

Monthly Committee of the Whole Board Meeting

Duluth Public Schools, ISD 709

Agenda

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

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. Computer Science Pathway in Duluth

2

2) Advancing Equity

a. Attendance Update

16

3) Improving Systems

a. Recruitment and Retention Plan

27

B. Budget Update

1) Budget Update

50

C. Other

4. **ADJOURN**

COW Agenda Cover Sheet

Meeting Date: 3/4/25

Topic: Computer Science Pathway in Duluth

Presenter(s): Cindy Miller, maybe Danette Seboe and Peter Graves

Attachment (yes): ☐ Duluth Public Schools Computer Science Ed

Brief Summary of Presentation or Topic (no more than a few sentences): We're nearing the end of the second year of our 4 year grant with Northern Lights Collaborative. This presentation will show our progress and goals.

This Requires School Board Approval ___Yes ___No

Duluth Public Schools

Computer Science Education

cynthia.miller@isd709.org

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Who We Are

**Cindy Miller, Media Specialist and Building Tech Coordinator, K12
Computer Science Lead, Content Specialist**

**Peter Graves, Technology Manager, Former Educational
Technology and Innovation Coordinator, Former Classroom
Teacher**

**Danette Seboe, Principal on Special Assignment - College, Career,
and Life Readiness, CTE Coordinator**

How it Started

2022-23 School Year

National Center for Computing Education - CS For All

- Teacher Committee - Media Specialist, Math teachers
- PD for Art, Media, Science, and Math teachers
- Jen Rosato, Paul Schonfeld and team

Elementary Media/Tech Classes introduce Scratch coding and Code and Go Mouse

6th Grade Computers Class - unchanged since 1996 (!), applications

AP CSP Elective for grades 9-12

Spotty CS “Pet Projects” throughout the district

MN Dead Last in High School CS Offerings⁵ - five schools



Elementary
Code and Go
Mouse and
Scratch
learning



Middle School RVR+ projects



How it Started

2023-24 School Year

- Northern Lights Consortium for Computing Education - National Science Foundation Grant
 - Hired CS Lead, Cindy Miller (.2 FTE)
 - Formed CS Champions Team (teachers, counselor, Native American and SpEd. staff, and some admin)
 - Conducted SCRIPT Rubric (Leadership, Teacher Capacity, Curriculum and Materials, Partnerships, Community, Technology Infrastructure)
- District hired Education Technology and Innovation Coordinator and Digital Innovation Spec.
- CTE Pathway explored - Business or Communications Pathway
- K12 Media Specialists trained with CodeSavvy and NLCCE - Hour of Code, CS Fundamentals and Unplugged CS; CS pilot in elementary
- HS and MS Courses added over the Summer - Revamped 6th grade class, Robotics and Coding, CS 8, CS 10

How it's Going

2024-25 School Year

Educational Technology and Innovation Coordinator position dissolved

Goals in NLCCE Project - LOTS of work with NLCCE

- Rewrite the 6th Grade "Computers" Course
- Scope and Sequence alignment
- Identify Funding for sustainable CS
- Use District PD Days

Unwritten goals

- New Courses - Codes, curriculum, and course descriptions don't match or align with CTE frameworks - BIG JOB!
- CSTA and Information Technology Educators of MN standards alignment
- Equipment and Supply purchases
- Build awareness - teachers, administration, community, STEMpathy Event



Middle School teachers PD with Paul Schonfeld and Tom Cozzolino from NLCCE - physical computing and more

Quarterly PLN meetings with NLCCE; work with other districts in Northern MN.



How it's Going

2024-25 School Year

Required Courses

- K-5 Integrated Media/Tech - 8-10 Unplugged and Code.org's CS Fundamentals
- 6th Grade Computer Literacy - Tech Applications and Code.org's CS Discoveries units
- 10th Grade Computer Science - by name only

Elective Courses

- 6th and 7th Grade Coding and Robotics (Industrial Tech teachers) - underwater robotics
- 8th Grade Computer Science - Data Science and Scratch
- 9-12 AP CSP - one class, low enrollment¹⁰

What's Next

2025-26 School Year

- K-8 - CS Integrated with Music and Science
- 9th-12th - Computer Repair Academy - Vivacity program, Intern with Tech Dept.
- 11th-12th - Computer Gaming and App Design, Code.org
- Outside of school programming - Summer, afterschool, Community Ed., organizations

2026-27 School Year

- K-8 - CS Integrated with Music and Science
- 11th-12th - Multi-Media and Video (not exactly Computer Science)
- 11th-12th - Cybersecurity (collab with local community college, local ASAF Base)

Coming Up Soon - CS Teachers

Midwest Indigenous CS PD event

- March 13, 2025
- 9am - 3pm at NE Service Coop in Mountain Iron
- Who: Educators in the K12 CS Pathways Grant Project
- Stipend: Participants will receive a \$400 stipend for teaching and reflecting on one CS lesson after the workshop
- [Poster to share](#)
- Register here: <https://bit.ly/IndigenousEd4CS>

