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Duluth

Public Schools

Every Student. Every Day.

Superintendent's Report

September 22, 2026



OUR MISSION

Every student, every day will be empowered with learning opportunities for growth, creativity and curiosity, in preparation for their future in a global community.

OUR VISION

Duluth Public Schools provides an academically engaging, safe and inclusive environment with high expectations and responsible use of resources.

OUR CORE VALUES

Learning



Developing a love of learning through life-long inquiry.

Excellence



Having high standards for all through accountability, integrity and authenticity.

Equity



Creating conditions of justice, fairness and inclusion so all students have access to the opportunities to learn and develop to their fullest potential.

Collaboration



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

Belonging



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

Topics

- 2026 Student Representative Reports
 - Osiris Garcia Henderson- ALC
 - Tamia Bowles - Denfeld
 - Kalina Mattila - East
- Referendum
- School Board Member Recognition
- Other

Student Representative Reports

Referendum Update



Operating Levy Referendum

Vote on or before Nov. 3



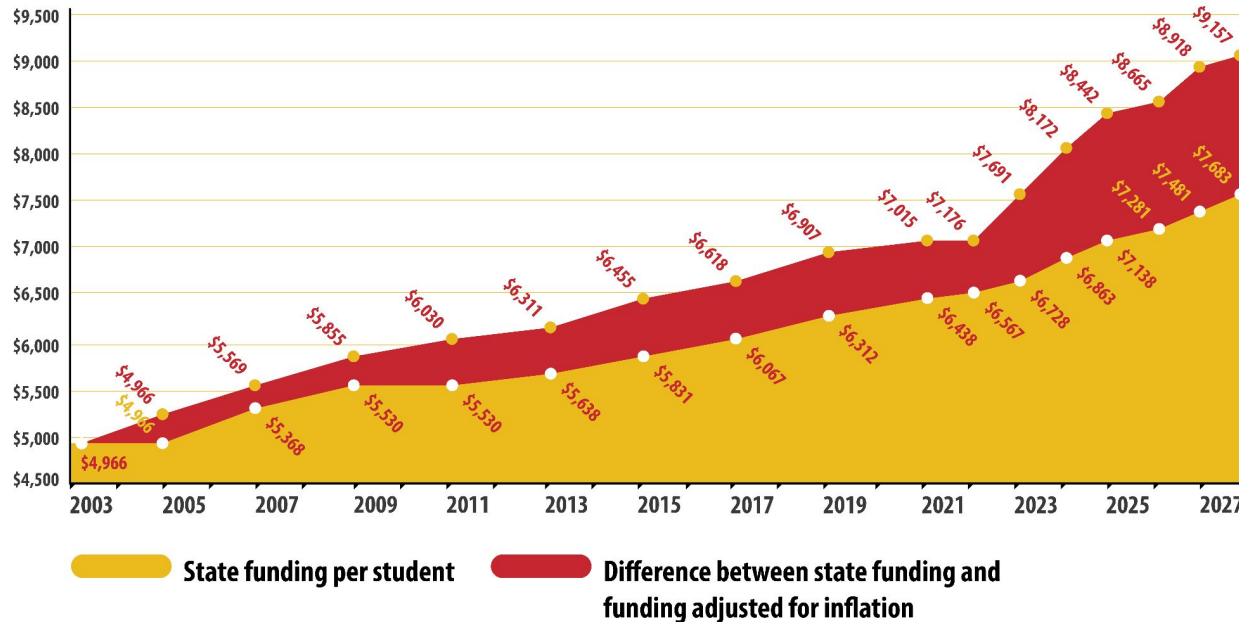
Information Sharing Efforts

- Staff informational sessions at each school
- Parent and PTA sessions
- Town hall meetings
 - Wed., Sept. 30, 6:30 p.m., Lowell Elementary School, Media Center,
 - Wed., Oct. 7, 6:30 p.m., East High School, Media Center
 - Thu., Oct. 8, 6:30 p.m., Facebook Live, www.facebook.com/duluthpublicschools/
 - Wed., Oct. 14, 6:30 p.m., Denfeld High School, Media Center

The Challenge - Nearing a Financial Crisis

- State funding increases have not kept pace with inflation.

State Revenue Increases Don't Keep Pace With Inflation



Difference
= \$1,474

The Challenge - Nearing a Financial Crisis

Costs are continuing to rise faster than revenues.

- Fuel
- Health insurance
- Special education program costs
- Unfunded mandates
- Supplies
- Contracted services

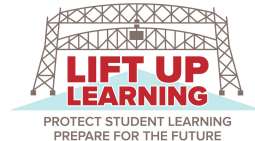
The Plan

Protect Student Learning; Prepare for the Future

The Duluth Public Schools Board **unanimously approved** a referendum for the Nov. 3, 2026 ballot.

The board came to the realization that **cuts alone cannot solve the larger structural problem.**

The district is asking taxpayers to consider a revenue increase to protect **student learning and prepare Duluth schools for the future.**



2 Operating Levy Questions

Question 1 - Step Up Levy

- \$3.9 million in 2027
- \$8.3 million in years 2-10
- Tax impact: \$8/month on a \$300,000 home

Question 2 - Additional Levy

- \$3.4 million per year for ten years
 - \$7/month on a \$300,000 home
- Question 2 is contingent on voter approval of Question 1.
- Both levies would increase at the rate of inflation each year.



The Impact of a **YES** Vote

IF THE REFERENDUM IS APPROVED

Question 1 addresses:

- Current and future deficits
- Maintains existing class size and programs
- Keeps property taxes stable

Question 2, combined with right-sizing:

- Buys time to fix the long-term financial structure
- Potential limited restoration based on priorities
- Stabilizes the district's budget

Preserves what we have today.



The Impact of a **NO** Vote

IF THE REFERENDUM IS NOT APPROVED

Over the next two years:

- At least \$12 million in additional cuts, equal to roughly 120 positions will need to be made.
- This could lead to:
 - higher class sizes
 - fewer student supports
 - the reduction of student educational programs



Potential Reduction Areas

- Reductions in staff - teachers, administrators and support positions - \$12M is equal to approximately 120 positions
- Reduction in services - interventionists, programing, and other areas
- Increased class sizes and workloads
- Consideration of school closures
- Other multiple other areas

Another Ballot Question: Constitutional Amendment

Question proposes increasing the Permanent School Fund annual distribution to schools to up to 4.5% of its three-year average value, effective FY 2028.

For Duluth Public Schools, approval would provide approximately:

- \$250,000 in additional annual funding
- 0.002% of the district's budget
- ZERO tax increase to residents

While appreciated, this amendment has a very minimal impact on Duluth's financial challenges and does not replace the need for the operating levy.



School Board Recognition

September is Minnesota School Board Recognition Month

On behalf of the Minnesota School Boards Association and Duluth Public Schools in honor of Minnesota School Board Recognition Month, thank you for your service to Minnesota's public schools, and being a guiding light for student success!

We look forward to celebrating you and your contributions more with the rest of the nation in January during National School Board Recognition Month

Questions