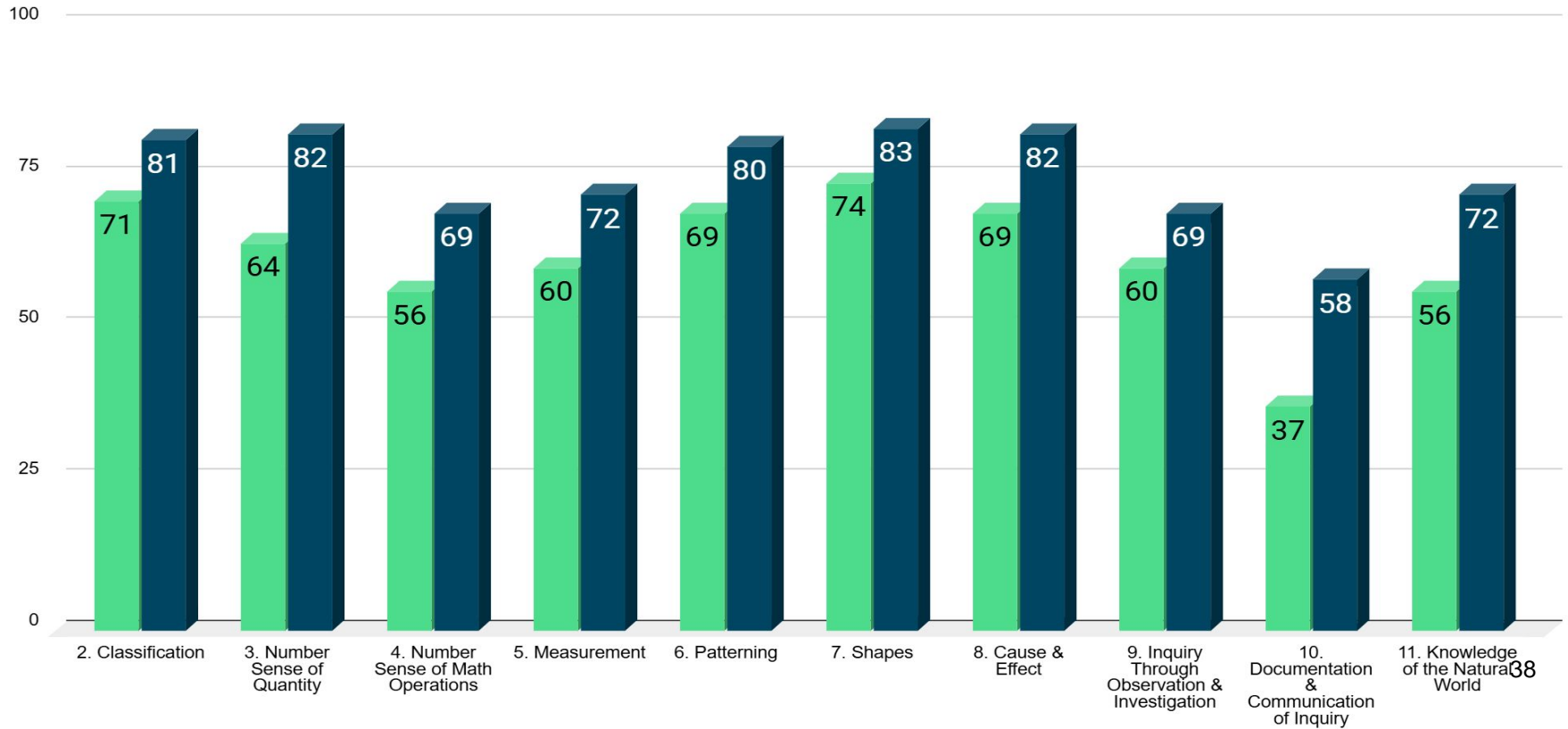
## Language & Literacy

■ Fall ■ Winter

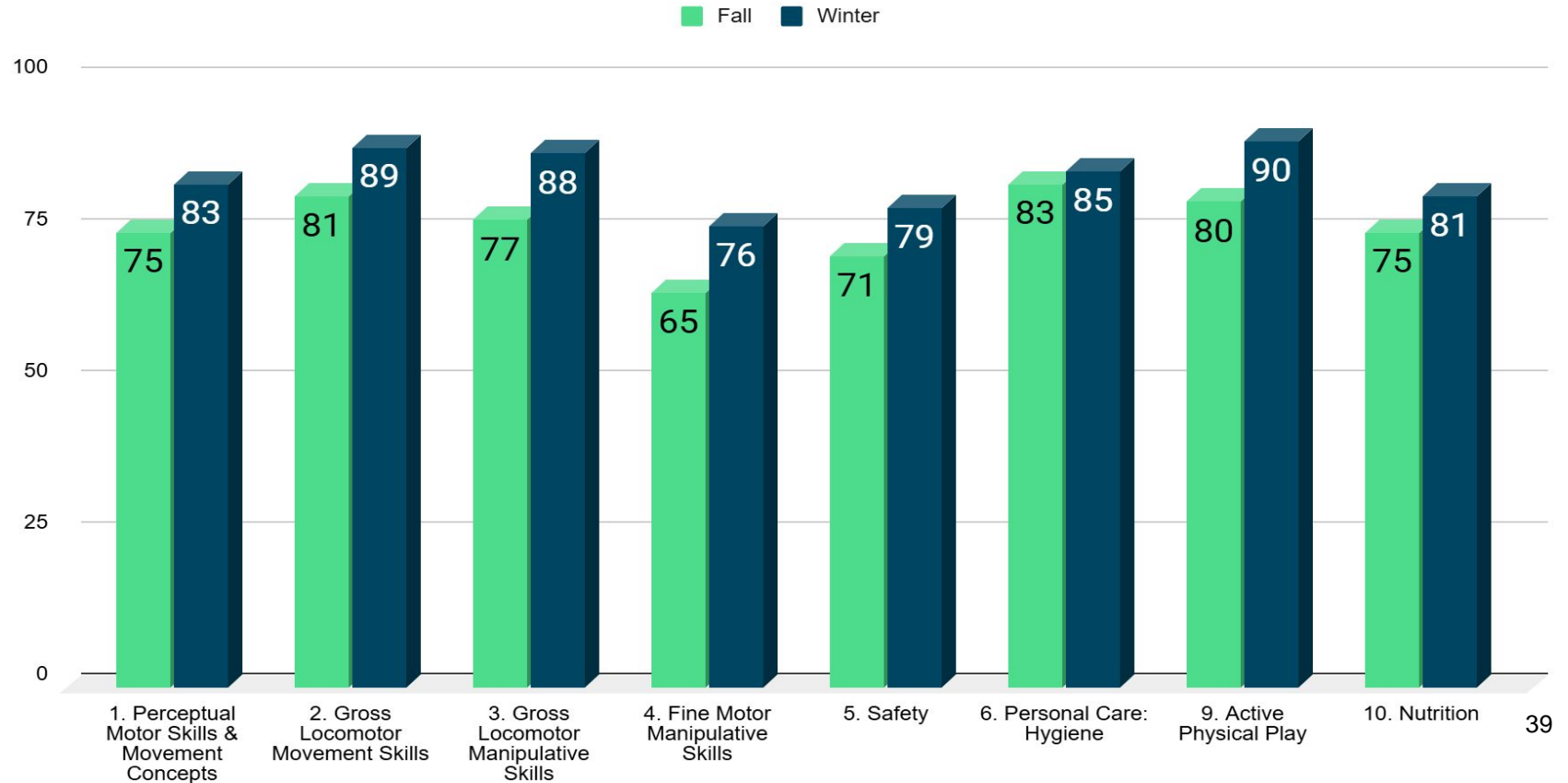


## Cognition Including Math & Science

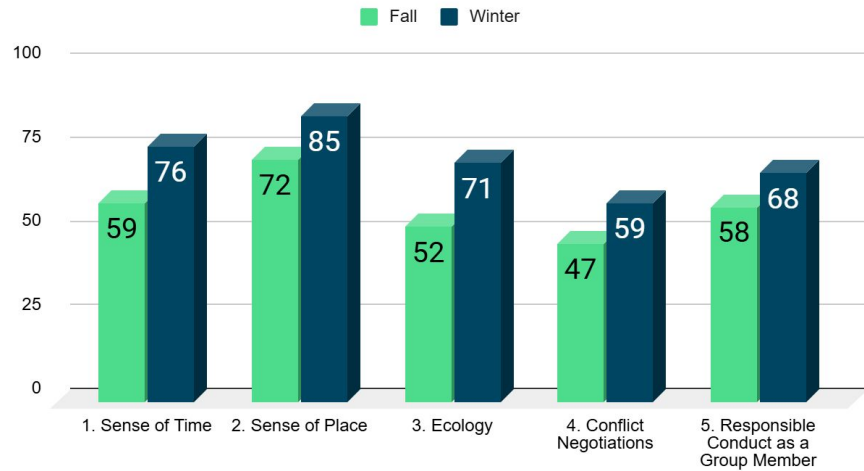
■ Fall ■ Winter



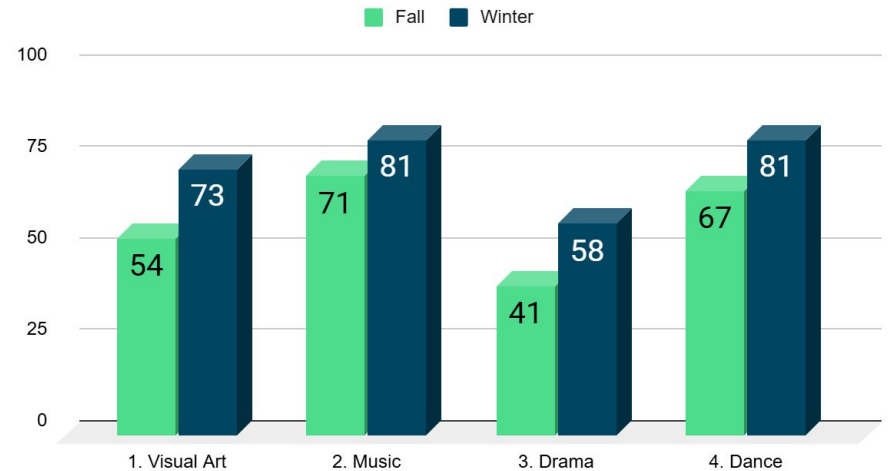
## Physical Development-Health



## History-Social Sciences



## Visual & Performing Arts



# Mental Health Support

## Supports for mental health and well-being (from Head Start Standard 1302.45) (highlights related to mental health)

- To support a program-wide culture that promotes mental health, social and emotional well-being, and overall health and safety, a program must use a multidisciplinary approach.
- Ensures mental health consultation services are available at a frequency of at least once a month.
- *Mental health consultants.* A program must ensure that mental health consultants provide consultation services that build the capacity of adults in an infant or young child's life to strengthen and support the mental health and social and emotional development of children.

# Mental Health Support

**Time in classrooms**

**Structured observation**

**Consult with teachers**

**Consult with parents**

**Behavior Incident Data**

**Student support teams**

**Staff training**

**Program support**

**Referrals to outside services**

# Mental Health Support

**Behavior Incident Reports (BIRs) are part of behavior tracking in Duluth Preschool**

- **Physical aggression towards peers**
- **Physical aggression towards staff**
- **Property destruction (i.e. throwing materials)**
- **Risk taking** - unsafe climbing, biting non-foods, or other risky behavior
- **Inappropriate body behaviors**
- **Elopement** - attempting to leave the class or run away from the group
- **Withdrawn** - staying outside of the group's activities, or refusing activity options
- **Uncontrollable crying** - extended periods of crying without responding to comfort measures
- **Other** - some behaviors of concern don't fit neatly into a category

# Mental Health Support

**1,200 total incidents (representing 1727 total behaviors of concern)**

## **Behavior Incidents by rate\***

- Physical aggression towards peers - 444
- Physical aggression towards staff - 376
- Elopement - 197
- Property Destruction - 209
- Risk taking - 137
- Uncontrollable crying - 129
- Withdrawn - 107
- Self-harm - 39
- Inappropriate body behavior - 16
- Other documented behavior incidents - 73

# Mental Health Support

## Behavior Incident Tracking

- One piece of data that adds to our understanding of a child
  - Some students enter preschool with extremely high needs - whether environmental, developmental, medical/physiological, or a combination.
  - Preschool staff support individual needs through comprehensive services including behavior planning, resource and referral, family education, and classroom supports.
- One piece of data that adds to our understanding of program needs and resources
- Shows where supports are needed at the classroom and program level.

# Special Education: Students Served under IDEA

Spring 2026 Data (as of March 25, 2026)



## PROGRAM-WIDE SUMMARY

Total Enrolled (Actual): **283**

Students with Open IEPs: **99**

Students with Open IFSPs: **1**

Students with Closed IFSPs: **1**

Total Served (Program Wide): **101**

Percentage of Actual Enrollment: **35.7%**

Breakdown by Disability: **73 DD, 24  
Speech/Language, 2 ASD, 1 EBD, 1  
Hearing Impairment**



## HEAD START

Actual Enrollment: **180**

Open IEPs: **60**

Percentage: **33.3%**

Breakdown: **43 DD, 16**

Speech/Language, **1 EBD**



## VOLUNTARY PRE-K (VPK)

Actual Enrollment: **21**

Open IEPs: **6**

Percentage: **28.6%**

Breakdown: **3 DD, 2**

Speech/Language, **1 Hearing  