Coming Up Soon - 4th Grade Teachers

Intro to CS/CT PD

- Online course, mix of synchronous and asynchronous learning
- April - May coursework open
- Synchronous meetings April 10, 17, 24 (4pm-5pm online via Zoom)
- Lesson implementation with reflection
- Reflection, wrap up May 22nd (4pm-5pm online via Zoom)
- [Save the date flyer](#)
- Registration coming soon
- \$875 Stipend for completion of coursework, meetings, and lesson implementation

Coming Up Soon

K12 CS Teachers (including Media Specialists)

MN + CS Conference

- Dates: April 11-12, 2025
- Location: Minneapolis, Minnesota
- \$15 registration - Register here:
<https://form.raspberrypi.org/4873931>
- Travel scholarships¹⁴ are available



Questions?
Email Cindy Miller
cynthia.miller@isd709.org

COW Agenda Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:

Topic: Attendance Update

Presenter(s): Shalon Monroe

Attachment (yes) or (no) Yes

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

This presentation will focus on updates regarding attendance and how various sites are utilizing different materials and resources to improve attendance. We will explore some of the challenges we've faced and share the strategies we've implemented to overcome these obstacles, allowing us to strengthen our partnerships with students, families, and communities both at the district and site levels.

This Requires School Board Approval ☐ Yes ☒ No

COW Update on Student Attendance

Shalon Monroe, Family and Community Engagement Specialist
Adelle Wellens, Communications Officer

Attendance vs Chronic Absenteeism

ATTENDANCE

- It can be looked at in many ways just as “chronic absenteeism” can be, but viewed as instances of not attending school whether it's excused or unexcused.
- A student is considered consistently attending if they attend more than 90 percent of the time that the student is enrolled during the year.
- When attendance numbers start to fall in different areas, that's when the first steps of attacking the problem are taken.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

- An issue that can become a recurring problem when a student misses school frequently.
- It can be viewed as an indicator of poor individual performance from grades, behavioral and beyond.
- Missing 10 percent or more than 2 days a year can translate into students having difficulty learning to read by third-grade, advancing into middle school and even graduating from high school.

Attendance Policy Updates

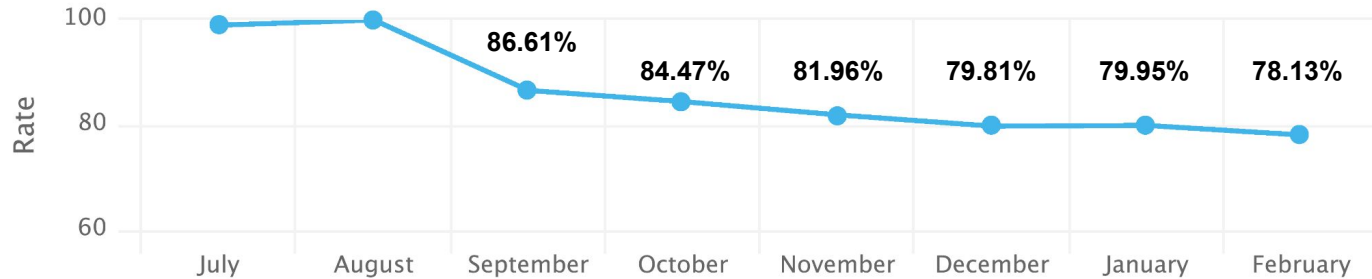
A deep look at the attendance policies has been looked over and reviewed for a while. Since the beginning of the school year, policies have been discussed and reworded in different languages about the standard of attendance throughout the school district.

The new attendance policies went into their second read and was approved by the school board on Tuesday, February 25, 2025.

In the works, we know that there can be confusion when it comes to what an “exempt” and an “absent” are. In the near future there will be training for clerics on how to determine the differences and how to mark them in the system.

Let's take a look at the Numbers

A student is considered consistently attending if they attend more than 90 percent of time that the student is enrolled during the year.



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● Full Day Attendance Rate ● SIS Reported Attendance Rate

Growing through Challenges and Implementation

Variables with connected to attending school/attendance has made several strides as we are halfway through the school year.

- The partnership with the DTA is back and here to stay until next school year with free rides for high school students and staff.
- School sites having their vans have helped to provide rides in the afternoon/evening from participating in extracurricular activities that could have been a challenge.
- ParentSquare communication is growing, and parents are gaining a better understanding of the program's role in connecting with families.

Student Survey Says.....

Students at both high and middle schools were informed about a “Cause of Absenteeism” survey and encouraged to share their feedback to help identify attendance issues.

There were 1,007 submissions completed. Some of the responses that stood out the most in response to were that students were missing school for serious illnesses, minor illnesses, and doctor appointments.

High school students did show an increase in response for feeling anxious or depressed.

