

Monthly Committee of the Whole Board Meeting

Duluth Public Schools, ISD 709

Agenda

Tuesday, September 1, 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) Supporting Every Student

a. SRO Program Update

2

2) Improving Systems

a. Human Resources onboarding

12

b. Strategic Roadmap, Operational Plan, and Progress Monitoring

16

3) Advancing Equity - N/A

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

C. Budget Update - N/A

D. Other

4. **ADJOURN**

COW Agenda Cover Sheet

Meeting Date: Sep 1, 2026

Topic: SRO Program Update

Presenter(s): Jen Larva, Director of Secondary Education
Ethan Roe, Duluth Police Department SRO Coordinator

Attachment:  COW_Sept1_SRO Update 2026
 Current Contract_SRO Program Assessment Checklist

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

We will share program updates and review the SRO evaluation from the 2025-26 school year.

This Requires School Board Approval : No

School Resource Officer (SRO) Program Update

2026 SRO Program Assessment



Officer Introductions & Program Evaluation Process

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Duluth Police Department Officers

SRO Program Engagement Sites:

- **Denfeld High School** (DHS)
- **East High School** (EHS)
- **Lincoln Park Middle School** (LPMS)
- **Ordean East Middle School** (OEMS)

EVALUATION TIMELINE & PROCESS

Committee Process

The SRO committee met **twice** during this past school year to assess program effectiveness under the new contract.

- 1. Fall Kick-off & Strategy:** Reviewed the new contract **(2025-28)** and established our comprehensive feedback collection framework.
- 2. Ongoing Engagement:** Adelle Wellens & Jen Larva conducted focus groups at Denfeld & East High Schools to launch the **Thought Exchange** for students & families.
- 3. Spring Review:** Met to synthesize information, review qualitative data, and analyze SRO checklist rankings completed by building principals.

SRO Program Strengths

Engagement & Site Success

SROs successfully met expectations across all sites (**DHS, EHS, LPMS, OEMS**) for relationship building and safety support. Key 2025-26 metrics include:

- **114** student visit requests fulfilled & **144** student groups met with
- **218** requests to visit classrooms & **110** after-school events attended
- Consistent, collaborative participation on site safety teams

Student Security & Safety

Student feedback highlights strong confidence in physical safety and active, supportive intervention during campus events.

Documented De-escalation Success

SROs achieved proven resolution outcomes in managing and de-escalating critical school incidents, including student fights, vaping infractions, and behavioral crisis.



Areas for Continued Improvement

While overall perception is positive, the 2026 assessment identified key challenges:

Uneven Visibility

Blind-spots exist in specific "hot-spot" areas, such as bathrooms and corners without staff coverage.

Unclear Roles

The SRO educational function is inconsistent, and family awareness of the SRO's scope and limits is minimal.

Equity Gaps

Some students and non-binary/BIPOC respondents report feeling unheard or unsure of SRO support in conflict situations.

Where Can I Learn More About the SRO Program?

 **Official SRO Web Portal**

School Resource Officer Program Page

Explore the comprehensive contract details, program evaluations, site engagement statistics, and community feedback updates on the Duluth Public Schools website.

Navigation: isd709.org > **About Us** > **School Resource Officers**



The Bottom Line

Student voices in 2026 remain **largely supportive** of the SRO program, citing heightened safety and positive daily interactions.

Attention to **equity**, consistent **educational outreach**, and deeper **family engagement** will move the program from "good" to "exemplary".

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

Thank you for your partnership and dedication to student safety.



Duluth Public Schools SRO Program Evaluation

Focus Area		Criteria	Met Expectation	Notes/Comments: As of 4/20/2026
Building Relationships				
	Met with Student Groups who Requested	Met with 90-100%	Yes- All Sites ... ▾	114 student visit requests 144 Student groups met with
	Provide education around law enforcement topics when requested	Met with 90-100%	Not evaluated ▾	This will be added to the restorative actions data collection for 2026/27
	Introduced themselves to students and staff during various meetings (joined staff meetings or assemblies)	SRO Introduced/joined 5-6 times over the course of the year	Yes- All Sites ... ▾	218 requests to visit classrooms Survey results
	Attended site based community outreach activities (i.e. open house, jumpstart, first football game of the season, etc.)	SRO attended 5-6 activities	Yes- All Sites ... ▾	110 after school events attended
	Increased visibility in before and after school and during lunch	Student survey results with 85% or higher agree/strongly agrees	Yes- All Sites ... ▾	Survey results (see below)
Assessment of SRO Program				
	Participated in monthly/quarterly data review at each site and by levels to go through citations being issued	SRO attended at least 3 data review meetings	Yes- All Sites ... ▾	Frequently meetings between admin and SRO to discuss kids and any citation data.
	Each site principal participated in the personnel evaluations of SRO's	Principals provided input to DPD	Not evaluated ▾	Lagging metric.
Professional Development				