Impairment**



## SCHOOL READINESS (SR)

Actual Enrollment: **60**

Open IEPs: **27**

Percentage: **45%**

Breakdown: **20 DD, 5**

Speech/Language, **2 ASD**



## STATE FUNDED

Actual Enrollment: **27**

Total Served: **8**

Percentage: **36.3%**

Open IEPs: **7 (31.8%)**

Open IFSPs: **0**

Closed IFSP (parent decline):  
**1 (4.5%)**



46

★ **\*Note:** Open IEPs for Head Start, including drops, is 64 (35.6% of actual enrollment of 180). **Breakdown: 45 DD, 18 Speech/Language, 1 EBD.**

# Staff Professional Development

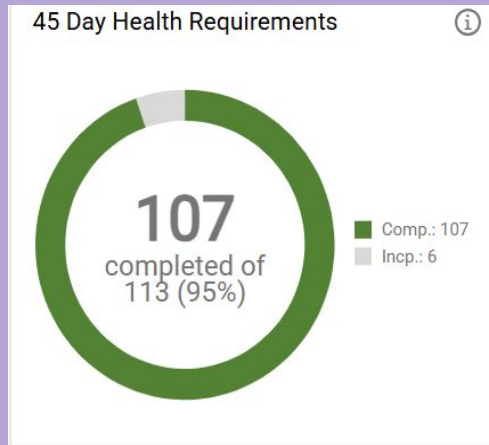
- Strengthening staff capacity
- Supporting staff wellness
- Supporting the whole child and their family through parallel process

[2025-26 Staff Training Template](#)

[2026-27 Staff Training Template](#)

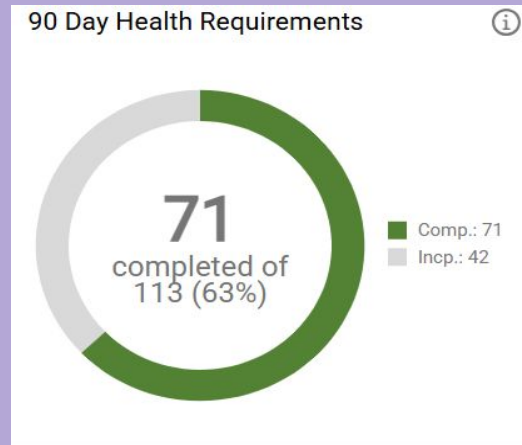
# Health and Nutrition

## Vision and Hearing Screening



39 students failed vision screening. The Duluth Preschool Program secured 17 free pair of glasses from Prevent Blindness

## Well Child Check and Dental



The Children's Dental Services comes to the schools to do preventive care.

## Incident/Accident Reports

- 18 incidents/accidents
- 2 reported to the Office of Head Start
- 1 reported to DHS

# CLASS Observations

CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System), measures classroom interactions, using behavioral evidence in the areas of:

- Emotional Support
- Classroom Organization
- Instructional Support

The scoring ranks from 1 (low) to 7 (high)

# Self Assessment

The following program wide recommendations support continuous quality improvement.

1. Continue to explore opportunities to hire and engage more substitute paraprofessionals and teachers, through a continued partnership with Kelly Education
2. Continue to build staff capacity in working with challenging child behaviors, both through strengthening intervention strategies, teacher mentoring and collaborative observations and ongoing parent partnership
3. Continue Internal Monitoring, supporting individual sites and staff through a parallel process seeking optimal outcomes for our children and their families.
4. Continue to support teams in inputting data through Child Plus and Educlimber (BIRs), informing program decisions through data collections and exploration.
5. Continue to explore program goals for the NOFO 2026-31

# Partnerships

The Depot  
Viewcrest Nursing Home  
Hawks Ridge  
First Witness  
Fire Station #1  
YMCA  
Growing Little Loves Creative Art Space  
Duluth Public Library  
Bayfront (partnership with Parks & Rec)  
LSC Dental  
Lincoln Park  
Bagley Nature Center\*  
Children's Museum  
Superior Zoo\*  
Great Lakes Aquarium  
Playfront\*  
Duluth Art Institute

\*scheduled for the  
Spring 2026

# Where are we in the grant cycle?

- Current extension ending August 1, 2026
- Checking into [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov) for the NOFO
- Monthly check in with OHS
- Preparing for a possible grant extension
- Preparing for a possible NOFO- 5 year competitive opportunity

# Questions

Thank You

## 2025-2026 Duluth Public Schools Head Start Self Assessment Report

### Purpose of Self Assessment

Head Start Performance Standard §1302.102(b)(2)(i) indicates that a program must effectively oversee progress towards program goals on an ongoing basis and annually must conduct a self-assessment that uses program data, and professional development and parent and family engagement data as appropriate, to evaluate the program's progress towards meeting program goals, compliance with program performance standards throughout the program year and the effectiveness of the professional development and family engagement systems in promoting school readiness.