Progressing as a WHOLE

Attendance is a measurement that can be evaluated from the beginning, half-way, and end of a school year. Each school site and grade level experience attendance concerns at different levels and have different techniques that they have helped with the challenges that they are presented with.

Every Monday at Lakewood Elementary, staff members wear attendance t-shirts to encourage students to come to school and show how they are happy to have them.

Myers-Wilkins' attendance has grown in level. However, they have dealt with a decrease in those numbers due to unseen circumstances with having some attendance record because they have consistently had school bus route canceled. They have had more than three cancellations in the past two months.



Progressing as a WHOLE

Elementary Level: Communication via ParentSquare (calls/texts), phone calls, sending letters and postcards as friendly reminders, and daily check-ins with students.



Middle Level: Communication through ParentSquare (calls and texts), sending out letters when students has three or more absences, counselors connecting with students, weekly one-on-one meetings with students and conducting meetings with families when attendance contracts are created and in general.

High School Level: Attendance letters are sent home along with follow-up phone calls. Building strong staff-student relationships and having heartfelt conversations about attendance issues, as well as concerns beyond school, is essential.

Moving and Shaking on the District level

On Monday, February 10th, I got the chance to attend several schools in St. Paul as a part of National African American Parent Involvement Day (NAPPID). On this day, schools hold different events, allowing parents/guardians to see what their children experience in their classrooms/schools. I visited three schools: Eastern Heights Elementary, Highland Park and Central High.

Another step comes in the form of going to different PTAs, Attendance Meetings, CIT Meetings, and ongoing Parent Advisory Meetings.

Community and School Engagement: One thing that has been heard and how the community would like to volunteer with our school sites and students. A [volunteer application](#) was created for individuals to fill out, and I will help to get them paired with school principals and find volunteer opportunities.

Questions?

COW Agenda Cover Sheet

Meeting Date: March 4, 2025

Topic: Recruitment and Retention Plan

Presenter(s): Theresa Severance and Charlie Cook

Attachment (yes) or (no) yes

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

This presentation is designed to give the school board a clear and concise overview of the Duluth Public Schools Employee Recruitment and Retention Plan, which is currently in draft form.

This Requires School Board Approval ☐ Yes ☒ No

Employee Recruitment and Retention Plan

Committee of the Whole
March 2025



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.

Why this plan matters...

- Supporting Every Student
 - A blueprint for ensuring student success through dedicated employees.
- Advancing Equity
 - Our commitment to attracting and retaining top-quality, diverse staff.
 - Emphasis on hiring employees that are lifelong learners, and value diversity.
- Improving Systems
 - Multi-year development process: Attract, Develop, Retain.
 - Utilize data-driven strategies for continuous improvement.



Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- Workforce reflecting our diverse student body.
- Recruiting racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse educators.
- Creating an inclusive and supportive environment.
- Equal employment opportunities for all.



Attracting and Retaining Talent

- Expanded advertising and partnerships.
- Participation in targeted job fairs.
- Comprehensive onboarding and mentorship.
- Professional development opportunities.
- Employee wellbeing initiatives.



Streamlined and Equitable Hiring

- Openings advertised on diverse platforms.
- Applicant tracking system for efficiency.
- Diverse interview committees with bias training.
- Culturally sensitive interview questions.
- Follow-up communication for all candidates.



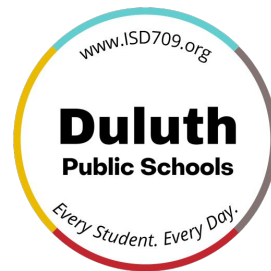
Supporting our American Indian Staff

- Formal partnerships with tribal bands.
- Culturally responsive hiring practices.
- Mentorship programs and resource groups.
- Dedicated budget for targeted efforts.
- Clear discrimination complaint procedure.



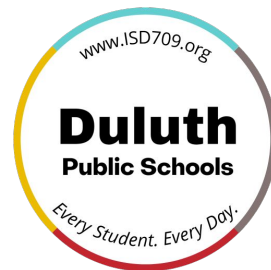
Measuring Our Success

- Quarterly data analysis and action planning.
- Regular evaluation of program effectiveness.
- Using data to refine strategies.
- EEOC data analysis for equity.



Moving Forward Together

- Implementation of the plan and ongoing monitoring.
- Continued collaboration with stakeholders.
- Commitment to building a strong, diverse, and supportive workforce.
- Questions and Discussion.



Duluth Public Schools

Employee Recruitment and Retention Plan

Introduction

The Duluth Public Schools Employee Recruitment and Retention Plan outlines our commitment to attracting, developing, and retaining a diverse and highly qualified workforce dedicated to student success.

Purpose

The Duluth Public Schools Employee Recruitment and Retention Plan serves as the blueprint for hiring and retaining employees. This is a multi-year development process of attracting, developing and retaining highly qualified employees throughout the district. A key element to student success is highly qualified and dedicated employees focused on educating the whole child. Duluth Public Schools is dedicated to recruiting the best employee for the job.