Duluth Public Schools SRO Program Evaluation

	Received training on working in schools and with students	All SROs received training	Yes- All Sites ... ▾	Per DPD
	Received training on anti bias policing, implicit bias, restorative practice, and cultural competency	All SROs received training	Yes- All Sites ... ▾	Per DPD
	Participated in the same training as teachers/staff (i.e. behavior interventions, trauma informed, implicit bias, and cultural competency etc.)	All SROs participated in certified staff professional development	Mostly Met (3... ▾	Participates with district staff at a safety training conference.
Communication and Transparency				
	Provided citation and complaint data in timely fashion	Updated monthly	Yes- All Sites ... ▾	Provided and posted on the website each month.
	Provided relevant personal and personnel information for the SRO website	Updated in timely fashion	Yes- All Sites ... ▾	Provided and posted on the website annually.
Supporting Safety				
	Officer participation on site safety team	Attends when in the building	Yes- All Sites ... ▾	
	Attendance at staff debriefs after incidents when requested	Met with 90-100%	Yes- All Sites ... ▾	
Narrative: Student and Family Perception Data of SRO Program				
Executive Summary 2026 School Resource Officer (SRO) Program – Student & Family Feedback <i>Key Qualitative Indicators</i> • Visibility – Most student respondents say they see the SRO daily or weekly; a smaller group (“rarely/never”) indicates blind-spots such as bathrooms, elective wings and some after-school activities.				

Duluth Public Schools SRO Program Evaluation

- Approachability – Frequent descriptors include “kind,” “easy to talk to,” “greeted me,” and “helps with weekend check-ins.” A handful of students note they have “never talked” to the SRO or felt “yelled at.”
- Perceived Safety – A clear majority report feeling “safe” or “very safe” with an SRO on campus.
- Crisis Response – Multiple comments highlight the SRO’s quick action in breaking up fights, removing vaping from bathrooms and supporting mental-health incidents.
- Educational Role – Roughly half recall law-related lessons or informal mentoring; others say they have had no direct instruction.
- Equity Lens – Positive remarks on respectful treatment of diverse students appear, yet isolated concerns cite not being heard or supported by the SRO in conflict situations.
- Family Voice – Very limited 2026 family data; those who did respond were uniformly supportive but asked for clearer role definitions.

Strengths to Leverage

1. Consistent hallway, lunch-time and activity presence.
2. Strong rapport with many students, evidenced by friendly greetings and mentoring stories.
3. High confidence in physical safety during potential emergencies.
4. Documented incidents of effective de-escalation (fights, vaping, behavioral crises).

Challenges & Gaps

1. Uneven visibility in specific “hot-spot” areas (bathrooms, corners without staff coverage).
2. Some students and non-binary/BIPOC respondents report feeling unheard or unsure of SRO support.
3. Education/teaching function is inconsistent—many students unsure what the SRO can help with.
4. Family awareness of the SRO’s scope and limits is minimal for the current year.

Alignment to District Strategic Directions

- Supporting Every Student – SROs help create safe, positive learning spaces and provide indirect behavior support.
- Advancing Equity – Program must continue refining culturally responsive practice so all students feel “safe, seen, heard.”
- Improving Systems – Integrating SRO data with MTSS processes and communicating role clarity will strengthen overall safety infrastructure.

Bottom Line

Student voices in 2026 remain largely supportive of the SRO program, citing heightened safety and positive daily interactions. Attention to equity, consistent educational outreach, and deeper family engagement will move the program from “good” to “exemplary” while staying true to the district’s mission of empowering every learner every day.

COW Agenda Cover Sheet

Meeting Date: Sep 1, 2026

Topic: Human Resources onboarding

Presenter(s): Steve Johnson

Attachment:

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

I'll be covering what Human Resources does for new hire onboarding, along with what the sites should do. While this report may seem basic, I feel we need to get back to basics and make sure our onboarding addresses what employees need on day one of employment.