Head Start Performance Standard §1302.102(c)(2)(iv) indicates that a program must use information from ongoing monitoring and the annual self-assessment, and program data on teaching practice, staffing and professional development, child-level assessments, family needs assessments, and comprehensive services, to identify program needs, and develop and implement plans for program improvement.

Questions that helped guide the process were:

- Is our program meeting the Head Start Performance Standards?
- Are our services responding to the changing needs of children and families?
- Is the program achieving the continued goals for the 2025-26 program year?

Duluth Head Start used a process for the self assessment that involved teams, focus groups, surveys and program data to determine success in the following areas:

1. High Quality Preschool Classrooms
2. Responding to the Unique Needs of our Community
3. Fostering Resilience with a Focus on Health and Wellness
4. Program Management and Quality Improvement
5. Family Engagement and Enrollment

### Program Strengths

Duluth Head Start is a school based program with a mission to create a strong learning community in order to achieve success in the classroom and beyond. Currently located in eight of the eight elementary schools in Duluth, MN, spread across this 27 mile long city, along the shores of Lake Superior.

Independent School District 709, Duluth is identified as the Head Start grantee. Head Start has been in our public schools since 1965 and is staffed by certified teachers, and paraprofessionals, represented by the school district bargaining units. The wages and benefits align with that of other District 709 employees. The collaboration and partnership between Head Start and District 709, allows for multiple opportunities to work together through initiatives and programs in support of children and families. The Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRPD) student assessment data will support the selected age-appropriate experiences, high quality preschool classroom design, and family engagement, all preparing our children for kindergarten.

## Methodology

Program leadership, collaborative school partners, the Head Start planning team, and Head Start Parent Policy Council provided input into the program's self assessment methods and direction. The program self assessment was conducted through survey, staff conversations, focus groups, data review, staff and parent interviews, and a review of community needs reports. This methodology was approved by the Policy Council on February 12, 2026 and provides an opportunity for self assessment in the following program areas :

1. High Quality Classrooms
2. Responding to the Needs of Our Community
3. Fostering Resilience with a Focus on Health and Wellness
4. Program Management and Quality Improvement
5. Parent, Family, and Community Engagement; Enrollment; Transportation

## High Quality Preschool Classrooms

High quality preschool classrooms are identified in research as programming that supports the development of children across domains. A rich environment of experiences, with a focus on the social/emotional developmental domain is the foundation from which student growth and learning occurs. The relationships between teachers and children, teachers and families, along with play-based learning and qualified staff members contribute to high quality preschool classrooms. High-quality preschool classrooms bolster student success, across developmental domains, supporting optimal child outcomes.

The Pyramid Model, first introduced to the Duluth Preschool Program in 2017, has been fully implemented into the fabric of the preschool program. The Pyramid Model evidence-based teaching practices begin with an effective workforce, nurturing and responsive relationships, resulting in high quality supportive environments. The parent engagement components of the Pyramid Model, support the home-school connection, with shared tools, language, and practices.

The data around challenging behaviors, including, but not limited to physical aggression, elopement, uncontrolled tantruming, self harm, and withdrawal can be shared with parents and allowing the data to tell the child's story. In addition, the Preschool Support Team, the classroom team and families, use the data to problem solve and coach one another in support of a child's social/emotional development and success in the classroom setting. Our Behavior Incident Reports (BIRs), 1200 from September 14, 2025 through March 31, 2026 indicate that child aggression towards peers and then staff are the most reported this program year. The BIRs indicated that child elopement is the second most reported challenging behavior, demonstrated by children in the Duluth Preschool Program.

### Responding to the Unique Needs of Our Community

The unique needs of the Duluth Community are informed by the following:

- Climate:
  - 40.6 inches of snowfall, with warmer than average winter temperatures
  
- Homelessness:
  - At the time of this report, 20 enrolled children were identified as homeless. This number changes on a monthly basis. The unique needs of homeless children

are supported by classroom teams, community partners and through our birth to 5 State of Minnesota Head Start FIT Program and the District 709 FIT collaboration.

- **The mental health and well-being of the children we serve:** The most current data collected through program behavior incident reports (BIRs) indicates that challenging behaviors are a part of our preschool classrooms. The Duluth Preschool Program has recorded 1200 BIRs, between September 2025 and March 2026 or 109 days of preschool programming. Support for mental health and well-being, as dictated by Head Start Performance Standard 1302.45 invites the following approach in service to our enrolled preschool children.
  - To support a program-wide culture that promotes mental health, social and emotional well-being, and overall health and safety, a program must use a multidisciplinary approach.
  - Ensures mental health consultation services are available at a frequency of at least once a month.
  - *Mental health consultants.* A program must ensure that mental health consultants provide consultation services that build the capacity of adults in an infant or young child's life to strengthen and support the mental health and social and emotional development of children.

In addition, the mental health team supports families and classrooms through the Preschool Support Team (PST). This is a collaboration between families and classroom staff seeking to support children in the social/emotional domain in both classroom and home. The PST collaboration allows teams to review behavior data, investigate the function of a child's behavior and share the child's school story, while learning about the child's home story, as expressed through the child's behavior.

Together, the family and preschool staff create an individual plan for the child. The plan is titled "scaffold to success". The goal is to support the success of the child

across developmental domains, allowing for practice of skills, building of new skills and any needed adjustments along the way. Scaffolding for success represents Duluth Preschool's response to Minnesota's Successful Learner Equation.

- **Nature based programming:** Nature based preschool programs are some of the fastest growing preschool program types in MN and the US. During the course of this grant and its extension, we have maintained 4 Nature Playscapes at schools with the highest concentration of poverty in the Duluth Public Schools. In addition to the playscapes, we have continued to provide children with high quality outdoor gear so they can feel comfortable outside in any weather.
- **Oshki-Inwewin:** This bicultural preschool incorporates Ojibwe language and culture into programming. It draws families from across the city who are interested in having this experience for their children. It is located in an elementary school that houses an Ojibwe language immersion program. Interest in this program continues to grow.
- **Artist in Residence Program:** We partner with the Duluth Art Institute to provide an artist in residence program for full day classrooms. Artists provide an art lesson for 9 weeks and then have an art showcase at the end of the experience. We plan to continue this going forward.
- **Scholarships:** Our program partners with various community partners offering enrichment opportunities for children and families. Several of these have streamlined scholarship applications so that families' participation in Head Start indicates eligibility taking the burden of proof of the family.

## Fostering Resilience with a Focus on Health and Wellness

### **YMCA Partnership:**

Our partnership with the YMCA provides:

- 2 full day classrooms to attend a six week Safety Around Water class during the school day.
- Day passes for every Head Start staff and family
- In spring of 2026, we will add a swim class for Head Start parents - a result of last year's self assessment. This will include childcare. Family Advocates worked to recruit adults to attend this opportunity.

### **Health and Wellness for Staff:**

Our Health and Wellness Committee provides breakfast for staff at each of our staff meetings. Staff also have the opportunity to provide input, anonymously through the 'preschool suggestion box'. Staff input is reviewed by program coordinators and addressed through the weekly Friday Updates from the Director. To date, 7 anonymous suggestions have been submitted and received responses, through this platform.

**Reflective Practice and Supervision :** Duluth Preschool staff were encouraged to engage with one another through opportunities at our staff training/ professional development days and staff meetings. Reflective Practice such as this, is a common Early Childhood process that helps staff feel supported and seen by colleagues and supervisors.