The Duluth Public Schools is committed to hiring the best employees to work with our students. Our employees:

- Are life-long learners
- Have high expectations for students and themselves
- Are open to change
- Have a positive attitude and work ethic
- Have a sense of responsibility.
- Are driven and focused on helping students be successful
- Are team players who are helpful to others
- Collaborate effectively within their department/school site
- Value diversity

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.

Mission Statement:

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

Vision Statement:

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

Human Resources Department Workforce Equity Statement

A key District priority is to recruit and retain a workforce that reflects the diversity of our student body and community. The District is committed to recruiting, hiring, developing, and retaining racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse educators who center their work on student success. We believe that every student's learning experience should be fostered in an inclusive and safe environment. We are committed to hiring staff who reflect our students' beliefs and experiences.

District Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

Duluth School District deeply values and is committed to promoting cultural diversity. We embrace and respect the diversity of individuals, identities, and cultures. We strive to foster an inclusive organizational culture.

We believe a diverse staff is crucial to our mission of educating students. Therefore, we are committed to promoting diversity in recruitment and hiring practices. We provide equal employment opportunities to all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status.

We value the diversity of our job candidates, staff, board, and volunteers. We are dedicated to preventing harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. We encourage respectful communication and cooperation. Our organization is committed to sustaining and promoting diversity throughout the entire employee lifecycle, from recruitment to termination.

Hiring Process

We are committed to a fair, transparent, and efficient hiring process that attracts and selects the best candidates for our students. Our goal is to recruit and retain top-quality employees while creating a collaborative and thoughtful experience for all stakeholders. This streamlined protocol ensures consistency and equity throughout the hiring journey.

District Hiring Protocol

Openings and Application:

- Open positions are created and advertised on various platforms, including K12JobSpot.com, EdPost.edu, Handshake.com, Indeed.com, social media, and through partnerships with educational institutions and community organizations.
- Interested candidates submit their applications through our applicant tracking system.

Screening and Interview Selection:

- Human Resources screens each application to ensure candidates meet the minimum job requirements.
- Human Resources contacts the relevant administrator/supervisor to determine which candidates will be invited for interviews.

- The administrator/supervisor forms an interview committee with diverse representation from relevant departments or roles.
 - *Note: Formal bias training on equitable interviewing practices will be provided to all interview committee members before they can serve on an interview panel. This training will be implemented by June 1, 2025, and will be conducted annually.*

Interview Process:

- Human Resources and the administrator/supervisor schedule interview dates.
- Candidates are scheduled for interviews, which may include virtual or in-person formats.
- Administrative candidates may have a second interview with the Superintendent and/or Cabinet Members.
- The interview committee reviews each application and asks each candidate the same predetermined, culturally sensitive questions.
- Each member of the interview committee ranks the candidates.
- The committee discusses the rankings and selects the top candidate(s).

Offer and Onboarding:

- Human Resources conducts reference checks and extends an official job offer. (For upper-level positions, an unofficial offer may precede the official one.)
- Human Resources conducts a background check and completes new hire paperwork.
- The selected candidate is submitted to the School Board for approval.
- Human Resources meets with all newly hired employees to complete the new hire orientation process.
- The supervisor meets with the newly hired employee to begin the onboarding process.
- All candidates who interview for a position will receive a follow up email within one week of the hiring decision. If a candidate is not selected, the email will thank them for their time, and encourage them to apply for future roles at Duluth Public Schools.

Communication to Not Selected Candidates:

- All candidates who interview for a position will receive a follow-up email within one week of the hiring decision.
- If a candidate is not selected, the email will:
 - Thank them for their time and interest in Duluth Public Schools.
 - Express appreciation for their participation in the interview process.
 - Encourage them to apply for future roles at Duluth Public Schools.

Technology and Efficiency:

- We utilize an applicant tracking system to streamline the hiring process, track candidate progress, and ensure efficient communication.
- We utilize online platforms for virtual interviews, expanding our reach to potential candidates and improving efficiency.

Advertising Positions

We advertise open positions on various platforms, including:

- K12JobSpot.com, EdPost.edu, Handshake.com, and Indeed.com.

To reach a wider audience, we are increasing our social media presence on platforms like:

- Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

Additionally, we partner with organizations such as:

- Careers In Government, the National Diversity Network, and diverse teaching associations to identify and recruit qualified candidates.

We also email job postings to a network of educational institutions, community organizations, and government agencies to expand our outreach.

We currently email all of our job postings to:

- University of Minnesota Duluth, Itasca Community College, University of Wisconsin Superior, College of St. Scholastica, Fond Du Lac Community College, Minnesota North College and Leech Lake Tribal College.
- Fond Du Lac Reservation, Grand Portage Reservation, Minneapolis American Indian Center, Community Action Duluth, Center City Housing, Trillium Services, Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans, Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, SOAR Career Solutions, and Human Development Center
- City of Duluth CareerForce, Minnesota Works Northwest Wisconsin CEP..