This Requires School Board Approval :

Human Resources

ONBOARDING

Human Resources Responsibility

- New hire paperwork
- Background check-no one starts prior to this being completed
- I9 completed-no one starts prior to this being completed
- Google account set up
- Email site Principal, Mentor and Director, with start date and site location
- Benefit information (if applicable)
- Badge access
- Para and Food Service Vector-first day at district for mandatory training.

Site Responsibility

- Meet the new hire on day one as they come in the door (mentor, clerical, principal, dean). This is a small item that makes a big impact
- A tour of the building if possible, also showing them their class, the breakroom, where to hang their coat, where the restrooms are.
- Safety training, showing the Emergency Operations Guide
- Distribute any keys or devices that are needed. Order and plan ahead of time if possible.
- Assigning access to items they need to be successful. Ex. New teacher that didn't attend orientation, how do they get a chromebook

COW Agenda Cover Sheet

Meeting Date: September 1, 2026

Topic: Strategic Roadmap, Operational Plan, and Progress Monitoring

Presenter(s): John Magas, Anthony Bonds, Simone Zunich and Team

Attachment: Presentation

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

This presentation will show the linkages between our strategic roadmap, our operational plan and our school board progress monitoring plan. The progress monitoring plan is meant as a draft for board feedback and is subject to change by the board and administration based on developing needs.

This Requires School Board Approval : No

Strategic Plan and Progress Monitoring Update

September 1, 2026



Mission, Vision and Values

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.

Strategic Roadmap, Operational Plan, Progress Monitoring 2026-27

- [Strategic Roadmap](#)
- [3 Year Operational Plan](#)
- [2026-27 Progress Monitoring](#)

Business Services Action Card

- **Financial Strategy:** Focuses on transparent budgeting, real-time forecasting, and aligning projections with state data to ensure stewardship.
- **Core Priorities:**
 - **Financial Goals:** Balancing budgets, managing enrollment trends, growing fund balances, and restructuring long-term debt.
 - **Resource Allocation:** Identifying initiatives for funding, revising budgets to reflect reductions, and performing capacity/functional studies.
 - **Technology:** Developing a 5-year plan to manage the lifecycle of district hardware (Chromebooks, desktops, etc.).
 - **Operations:** Ongoing improvements to transportation processes and maintenance of facilities.
- **Key Challenges:** Establishing a balanced budget and ensuring long-term (3-5 year) implementation of strategic initiatives.

Advancing Equity Action Card

Academic Equity & Student Engagement

Centralized Student and Family Engagement

- **Welcome Center:** Onboard & support families.
- **Needs Assessment:** Surveys & focus groups.
- **Connection Events:** Targeted training.

Relaunching Achievement & Integration Plan

- **Myers-Wilkins Plan:** Implement key interventions.
- **Targeted Growth:** Track metrics for students of color.

Black Brilliance & Targeted Support

- **Upcoming Initiatives:** Developing targeted strategies to accelerate academic outcomes and elevate the overall success of our Black students.

Inclusive Representation & Culture

Reestablishing EEAC & Framework

- **Relaunch EEAC:** Clear cadences & guidelines.
- **Equity Framework:** District-wide expectations.

American Indian Strategic Plan

- **Student Services:** Academic & social-emotional support.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborate with American Indian leaders.

Educator Capacity

- **Affinity Spaces & Dev:** Support Educators of Color.
- **Training:** Train-the-trainer & trauma-informed PD.

Action Card: MTSS

MTSS Action Card

Duluth Vision for Tier 1 Instruction

Duluth Public Schools Vision for Tier 1 Instruction

Duluth Public Schools is committed to providing engaging Tier 1 (Core) instruction in every classroom for every student, particularly those who have historically been furthest from educational opportunity.

As a district, we emphasize continuous improvement through collaboration to meet the needs of all learners.

Our approach to Tier 1 instruction is grounded in:

- Alignment to the identified local state (MN Academic Standards) and national standards
- Implementation of high-quality instructional materials
- Explicitly stated learning outcomes
- Culturally responsive instruction

Our work is rooted in four universal commitments:

- **Commitment 1:** All students thrive from rigorous instruction which incorporates effective pedagogical shifts and is aligned to the identified local, state (Minnesota Academic Standards) and national standards.
- **Commitment 2:** All students have access to grade-level benchmarks through district-adopted, high-quality instructional materials.
- **Commitment 3:** All students understand what they will learn and their path to learning through specific learning intentions and success criteria.
- **Commitment 4:** All students feel a sense of belonging through culturally responsive instruction, the teacher development and evaluation framework.