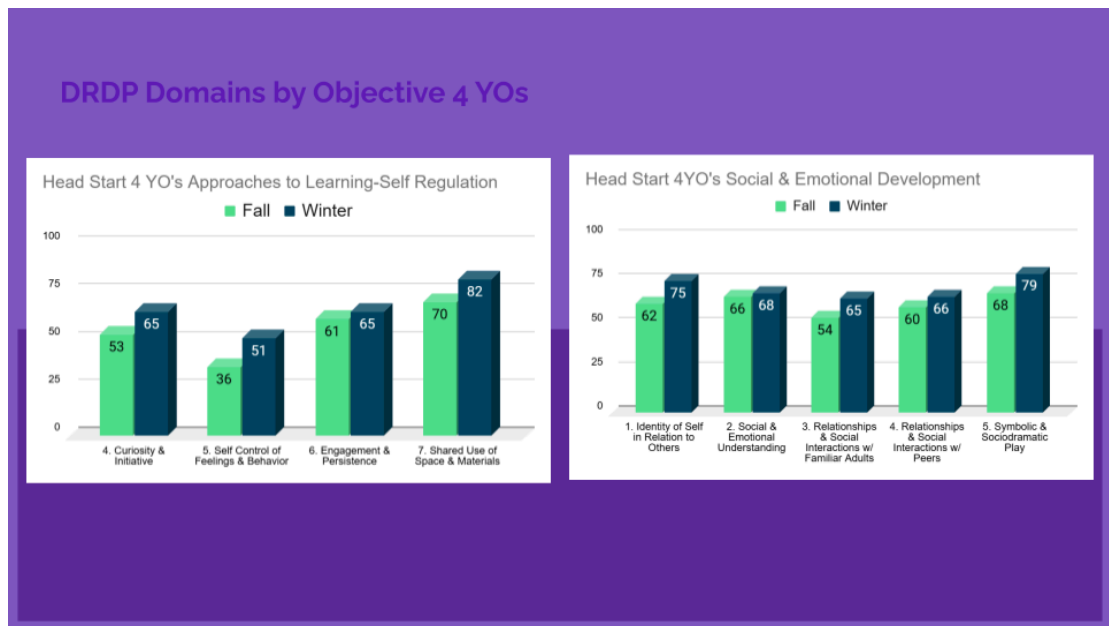
**Professional Development:** The Duluth Preschool Program has moved under Community Education, in the Duluth Public Schools Organizational Chart. This move has informed some of the staff development opportunities throughout the

2025-26 program year. The staff provided input into staff development opportunities utilizing the Coordinator Team, Planning Team and staff surveys. In addition, the Duluth Preschool Program has partnered with the Duluth Public Schools Professional Development Department and Community Education to plan staff professional development. The onboarding of classroom staff was more intentional this program year, with teacher and paraprofessional mentoring, in real time and with an approved paraprofessional on-boarding checklist. Staff feedback on both the mentoring and checklist have been favorable.

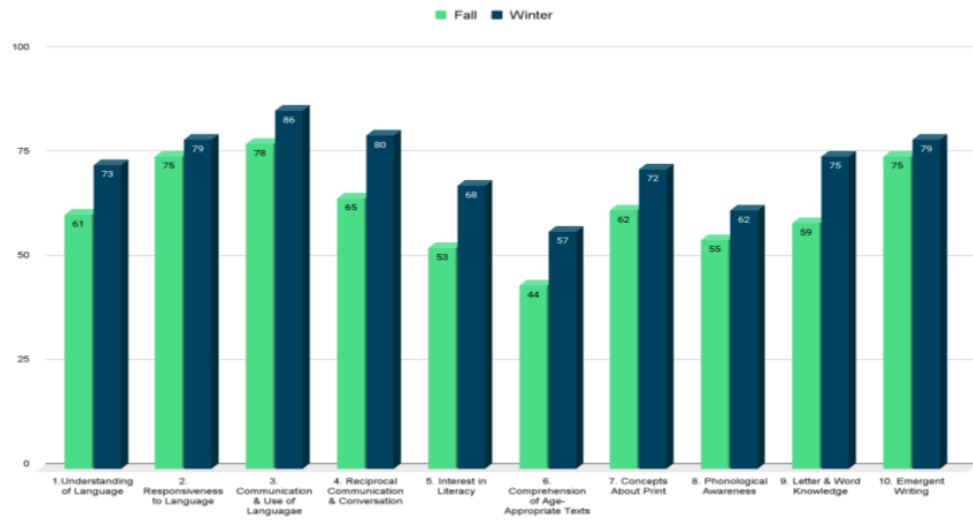
**School Readiness**

Head Start is a school readiness program, as defined by the Office of Head Start. The Desired Results Developmental Profile or DRDP results for the Fall 2025 and Winter 2026 are as follows:

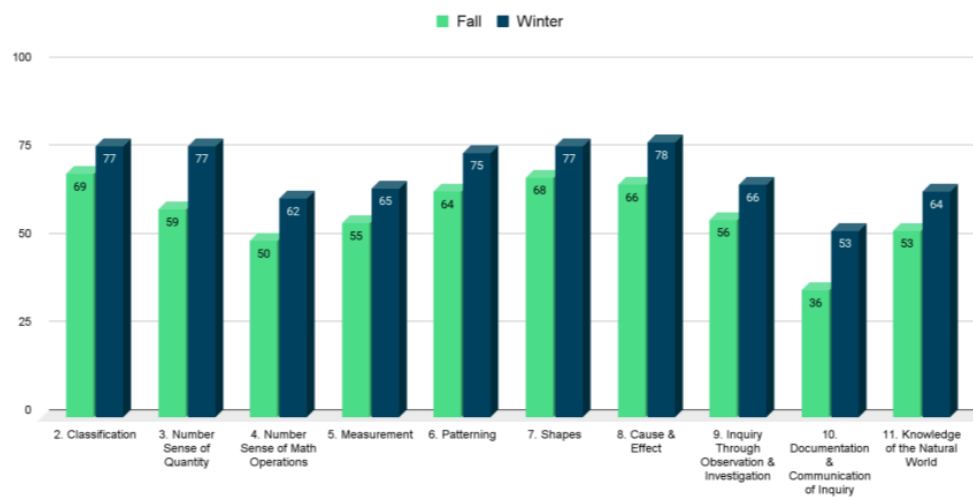
- 254 3-5 year olds enrolled at checkpoint cutoff
- 96% assessed
- 4% “Elected Not to Rate” (10 children-chronic absences)



Head Start 4 YO's Language & Literacy Development



Head Start 4 YO's Cognition, Including Math & Science



## Program Management and Quality Improvement

**Federal Monitoring:** We were monitored by the Office of Head Start in the spring of 2024. There was one finding that was corrected regarding Oral Health Determination. Several program strengths were noted including:

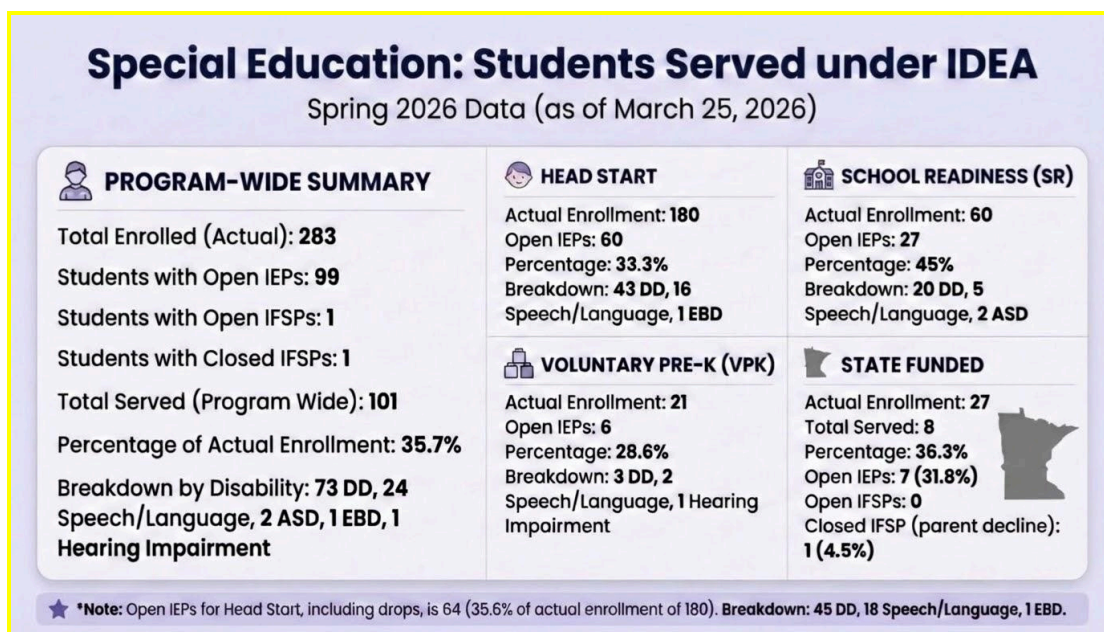
- Formal systems that remove barriers for policy council member participation
- Use of ongoing program data to innovate in the classroom based on needs of individual or subgroups of students
- Regularly offering families information or activities designed to support families' mental health and wellness
- Solicits and uses inputs from families to improve programming
- Provides economic mobility support to help families with pathways out of poverty
- Continuously evaluates the success of recruitment strategies and adjusts strategies as appropriate
- Provides targeted support for children and families who are at risk of low attendance

**Internal Monitoring:** We monitor classrooms twice per year: in the fall and spring. We monitor to see the following:

- Pyramid Model practices are in place
- Evidence of curriculum fidelity
- Active Supervision procedures are in place
- Meals are being served family style
- Health/Allergy information

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** The LRE is defined as placement of a child to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in

public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled. Duluth Preschool offers an LRE through inclusive preschool programming, partnering with the Duluth Public Schools Special Education Department. The acceptance and placement of students is a collaborative process, seeking to place children in their “home” school. The collaboration with teachers, IEP casemanagers, program leadership, program coordinators and families, contributes to the overall inclusion of children of differing abilities into the Duluth Preschool Program.