To further enhance our outreach to American Indian candidates, we implement targeted advertising strategies as detailed in the 'Targeted Recruitment for American Indian Staff' section, including partnerships with tribal organizations and participation in relevant cultural events.

Talent Recruitment

We continue to strengthen partnerships with colleges and universities to develop a pipeline of future employees. We actively participate in college and local recruitment fairs to connect with potential candidates.

Specific Job Fairs: The district will attend a minimum of 8 job fairs each year including the Minnesota Education Job Fair, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College and Lake Superior Job Fair, and other local job fairs through CareerForce and JET.

Partnership Documentation: A document outlining all active partnerships, including the goals, responsibilities, and contact information for each partnership, will be maintained and updated regularly. This document will be reviewed annually by the Human Resources department and the leadership team.

We actively seek individuals who resonate with our mission to "Make a difference in your community, one student at a time." We strive to attract candidates who are dedicated to student growth and development, offering them a rewarding career with competitive benefits and a positive work environment.

Talent Retention

In alignment with the Minnesota Department of Education's (MN DOE) NextGen licensure initiatives, the District is actively exploring and implementing pathways to attract and retain diverse talent. This includes supporting 'Grow Your Own' programs that encourage and support current staff members to pursue teaching careers. As a successful example of this commitment, the district partnered with CareerForce, the College of St. Scholastica, and the University of Minnesota Duluth in the Drive for 5 grant, which provides educational opportunities for district employees to achieve their teaching degrees. The district is committed to continuing to develop and implement similar initiatives to foster a sustainable and diverse educator workforce. NextGen MN DOE focuses on modernizing teacher licensure to address workforce shortages and ensure equitable access to qualified educators. This includes:

- **Alternative Licensure Pathways:** We are investigating and supporting alternative licensure programs that allow individuals with relevant experience and expertise to transition into teaching roles, addressing barriers for potential educators who may not follow traditional routes.
- **Addressing Teacher Shortages in High-Need Areas:** We are working to identify and prioritize recruitment and retention efforts in high-need subject areas such as special education, as well as specific geographic locations within the district that experience higher teacher turnover rates, aligning with NextGen MN DOE's focus on equitable distribution of qualified educators. We will compile and publish a list of high-need areas annually.

New Employee Integration Process

To foster a sense of belonging and set new employees up for success, we are developing a comprehensive integration process. This plan will ensure a smooth transition and provide access to essential resources.

Planned Expanded Onboarding: Beyond the new hire orientation, supervisors will implement a structured onboarding process, including a First Week Focus and a 30-60-90 day check-in plan, designed to deeply integrate new employees into the district's culture, specific job responsibilities, and available resources.

- **First Week Focus:**
 - Welcome and Introductions: A warm welcome from the supervisor and team members, including introductions to key personnel.
 - Workspace and Technology Setup: Assistance with setting up workspace, accessing necessary technology, and navigating district systems.
 - Initial Job Responsibilities and Expectations: A clear overview of immediate job responsibilities, performance expectations, and key deadlines.
 - District Culture and Values: Introduction to the district's mission, values, and culture, including key policies and procedures.
 - Team Integration: Opportunities to meet with team members, understand team dynamics, and build initial relationships.
 - Initial Questions and Support: Dedicated time for new employees to ask questions and receive support from their supervisor and team.

- **Planned 30-60-90 Day Check-in Plan:**
 - 30-Day Check-in: Will focus on introducing basic district and department procedures, providing access to necessary technology and tools, addressing initial questions, and establishing a foundation for the role. This includes understanding team dynamics and initial job responsibilities.
 - 60-Day Check-in: Will focus on reviewing progress on key tasks, addressing any emerging challenges, and ensuring the employee is integrating effectively with their team and work environment. For teachers, this may include curriculum implementation and initial student progress. For support staff, this may include reviewing workflow and project timelines.
 - 90-Day Check-in: Will focus on overall adjustment to the role and district culture, identifying professional development needs, discussing long-term goals, and ensuring the employee feels fully integrated into the school community. This includes reviewing performance expectations and setting goals for the next period.
- **Planned Resource Provision:** New employees will receive clear access to:
 - District and department-specific policies and procedures manuals.
 - Technology platforms, software, and support systems relevant to their role.
 - Access to necessary tools, equipment, and resources.
 - Introductions to key support staff, including IT, Human Resources, and department-specific personnel.
 - Information on available professional development opportunities.

Mentorship Program

The district is committed to supporting all new employees through a comprehensive mentorship program.

- **Teacher Mentorship:** A structured mentorship program is currently in place for new teachers, pairing them with experienced colleagues. Mentors provide guidance, support, and feedback throughout the teacher's first year. Regular mentor-mentee meetings are scheduled, and program effectiveness is evaluated through ongoing feedback collection.
- **Expansion to All Staff:** The mentorship program will be expanded to include all new staff members, including paraprofessionals and support personnel. Experienced colleagues will be paired with new employees to provide guidance, support, and feedback during their initial year. Tailored training and support will be provided for each staff group.
- **Mentor Training and Expectations:** The district will provide comprehensive training for all mentors, focusing on effective mentoring strategies, communication skills, and district resources. Mentors will be expected to:
 - Conduct regular meetings with mentees.
 - Provide constructive and actionable feedback.
 - Assist mentees in understanding district culture, policies, and procedures.
 - Model effective professional practices.

The effectiveness of the mentorship program will be evaluated through annual surveys of mentors and mentees, as well as tracking new employee retention rates. Additionally, focus

groups will be conducted bi-annually with mentors and mentees to gather qualitative feedback and identify areas for program improvement.

In addition to our general mentorship program, we have established a targeted mentorship program for American Indian staff, as outlined in the 'Targeted Recruitment for American Indian Staff' section, to provide culturally specific support and guidance

Professional Development

We offer comprehensive professional development opportunities throughout the year to support effective teaching and learning, enhance staff skills, and foster a culture of continuous improvement. By investing in our staff's knowledge and abilities, we aim to improve student achievement and prepare them for college and career readiness.

- **Diverse Offerings:** Professional development will cover areas such as culturally responsive Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), culturally responsive teaching and learning, restorative practices, de-escalation techniques, social-emotional support programs, and Indigenous history, culture, and current events.
- **Evaluation and Improvement:** The effectiveness of professional development programs will be evaluated through post-training surveys, participant feedback sessions, and analysis of student achievement data where applicable. Program evaluations will be conducted annually, and findings will be used to refine and improve future professional development offerings.
- **Accessibility:** We will strive to make professional development accessible to all staff, including those with diverse learning needs and schedules.
- **Partnerships:** When needed, we will partner with local tribes for customized training programs.

Culture and Climate

Duluth Public Schools is committed to providing professional development opportunities for staff in areas such as culturally responsive Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), culturally responsive teaching and learning, restorative practices, de-escalation techniques, and other social-emotional support programs. These initiatives aim to enhance the school culture and climate.

District administrators provide extra support to students facing truancy or credit deficiency issues, helping them get back on track to graduate. District Social Workers offer a range of services to students and families in need, including counseling, referrals, and basic necessities like food and clothing. We recognize that a supportive work environment is essential for retaining staff.

Employee Wellbeing Initiatives

We offer a comprehensive suite of resources to support our staff's physical, mental, and emotional health, including:

- **Mental and Emotional Wellbeing:**
 - **Calm Membership:** All staff have access to a complimentary Calm membership, providing tools for mindfulness, meditation, and stress reduction.
 - **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** Confidential access to professional

counseling, resources, and support services is available through our EAP for employees and their families.

- **Physical Wellbeing:**
 - **Annual Wellness Fair:** We host an annual wellness fair, featuring health screenings, fitness demonstrations, and information on healthy lifestyle choices.
 - **Monthly Wellness Newsletter:** The Human Resources Department publishes a monthly newsletter, providing staff with valuable information on health tips, wellness resources, and upcoming events.
- **Ongoing Support:**
 - We are committed to continuously evaluating and expanding our wellness offerings to meet the evolving needs of our staff.
 - We will encourage feedback from staff regarding what other wellness initiatives

Employee Recognition and Appreciation

We believe that recognizing and celebrating employee achievements is fundamental to a positive and productive work environment. This section outlines our strategies for showing appreciation and our plans for future development.

We are dedicated to exploring and implementing various forms of employee recognition to acknowledge their hard work and dedication.

Existing Recognition Practices:

- **Staff Shout-Outs:** The district currently features staff shout-outs in the regular District newsletter, providing peer-to-peer recognition.
- **Public Acknowledgment:** Employee achievements are regularly highlighted in various district newsletters, showcasing their contributions to the school community.

Exploring Recognition Options: We will actively investigate and evaluate diverse recognition strategies, including:

- Further development of peer-to-peer recognition programs, potentially through an online platform.
- Expanding public acknowledgment of achievements, such as featuring employee accomplishments in the school board meeting minutes.
- Supervisory recognition through personalized thank-you notes and verbal appreciation.
- Spotlighting employee successes on the district website and social media platforms.

Focus on Appreciation: We prioritize creating a work environment where employees feel valued and appreciated for their daily contributions.

Future Development: We will continue to evaluate and develop recognition programs that are both meaningful and sustainable within our current financial resources.

Data-Driven Approach

We are developing a system to track key metrics and indicators related to our hiring practices. This data will help us measure our progress, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven decisions to optimize our recruitment efforts.