**Transportation Internal Monitoring:** Transportation is monitored three times per year, at the beginning of the school year, after the winter break, and in April following Spring break

We look to see upon arrival at school that

- Bus vests are being used
- Children are not released until teachers are present
- Staff are maintaining active supervision as they walk children to the classroom

- Drivers have current Release To information
- Drivers are in possession of a current route sheet

At home drop off stops we look to see that

- Parents are going up to the bus to pick children up

When a child is returned to school because an adult was not present, that provides evidence that our plan is being followed.

Bus Concern Forms are used when staff or families have concerns about a parent, driver, or child's behaviors. This form is sent to our Enrollment Coordinator who follows up with them. Bus Concern forms were completed in 2025-26, through an on-line platform. In addition, the District Transportation Coordinator, follows up with our Transportation Coordinator, regarding any ridership concerns.

## Enrollment

We were identified in 2023 as being chronically under enrolled. This was due, in large part, to us limiting enrollment in classrooms struggling with challenging student behavior. Some behaviors made it difficult to keep classrooms safe.

We have worked toward and maintained the required full enrollment for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 school year. We continue to review our enrollment process annually, making any needed adjustments to the process. Contributing to this process is the quarterly Office Flow Meeting. This meeting has been established to create pathways for talking through changes, challenges, and celebrations, in the Duluth Preschool Office culture.

Finally, we have created a recruitment team, including our clerical team member, our business manager, the ERSEA Coordinator, the Inclusion Coordinator, and the

Director that meets 2 times per year to look at sites that may need strategic recruitment and child placements, along with a recruitment timeline to keep us on track with the many tasks involved in launching a new program year.

## Family Engagement

Parent Committee meetings at sites have had low attendance (2-11 families), with the exception of the very first one of the year: the Ice Cream Social, held in September and early October, which had 8-17 families in attendance across all sites. We have seen success in bringing families together, when we invite them from across the city to meet at community sites like The Depot or Bayfront Park. Attendance numbers up to 117 individuals have been recorded at the city-wide events. Attendance at city wide events feels satisfying for family advocates and pleasurable for families, allowing both to connect over preselected themes like, health and wellness, challenging behaviors, nutrition, mental health, and family routines.

## Program Facilities

Per Head Start and the Department of Human Services: Minnesota Child Care Centers need a minimum of 35 square feet of usable indoor space per child, with specific exclusions like hallways and closets, but centers also need 75 sq. ft. per child outdoors. Up to 25% of space occupied by furniture or equipment can count towards the total.

The current funding allows for 306 student slots. There are 8 classrooms currently accepting student placement, with 18 class sessions= 18 students per session

## Program Staffing

Past practice was also used this program year to support the need for teacher subs. Certified staff: Family Advocates and Program Coordinators select 2 days per month as: “back up” teacher/para subs. Community Education is funding a float paraprofessional position, beginning 1/5/26 and ending 3/31/26.

The number of teacher absences (Frontline) September: 13/ October: 27 /November: 24 /December: 25.5/January 22/February 23/March 19. The number of para absences(Frontline) September: 38/October: 41 /November: 35 /December: 35.5/January 46/February 44/March 48 The requirement for fingerprinting of subs increased the difficulty in filling absences, through Kelly Education. There are currently 13 teacher subs and 11 paraprofessional subs, who meet the fingerprinting requirement.

## Noteworthy Additions

The Office of Head Start has indicated that the competitive NOFO grant will be released during the Summer of 2026. Competition allows us an opportunity to redefine how our program responds to identified community needs.

## Recommendations

The following program wide recommendations support continuous quality improvement.

1. Continue to explore opportunities to hire and engage more substitute paraprofessionals and teachers, through a continued partnership with Kelly Education
2. Continue to build staff capacity in working with challenging child behaviors, both through strengthening intervention strategies, teacher mentoring and collaborative observations and ongoing parent partnership
3. Continue Internal Monitoring, supporting individual sites and staff through a parallel process seeking optimal outcomes for our children and their families.
4. Continue to support teams in inputting data through Child Plus and Educlimber (BIRs), informing program decisions through data collections and exploration.
5. Continue to explore program goals for the NOFO 2026-31

By signing below, this report has been approved by the Governing Board and Head Start Policy Council.

\_\_\_\_\_ Kelly Durick-Eder, School Board Chair

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Danielle Baublitz, Policy Council Chair

\_\_\_\_\_ Date



## **Transportation Waiver for Duluth Head Start FY 2027**

- Voluntary PreK is required to provide transportation to and from school for 4 year olds
- Due to this, we are asking that 4 year old Head Start children also be allowed to ride the bus to and from school. We know transportation can be a significant barrier to accessing preschool for families experiencing poverty.
- We are asking to waive the following Head Start regulations:
  - Restraints 1303.71(d) and 1303.72(a)(1)
  - Monitors 1303.72(a)(4)
- Our Parent Policy Council supports this plan contingent on maintaining the following safety provisions:
  - Preschool children will wear reflective vests making them highly visible to the bus drivers and other staff, both to and from school
  - Preschool children will sit in seats closest to the driver
  - An adult must meet the children at the bus door at drop off, and must bring the child to the bus door at pick up. We encourage parents to establish communication with the driver.
  - Unfamiliar designated adults must present an ID to the bus driver when picking up a child from the bus.
  - All Head Start children must participate in a bus safety presentation on the first day of school.
  - Riding the bus is voluntary, so parents may choose to self transport if they prefer.
    - The number of four year olds varies from year to year, but last year **x** preschool children ride the bus on any given day.

We appreciate your commitment to removing barriers for children whose families are experiencing poverty by safely getting preschool children to and from school. We know establishing patterns of regular attendance is very important for school success, and we can directly correlate transportation increased attendance.

By signing below, you are acknowledging that this waiver has been approved.

\_\_\_\_\_ Kelly Durick-Eder, School Board Chair

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Danielle Baublitz, Policy Council Chair

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

## **COW Agenda Cover Sheet**

**Meeting Date: April 7, 2026**

**Topic: Graduation Rates 2025**

**Presenter(s): Jen Larva, Brenda Spartz**

**Attachment: Pending**

**Brief Summary of Presentation or Topic (no more than a few sentences): The recent graduation rates for 2025 have been released and will be public on Friday, April 3. We will review the state, district and site results. There are many celebrations to be shared!**

**This Requires School Board Approval : No**

## **COW Agenda Cover Sheet**

**Meeting Date: 4/7/2026**

**Topic: Child Nutrition Supper Meal Audit**

**Presenter(s): Sheila Oak**

**Attachment: Copy of the Audit findings and corrective action plans**

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

The Denfeld Supper Meal program was audited by MDE-FNS (Food and Nutrition Services) in October 2025. This is the findings of that audit and the corrective action taken.

**This Requires School Board Approval :**

## Child Nutrition Program March 2026

### Number of Employees

3 Administrative  
1 Food Service equipment technician  
15 Certified Food Protection Managers  
50 Helpers (5 open jobs currently)  
19 Dishwashers and 4 Subs

### Programs Serviced

**Average daily meals/snacks—7915 -- Plus Ala Carte sales**

Breakfast  
Lunch  
Afterschool Snack  
HeadStart Breakfast  
HeadStart Lunch  
Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program-Myers Wilkins  
Afterschool Super Snack-Denfeld  
Harbor City International School Lunch Meals catered daily  
Summer Breakfast  
Summer Lunch

### Bids within Program

Food  
Milk  
Bread

### Audits

Administrative Audits from USDA/MDE-FNS—Every 3-5 years  
Summer Meals--Yearly  
New programs-- Yearly  
Health Department –2 times a year to each school  
Also involved when Head start is audited or Harbor City, or the District as a whole.

### Free and Reduced Lunch applications

1200 per year (computer and hand calculated)  
Majority are Directly Certified through the State of Minnesota  
Verification Process –3% random pull once yearly

### Menus

Meet USDA guidelines  
Special diets also honored, Gluten free, Lactose free, Peanut Free, etc.  
Managed by Software and ProTeam consultants  
4-week repeating lunch menu cycle

### Staff Continuing Educational Requirements

Managers are Certified Food Protection managers- Need 4 hours refresher every 3 years  
Initial course and exam to obtain certification.

USDA requires:

Managers 10 hours  
20+ hour employees 6 hours  
20 or less hours 4 hours  
School District annual computer-based training VECTOR

### School Lunch Accounts

Monthly Billings over -10.00

### Software Programs

**Infinite Campus**— This is the point of service system used to run our program. Handles F/R/P information, lunch account balances, meal counts, bills, etc.

**PROTEAM HEALTHY MENUS**—Menu software, nutrient analysis. Managed by an outside company for us, Fulfills all requirements from USDA for product labels and audit assistance.





## **Child Nutrition Programs – Child and Adult Care Food Program Review Report**

**Duluth ISD #709 (1000003456)**

**Sponsor Review Date: November 19, 2025**

**Date Findings Discussed with Sponsor: November 19, 2025**

**Corrective Action Due Date: January 16, 2026**

**Site Reviewed and Review Date: Denfeld Senior High School - November 19, 2025**

**Month of Review: October 2025**

**Lead Reviewer and Additional Team Members: Nancy Brady, R.D., SNS, CFPM and Christine Miller**

**Sponsor Representative: Sheila Oak, Food Service Director**

**Instructions: Please utilize this format to develop a corrective action plan within the table below for each finding identified in this review report.**

**1. Who**

List the names and job titles of all staff responsible for:

- Correcting the finding, and
- Maintaining the corrective actions going forward.

**2. What and How**

Describe the steps you have taken or will take to correct the finding(s). Include:

- Specific actions taken
- Any new or updated processes or procedures
- How often each procedure will be done, for example, daily, weekly, monthly.

**3. When**

Provide the date(s) the corrective actions were or will be implemented.

**4. Supporting Documentation**

Attach documents that support your corrective actions, if applicable. Examples include:

- Staff training records
- Meal count records
- Updated menus, procedures, or checklists

*How to Submit Your Response*

1. Save this report as a **Word** document.
2. Enter your corrective action in the 'Sponsor Corrective Action Column' next to each finding.
3. Attach your supporting documents.
4. Email the **Word** document and all attachments together to the lead reviewer.

If your corrective action response is incomplete or unclear, MDE will contact you to revise it.

*Sponsor Level Findings*

Area	Finding ID and Description	Required Corrective Action	Sponsor Corrective Action
<p>1200 Training—CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program Training Sponsoring Organization</p>	<p>1202SP. All afterschool program staff (i.e. Coordinators for DASH, Sport Teams and Debate Club) did not receive annual <i>CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program</i> training pertinent to their specific responsibilities and duties. Also, documentation (i.e. agenda, attendance date and names of participants) was not available to demonstrate that afterschool program staff received annual CACFP training.</p>	<p>Corrective Action: Describe your plan to correct this finding.</p> <p><b>Technical Assistance:</b> Require all afterschool program staff that work with students who will access the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program to attend an annual training on the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program. You can meet individually with staff and provide training pertinent to their specific responsibilities and duties OR use MDE’s Brighton training course available on our website (MDE-213 CACFP Annual Training for At-Risk Afterschool Care Center 2026).</p>	<p>Who: Sheila Oak DTR, Supervisor of Child Nutrition</p> <p>What and How: Require all staff involved with the afterschool meals program to meet individually with myself or a member of my office staff to get training that is pertinent to their specific duties in the meal service process. Have them sign the signature page when done training.</p> <p>When: Starting 12/1/25</p> <p>Supporting Documentation: Labeled A 3 pages</p>
<p>MDE Response to Sponsors Corrective Action Plan:</p>			
<p>1200 Training—Civil Rights Training Sponsoring Organization</p>	<p>1210SP. Staff from DASH who work with the public and participants of the CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program did not receive annual <i>Civil Rights training</i>. In addition, documentation (i.e. agenda, attendance date and names of participants) was not available to</p>	<p>Corrective Action: Describe your plan to correct this finding.</p>	<p>Who: Sheila Oak DTR, Supervisor of Child Nutrition</p> <p>What and How: Civil Rights training will be provided to the DASH staff involved in meal distribution and attendance. Foodservice employees involved in Prep and paperwork will have civil rights training annually.</p>

Area	Finding ID and Description	Required Corrective Action	Sponsor Corrective Action
	demonstrate that Civil Rights training was provided.		<p>The materials will be provided to the employees involved with training or they may watch the VECTOR video until the USDA video is updated.</p> <p>When: 12/1/2025</p> <p>Supporting Documentation: Labeled B 29 pages</p>
MDE Response to Sponsors Corrective Action Plan:			
<p><b>Observation and Recommendation:</b> It was noted during the review that all district employees received Civil Rights training produced by Vector Solution K-12 edition. Vectors civil rights training module has some outdated information in it but it can still be used until USDA updates their materials and training tools.</p>			

Area	Finding ID and Description	Required Corrective Action	Sponsor Corrective Action
<p>1600 Eligibility— Program and Participant</p>	<p>1604SP. Approximately half of the total number of At-Risk afterschool suppers that were served and claimed for reimbursement during this school year were provided to students who were <b>not</b> participating in an eligible afterschool care program. Many students were served the cold bagged supper and either left the school site or remained on site to consume the meal but did not plan to participate in any afterschool program.</p> <p>This is a repeat finding that was cited during an administrative review conducted in April 2023.</p>	<p>Corrective Action: Describe your plan to correct this finding.</p> <p><b>Technical Assistance:</b></p> <p><b>Participant Eligibility:</b> At-Risk Afterschool Programs may claim reimbursement ONLY for meals and/or snacks served to students (age 18 or under) who participate in an eligible Afterschool Program and who are “in the care” of the after-school program staff and only on days when the qualifying enrichment or educational program is offered. In addition, all meals and/or snacks served in the At-Risk Afterschool Meals Program must be eaten on site in a congregate setting.</p> <p><b>Program Eligibility:</b> Afterschool programs must be organized primarily to provide “care for children” after school or on the weekends, holidays, or school release days during the regular school year. Each identified afterschool program must provide organized regularly scheduled education or enrichment activities in a structured and supervised environment.</p>	<p>Who: Sheila Oak DTR, Supervisor of Child Nutrition—Responsible for corrective action and ongoing review of process</p> <p>What and How: Team or program leaders will be responsible for Picking up and distributing the bag meals, as well as maintaining the attendance and meal taken paperwork.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Program coaches or leaders will contact the Child Nutrition program of their desire to have afterschool meals for their group of students staying after school to participate in their enrichment program or sport.</li> <li>2. The team leader will be given the program training materials and Civil Rights training materials to review before they begin their role in the distribution of meals.</li> <li>3. The Team leader will be responsible for keeping the attendance sheet as well as the meal taken sheet that is given to them daily with the meals.</li> <li>4. The meals will be picked up from the cafeteria by 2:45 daily. The team leader or coach will distribute the meals to their group and the meals will be eaten as a group within the school district buildings.</li> <li>5. The attendance sheets will be returned the next day with the cooler and any unused meals.</li> </ol>

Area	Finding ID and Description	Required Corrective Action	Sponsor Corrective Action
			<p>6. Meal counts are to be lowered or raised daily by contacting the Child Nutrition office or the cafeteria.</p> <p>When: This new process of distribution began on 12/1/2025.</p> <p>Supporting Documentation: Online DASH attendance/meal consumption sheet</p> <p>Paper meal recording sheet that will be given to new participants in the program that will not be using an online form.</p> <p>Labeled C 3 pages</p>
MDE Response to Sponsors Corrective Action Plan:			

*Site Level Findings*

100002233 – Denfeld Senior High School

**DATE OF VISIT**

Area	Finding ID and Description	Required Corrective Action	Sponsor Corrective Action
300 Meal Counting/Claiming— Day of Review	302. Daily attendance information was <b>only</b> collected and recorded for students who participated in afterschool programs offered by DASH. No other afterschool programs offered at Denfeld High School collected/recorded or maintained daily attendance information of their program participants.	<p>Corrective Action: Describe your plan to correct this finding.</p> <p><b>Technical Assistance:</b> Attendance information must be recorded daily on a roster of student’s names for each eligible afterschool program. Site staff must compare daily meal and/or snack counts to daily attendance information to ensure that the number of meals and/or snacks served does not exceed the total number of students in attendance.</p>	<p>Who: Sheila Oak DTR, Supervisor of Child Nutrition—Responsible for corrective action and ongoing review of process</p> <p>What and How: Team or program leaders will be responsible for Picking up and distributing the bag meals, as well as maintaining the attendance and meal taken paperwork.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Program coaches or leaders will contact the Child Nutrition program of their desire to have afterschool meals for their group of students staying after school to participate in their enrichment program or sport.</li> <li>2.The team leader will be given the program training materials and Civil Rights training materials to review before they begin their role in the distribution of meals.</li> <li>3.The Team leader will be responsible for keeping the attendance sheet as well as the meal taken sheet that is given to them daily with the meals.</li> <li>4. The meals will be picked up from the cafeteria by 2:45 daily. The team leader or coach will distribute the meals to their group and the meals will be eaten as a group within the school district buildings.</li> <li>5.The attendance sheets will be returned the next day with the cooler and any unused meals.</li> </ol>