Metric	Importance	Goal
Annual Retention Rates	Indicator of employee stability	Increase annual retention rates by 3% over the next two years
Percentage of Employee Evaluations Completed	Indicator of employee success and progress	Achieve 95% completion of employee evaluations by the end of each school year.
Number of Candidates per open position	Indicator of recruitment process	Maintain an average of 6 qualified candidates per open position.
Employee Attendance Rates	Indicator of employee stability and retention	Reduce employee absenteeism by 3% within the next year.
EEOC	Indicator of staff diversity	Increase the representation of racially diverse staff by 2% annually.

Data Analysis and Action Planning:

The Human Resources Department will compile and analyze the metrics outlined above on a quarterly basis. A report summarizing the findings will be presented to the district leadership team. Based on the analysis, action plans will be developed to address areas needing improvement. These plans will include specific strategies, timelines, and assigned responsibilities. Quarterly reviews will assess the effectiveness of these action plans and make adjustments as necessary. For example, if the annual retention rate falls below the goal, the Human Resources department will conduct a review of exit interview data and employee surveys to identify contributing factors and develop targeted interventions. The Human Resources department will review these metrics quarterly, and the findings will be presented to the leadership team.

In addition to these general metrics, we also track specific data related to the recruitment and retention of American Indian staff, including application rates, interview success rates, and retention rates, as outlined in the 'Targeted Recruitment for American Indian Staff' section. This data is analyzed to inform targeted interventions and ensure equitable outcomes.

EEOC Data

EEOC data refers to data collected by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which helps track workforce diversity and identify potential discrimination.

Data will be analyzed to identify areas where targeted recruitment efforts are needed, and to determine if there are any areas of inequity within our hiring and promotion practices. Action

plans will be developed to address any disparities and promote a more diverse workforce. The district will also conduct periodic reviews of hiring and promotion practices to ensure compliance with equal employment opportunity guidelines. Annually, the Human Resources department will produce a report detailing the EEOC data analysis, and will include action plans to address any findings.

Exit Interviews

The Human Resources Department conducts confidential exit interviews with departing employees. This process gathers crucial feedback, which is then analyzed to identify trends, enhance employee experiences, and inform data-driven retention decisions. The Human Resources department will compile a bi-annual report of exit interview data, highlighting key themes and recommendations. This report will be shared with the district leadership team, and action plans will be developed to address identified areas for improvement.

Timeline of Recruitment and Hiring Activities

To ensure a proactive and organized approach to staffing, we establish a clear timeline for key recruitment and onboarding activities. This schedule guides our efforts throughout the year, ensuring efficiency and consistency.

Date/Month	Recruitment/Hiring Activity
Ongoing	• Prepare for and attend job fairs with a focus on diversity • Revise and finalize all screening materials and data tools • Revise questions for in person and digital interviews • Share opportunities for employees to serve on interview committees • Advertise for and fill open positions
Annually	• Review staffing challenges/opportunities from the previous year • Review the onboarding for efficiency and made adjustments as necessary • Revise and publish recruitment brochures and fliers
Winter	• Meet with the administration to review needs for the upcoming school year
Early Spring	• Determine staffing needs for certified positions • Post all known vacancies for the upcoming school year
Spring	• Determine staffing needs for non-certified positions • Send letters for the following school year to all employees • Conduct interviews and onboard staff
Summer	• Conduct interviews and onboard staff • Conduct New Hire Orientation

The preceding sections of this plan outline our comprehensive recruitment and retention strategies for all employees, emphasizing our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Recognizing the historical and ongoing challenges faced by American Indian communities, and the importance of representation within our schools, we have developed targeted strategies to support American Indian staff. The following section details specific initiatives designed to address the unique needs and challenges related to recruiting and retaining American Indian educators and support personnel, ensuring their success and contributing to a culturally rich learning environment for all students.

Targeted Recruitment for American Indian Staff

We will continue to advertise open positions on various platforms and email our postings to educational institutions, community organizations, and government agencies. To reach a wider American Indian audience, we will also send job postings to the Minnesota Office of American Indian Education.

1. Partnerships:

- **Formal Partnerships:** We will establish formal partnerships with the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe to support recruitment events, job fairs, and newsletter/social media postings. These formal partnerships will be documented through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) outlining the specific roles, responsibilities, and goals of each collaboration.
- **Recruitment Events:** We will actively participate in recruitment events that focus on Native Americans, including tribal college career fairs, community gatherings, and cultural festivals. We will report to AIPAC on our attendance and outcomes at these events. A budget of \$1500 will be allocated annually for these recruitment activities.
- **Community Collaboration:** We will collaborate with the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC) and other community organizations, such as the Minneapolis American Indian Center and the Duluth Indigenous Commission, to identify potential candidates, collaborate on recruitment events and workshops, and spread awareness about job openings.
- **Networking:** We will actively network with tribal members and community leaders through community events and direct outreach.
- **Cultural Events:** We will participate in powwows, cultural festivals, and other events to connect with potential candidates and build relationships.

2. Culturally Responsive Practices:

- **Culturally Responsive Job Descriptions:** We will develop culturally responsive job descriptions that highlight the unique opportunities and challenges of working in a diverse school district. We will emphasize the importance of understanding diverse cultures, actively seeking individuals with experience working with diverse populations, and explicitly stating a commitment to equity and inclusion. Examples of phrases to be included are: "demonstrated ability to build relationships across cultures," "knowledge of cultural nuances," and "commitment to anti-bias practices." To ensure cultural sensitivity

and accurate reflection of student needs, AIPAC will review all job descriptions for positions impacting American Indian students.

- **Job Description Review:** We will review current job descriptions annually to ensure the requirements are reflective of the work needed and are free of unintentional bias.
- **Cultural Competency Training for Hiring Managers:** We will train hiring managers on cultural competency and bias-free interviewing. We will adapt interview questions to be culturally sensitive and create a welcoming interview environment.
- **AIPAC Involvement in Interviews:** When possible, AIPAC members will participate as members of interview committees for positions that directly impact American Indian students. Their responsibilities will include reviewing candidate applications, developing culturally relevant interview questions, participating in interviews, and providing feedback on candidates' cultural competency. A formal agreement outlining these responsibilities will be established.

Retention Strategies for American Indian Staff

1. Cultural Competency Development:

- **Regular Training:** We will offer all staff regular cultural competency training on an annual basis, and partner with local tribes for customized training programs when needed.
- **Professional Development:** We will provide professional development opportunities on Indigenous history, culture, and current events.

2. Supportive Work Environment:

- **Mentorship Program:** We will establish a mentorship program pairing new American Indian staff with experienced mentors. Mentors will receive training on effective mentoring strategies. The mentorship program will include regular meetings between mentors and mentees, at least once a month, for the first year of employment.
- **Career Development:** We will offer coaching for career development and advancement.
- **Resource Group:** We will create an American Indian Resource Group for networking, support, and cultural exchange.

3. Competitive Compensation and Benefits:

- **Competitive Packages:** We will offer competitive salaries and benefits to attract and retain top talent.

4. Community Engagement:

- **Cultural Events:** We will organize cultural events and celebrations honoring American Indian heritage and traditions, encouraging staff participation. American Indian staff will have a significant role in the planning and execution of these events.
- **Tribal Partnerships:** We will build strong partnerships with local tribes and community organizations to support American Indian staff.

5. Data-Driven Decision Making:

- **Data Collection and Analysis:** We will track and analyze data related to the recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion of American Indian staff, including application rates, interview success rates, and retention rates. This data will be reviewed quarterly by the Human Resources department and presented to the district leadership team.
- **Data Utilization:** We will utilize data to refine recruitment strategies, retention initiatives, and professional development opportunities.

6. Discrimination Complaint Procedure:

- **Formal Complaint Process:** Duluth Public Schools is committed to providing a discrimination-free environment for all staff, including American Indian employees. To ensure a thorough and consistent investigation, the district requires that all discrimination complaints be submitted using the official complaint form available on the Duluth Public Schools website.
- **Accessing the Complaint Form:** The complaint form can be found on the Duluth Public Schools website at <https://www.isd709.org/families/forms>. This form is designed to capture all necessary information to facilitate a complete investigation.
- **Submitting the Complaint:** Completed complaint forms should be submitted online. Staff members who require assistance in completing the form may contact the Human Resources Department for support.
- **Investigation and Confidentiality:** The district will conduct a thorough and impartial investigation of all complaints submitted using the official form, adhering to established timelines and procedures. The investigation will begin within 10 business days of receiving the complaint. The investigation will be completed within 45 business days, unless extenuating circumstances require additional time. All complaints will be handled with confidentiality to the extent possible.
- **Additional Resources:** While the formal complaint form is the preferred method for reporting discrimination, staff members may also seek information or guidance from the Superintendent's Office at (218) 336-8752 or the district's Title IX Coordinator at anthony.bonds@isd709.org. Complaints may also be filed with external agencies, such as the Minnesota Department of Human Rights or the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

Conclusion

Duluth Public Schools believes that our employees are our most valuable asset. The strategies detailed in this plan reflect our dedication to creating a supportive and equitable environment where every individual can thrive. By investing in our workforce, we are investing in the future of our students and our community. We are committed to the ongoing implementation and refinement of this plan, ensuring that Duluth Public Schools remains a destination for talented and passionate educators and support staff.

COW Agenda Cover Sheet

Meeting Date: March 4, 2025

Topic: Budget Update

Presenter(s): Simone Zunich

Attachment (yes) or (no) No

Brief Summary of Presentation or Topic (no more than a few sentences): Simone Zunich, Executive Director of Finance & Business Services, will provide a brief verbal budget update as realignment continues.

This Requires School Board Approval ☐ Yes ☒ No