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MDE Response to Sponsors Corrective Action Plan:			
<p>300 Meal Counting/Claiming— Five Day Reconciliation assessment conducted during the administrative review in November 2025.</p>	<p>304. After reviewing the “five-day reconciliation period,” which is assessed during our administrative review of Denfeld’s November supper meal counts, versus available attendance information, it was noted that the site's daily meal counts exceeded attendance information on the following days: November 11, 13, 17 and 18.</p>	<p>Corrective Action: When preparing your November 2025 claim for reimbursement kept in mind that the number of suppers that can be claimed for reimbursement on a daily basis can only reflect the number of students who attended the afterschool programing in DASH and received a meal.</p>	<p>Who: Sheila Oak, DTR, Supervisor of Child Nutrition</p> <p>What and How: The meal counts of students that were attending the afterschool DASH program and the students that punched in for meals were cross referenced and only those students attending DASH will be claimed for having a meal.</p> <p>When: When preparing the November claim on December 1, 2025.</p> <p>Supporting Documentation:</p>

Area	Finding ID and Description	Required Corrective Action	Sponsor Corrective Action
			<p>The comparison sheet and the final total for the claim.</p> <p>Labeled D 3 sheets (I did a revised claim after finding a math error)</p>
MDE Response to Sponsors Corrective Action Plan:			
<p>300 Meal Counting/Claiming—Review Period</p>	<p>305. Daily attendance records were not accurately maintained during the review period for all At-Risk afterschool participants. Attendance records were only maintained for students attending afterschool programs offered by DASH. No other afterschool programs (i.e. Sport Teams, Debate, etc.) recorded or submitted daily attendance information on a roster of student’s names.</p>	<p>Corrective Action: Describe your plan to correct this finding.</p> <p><b>Technical Assistance:</b> Regulations state that At-Risk Afterschool Programs may claim reimbursement <b>ONLY</b> for meals and/or snacks served to students who participate in an approved Afterschool Program.</p>	<p>Who: Sheila Oak DTR, Supervisor of Child Nutrition—Responsible for corrective action and ongoing review of process</p> <p>What and How: Team or program leaders will be responsible for Picking up and distributing the bag meals, as well as maintaining the attendance and meal taken paperwork.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Program coaches or leaders will contact the Child Nutrition program of their desire to have afterschool meals for their group of students staying after school to participate in their enrichment program or sport.</li> <li>2. The team leader will be given the program training materials and Civil Rights training materials to review before they begin their role in the distribution of meals.</li> <li>3. The Team leader will be responsible for keeping the attendance sheet as well as the meal taken sheet that is given to them daily with the meals.</li> <li>4. The meals will be picked up from the cafeteria by 2:45 daily. The team leader or coach will distribute the meals to their group and the meals will be eaten as a group within the school district buildings.</li> </ol>

Area	Finding ID and Description	Required Corrective Action	Sponsor Corrective Action
			<p>5.The attendance sheets will be returned the next day with the cooler and any unused meals.</p> <p>6. Meal counts are to be lowered or raised daily by contacting the Child Nutrition office or the cafeteria.</p> <p>When: : This new process of distribution began on 12/1/2025.</p> <p>Supporting Documentation: Online DASH attendance/meal consumption sheet</p> <p>Paper meal recording sheet that will be given to new participants in the program.</p> <p>Labeled C</p>
MDE Response to Sponsors Corrective Action Plan:			
300 Meal Counting/Claiming— Review Period	<p>308., 314f and 314g. Daily meal counts (suppers) reported during the review month of October 2025 were greater than daily attendance information on the following dates: October 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, and 30.</p> <p>A combination of these two issues contributed to this finding: 1. Suppers were offered and served to students who were not “in care,” or in other words not participating in an afterschool program. Specifically, students received a supper and either left</p>	<p>Corrective Action: Describe your plan to correct this finding.</p> <p>Meal count adjustments are summarized on the “Claim for Reimbursement Adjustment Form At Risk” an Excel spreadsheet which is attached to the email along with this review report.</p> <p>Overpayments identified during a CACFP review are totaled and if they exceed \$600, funds must be recovered. Refer to the review cover letter/email for more information. Sponsors may appeal actions taken by the Minnesota Department of</p>	<p>Who: Sheila Oak, DTR, Supervisor of Child Nutrition</p> <p>What and How: The meal counts of students that were attending the afterschool DASH program and the students that punched in for meals were cross referenced and only those students attending DASH will be claimed for having a meal.</p> <p>When: When preparing the November claim on December 1, 2025.</p> <p>Supporting Documentation:</p>

Area	Finding ID and Description	Required Corrective Action	Sponsor Corrective Action
	<p>the school building or stayed on site but had no intention of participating in any afterschool program.</p> <p>2. Daily attendance records of students who participated in eligible afterschool programs were not kept by staff who operated these afterschool programs. If attendance records had been maintained the suppers that their participants received could have been claimed for reimbursement. The DASH afterschool program was the only group that maintained daily attendance information of their participants.</p> <p>Note: Going forward, the total number of At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program suppers that can be claimed for reimbursement can <b>ONLY</b> reflect the number of meals served to students who attend an eligible afterschool program.</p>	<p>Education (MDE) in accordance with the CACFP Appeal Procedure, which is also attached to the email along with the review report.</p> <p>If an appeal is not received within the specified time frame, MDE will adjust the claim for reimbursement.</p>	<p>The comparison sheet and the final total for the claim. The November Claim</p> <p>Labeled D</p>
MDE Response to Sponsors Corrective Action Plan:			
300 Meal Counting/Claiming— Review Period	314a. Average Daily Attendance (ADA) was incorrectly reported on the review month claim for reimbursement. An enrollment figure of 440 students was reported as the ADA instead of a calculated average number of students who attend/participate	<p>Corrective Action: Describe your plan to correct this finding.</p> <p><b>Technical Assistance:</b> To accurately calculate Average Daily Attendance (ADA) which is reported on the Monthly Claim for Reimbursement: add together daily attendance for the reporting month to equal total</p>	<p>Who: Sheila Oak, DTR, Supervisor of Child Nutrition</p> <p>What and How: I will add up the monthly attendance for the DASH program and divide it by the number of reporting days to come up with the average daily attendance</p>

Area	Finding ID and Description	Required Corrective Action	Sponsor Corrective Action
	daily in the school's afterschool programs.	<p>monthly attendance. Next, divide total monthly attendance by the number of operational days in the reporting month to equal Average Daily Attendance.</p> <p>Total Monthly Attendance ÷ Operational Days = ADA</p>	<p>When: December 1, 2025</p> <p>Supporting Documentation: Labeled E 1 page Decembers claim also shows the average daily attendance as 27. 268 divided by 10=26.8 or 27.</p>
MDE Response to Sponsors Corrective Action Plan:			
300 Meal Counting/Claiming— Review Period	314j. The sponsor incorrectly reported the total number of suppers served on the October 2025 monthly claim for reimbursement because daily totals were sourced from the Food Production Records and incorrectly included suppers served to students who were not participating in an afterschool program.	Corrective Action: Describe your plan to correct this finding.	<p>Who: Sheila Oak DTR, Supervisor of Child Nutrition—Responsible for corrective action and ongoing review of process</p> <p>What and How: Team or program leaders will be responsible for Picking up and distributing the bag meals, as well as maintaining the attendance and meal taken paperwork.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.Program coaches or leaders will contact the Child Nutrition program of their desire to have afterschool meals for their group of students staying after school to participate in their enrichment program or sport.</li> <li>2.The team leader will be given the program training materials and Civil Rights training materials to review before they begin their role in the distribution of meals.</li> <li>3.The Team leader will be responsible for keeping the attendance sheet as well as the meal taken sheet that is given to them daily with the meals.</li> <li>4. The meals will be picked up from the cafeteria by 2:45 daily. The team leader or</li> </ol>

Area	Finding ID and Description	Required Corrective Action	Sponsor Corrective Action
			<p>coach will distribute the meals to their group and the meals will be eaten as a group within the school district buildings.</p> <p>5. The attendance sheets will be returned the next day with the cooler and any unused meals.</p> <p>6. Meal counts are to be lowered or raised daily by contacting the Child Nutrition office or the cafeteria.</p> <p>7. The claim will only include meals that were counted on the attendance sheet as well as the meal taken sheet.</p> <p>When: This new process of distribution began on 12/1/2025.</p> <p>Supporting Documentation: Online DASH attendance/meal consumption sheet</p> <p>Paper meal recording sheet that will be given to new participants in the program.</p>
MDE Response to Sponsors Corrective Action Plan:			

Area	Finding ID and Description	Required Corrective Action	Sponsor Corrective Action
500 Meal Service— Day of Review	503. Not all suppers were consumed on-site.	<p>Corrective Action: Describe your plan to correct this finding.</p> <p><b>Technical Assistance:</b> Meals and/or snacks served in the CACFP Afterschool Meals Program must be consumed on-site in a congregate setting. In addition, participants can take one vegetable or one fruit or one prepackaged grain item off-site to eat at a later time. The one food item a student takes off-site must be from the students own meal or from a share table.</p>	<p>Who: Sheila Oak, DTR, Supervisor of Child Nutrition</p> <p>What and How: Educating the group leaders handing out meals to students on the rules and regulation of the meal program. Explaining that meals are to be consumed on site and that participants can take one vegetable or one fruit or one prepackaged grain item off-site to eat at a later time</p> <p>When: December 1, 2025</p> <p>Supporting Documentation: Labeled A Part of the training for group leaders</p>
MDE Response to Sponsors Corrective Action Plan:			
1600 Eligibility - Participant and Site	1603. Some At-Risk suppers are served to students who are not participating in an approved afterschool care program.	<p>Corrective Action: Describe your plan to correct this finding.</p> <p>Meal count adjustments are summarized on the “Claim for Reimbursement Adjustment Form At Risk” an Excel spreadsheet which is attached to the email along with this review report. Options you can take regarding these adjustments are discussed in the Required Corrective Action column for Area 300 Meal Counting/Claiming—Review Period,</p>	<p>Who: Sheila Oak DTR, Supervisor of Child Nutrition—Responsible for corrective action and ongoing review of process</p> <p>What and How: Team or program leaders will be responsible for Picking up and distributing the bag meals, as well as maintaining the attendance and meal taken paperwork.</p> <p>1.Program coaches or leaders will contact the Child Nutrition program of their desire to have afterschool meals for their group of</p>

Area	Finding ID and Description	Required Corrective Action	Sponsor Corrective Action
		Finding ID and Description numbers 308., 314f and 314g.	<p>students staying after school to participate in their enrichment program or sport.</p> <p>2.The team leader will be given the program training materials and Civil Rights training materials to review before they begin their role in the distribution of meals.</p> <p>3.The Team leader will be responsible for keeping the attendance sheet as well as the meal taken sheet that is given to them daily with the meals.</p> <p>4. The meals will be picked up from the cafeteria by 2:45 daily. The team leader or coach will distribute the meals to their group and the meals will be eaten as a group within the school district buildings.</p> <p>5.The attendance sheets will be returned the next day with the cooler and any unused meals.</p> <p>6. Meal counts are to be lowered or raised daily by contacting the Child Nutrition office or the cafeteria.</p> <p>When: This new process of distribution began on 12/1/2025.</p> <p>Supporting Documentation: Online DASH attendance/meal consumption sheet</p> <p>Paper meal recording sheet that will be given to new participants in the program.</p>
MDE Response to Sponsors Corrective Action Plan:			



## **COW Agenda Cover Sheet**

**Meeting Date: Tuesday, April 7, 2026**

**Topic: 2026-27 Preliminary Budget Presentation**

**Presenter(s): Simone Zunich, Exec. Dir. of Finance & Business Services**

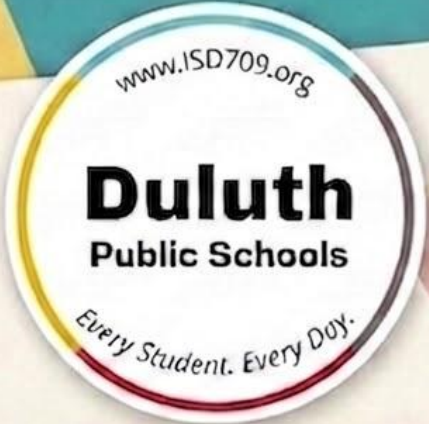
**Attachment: Yes – both powerpoint and pdf versions**

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

Simone will provide the 2026-27 preliminary budget presentation to the COW.

**This Requires School Board Approval :**

Approval in June, 2026

The logo is a circular emblem with a white center and a multi-colored border (yellow, blue, red). It contains the website address 'www.ISD709.org' at the top, the school name 'Duluth Public Schools' in the center, and the motto 'Every Student. Every Day.' at the bottom. The background of the slide features various colorful charts, graphs, and a schoolhouse illustration.

[www.ISD709.org](http://www.ISD709.org)

**Duluth**  
Public Schools

*Every Student. Every Day.*

# FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 PRELIMINARY BUDGET FINANCIAL PLANNING & PROJECTIONS

Prepared by: Simone Zunich  
Presented: COW Meeting, April 7, 2026

# Student Enrollment & Basic Revenue

**Average Daily Membership (ADM):** Projected at **8,175** (Increase from 8,125 in FY 26).

**Basic Formula Allowance:** Projected at **2.69%** increase or \$7,682 per pupil

**Levy Updates:** Revenue updated based on Pay 25 and Pay 26 cycles.

**Compensatory Aid:** \* Currently budgeted at **\$9,312,178** (based on MDE report).

# Special Education Funding

**FY 27 Revenue Projection:** \$27,530,933.

**FY 26 Revenue Revision:** Updated to \$31,341,962.

**Special Education General Fund Impact:** \* Currently accounts for **40%** of general fund programs.

- Setting 4 costs estimated between **\$500,000 – \$1,000,000**.

# Personnel & Benefit Assumptions

**Staff:** 2.5% average rollover applied

**Lane Changes:** Budgeted at 1.8%

**Insurance Premiums:** 15% estimated increase projected for both **Health** and **Liability** insurance

## **New Mandatory Obligations (Analytics Objects):**

- **Minnesota Family Medical Leave Act Paid Leave (MFMLA) (Obj 219): 5%**
- **Summer Unemployment (Obj 281): 5%**
- **Fund 02 (Food & Nutrition): 5% for Obj 281**

# Facilities & Site-Specific Needs

**Inflation Strategy:** 2.26% inflation applied *only* to Capital Projects (per Fed Reserve 5-yr projection)

- *Note:* Purchased services and supplies held flat to FY 26 levels

## **First Street Additional Staffing:**

- **1st St downtown:** \$350,000 (3.0 FTE )
- **Support:** \$150,000 (2 Custodians, 1 PT Clerical)
- *Note:* These assumptions may require further increases/decreases

# Unfunded Mandates & Contract Reviews

**READ Act:** Lane change costs of approx. **\$650,000** for FY 26 and and \$1,200,000 for FY 27.

**MFMLA:** While state-funded, the district must absorb the cost of substitutes.

**Summer Unemployment:** Funded by state through the end of FY 27.

**Efficiency Spotlight: \* Kelly Education:** Contracted costs were \$1.2M in FY 25.

- Analysis shows the district would pay ~33% more if handled internally; current contract represents a significant saving.

# Financial Outlook & Risk Assessment

## Spending Trends:

- FY 25 Overspend: **\$7,000,000**
- FY 26 Projected Overspend: **Minimum \$4,207,549**
- FY 27 Planned Budget Reductions: **\$4,000,000**

## Key Concerns:

- Special Education cost volatility
- Risk of **Statutory Operating Debt (SOD)** due to general fund depletion

## PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027 BUDGET

<b>REVENUES</b>	<b>Proposed FY 2027 Budget</b>	<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>Proposed FY 2027 Budget</b>	<b>Dollar Change</b>
01 General Fund	\$149,157,649.00	01 General Fund	\$153,031,448.00	-\$3,873,799
02 Food Service	\$6,283,279.00	02 Food Service	\$6,365,884.00	-\$82,605
04 Community Service	\$7,983,518.00	04 Community Service	\$7,855,857.00	\$127,661
06 Construction		06 Construction		\$0
07 Debt Service	\$28,913,419.00	07 Debt Service	\$28,453,464.00	\$459,955
08 Trust	\$305,000.00	08 Trust	\$285,842.00	\$19,158
20 Internal Service	\$1,201,126.00	20 Internal Service	\$1,309,828.00	-\$108,702
79 Student Activities	\$523,886.00	79 Student Activities	\$438,705.00	\$85,181
<b>Subtotal - Revenues</b>	<b>\$194,367,877.00</b>	<b>Subtotal - Expenditures</b>	<b>\$197,741,028.00</b>	<b>-\$3,373,151</b>

# Questions & Concerns?