

## **Schools Profile**

*Schools, community centers and parks will be intensely used for neighborhood and cultural activities.  
A variety of recreational activities for teens, children, seniors, and family groups will be developed.*

### **From the Duluth “2001 and beyond” Visioning Process**

This school-related background report describes the existing learning facilities, demographic changes and projected trends to help provide context for the creation of Comprehensive Plan goals, policies and future land use scenarios.

### **Duluth School District Background**

Duluth School District (709) includes 13 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 3 high schools, and some alternative learning centers and programs. Statistics for the two charter schools are not included in this background as that information is not necessary for District planning.

Given an average class size of twenty-four students, and an average classroom size of 700 square feet or more, the existing building configuration could support 14,424 students. However, not all classrooms are in use. Classrooms currently in use could provide space for 12,288 students -- but they're not filled to capacity. In fact, the district's 2002-03 enrollment was 11,200, a number that is expected to decline by several hundred students each year. The district is therefore spending money to support building space for 3,000 students more than is necessary based on current and projected enrollment.

### **Duluth School District Demographic Highlights<sup>1</sup>**

#### Population

- Duluth grew for the first time in decades from 85,493 in 1990 to 86,918 in 2000. The majority of population growth within the School District is occurring outside the City of Duluth (Figure 1 – School district boundary).
- The urban area only grew by 247 people while the rural area grew by 2,305 people, a 31.5% increase (Figure 2 population change).
- The number of families living in Duluth is 19,918, while the number of families with children under the age of 18 is 9,427.

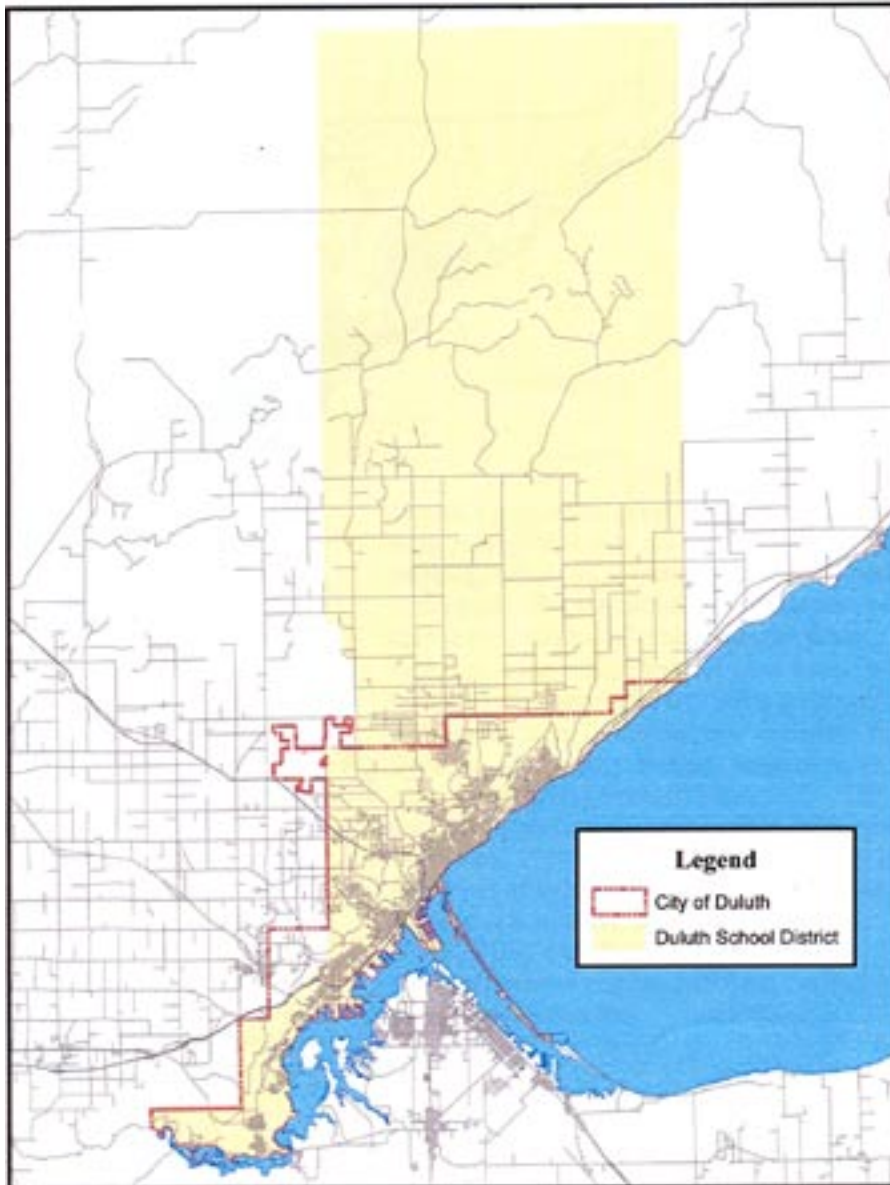
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<sup>1</sup> The following statistics are from the City of Duluth Planning and Development Department. Duluth School District Demographic Report. November 2003; Updated November 2004.

## Schools Profile

### Duluth School District Demographic Highlights

Figure S-1: Duluth School District Boundary



Source:

#### Migration/birth rates

- In 2000 only 54% of the population of the School District was living in the same house in 1995.
- Duluth's natural increase (births minus deaths) is near zero meaning that the number of births is just barely replacing the number of residents who pass away.

#### Age

- The number of children living in the School District showed an overall decline from 18,857 in 1990 to 18,150 in 2000.
- The decline in children is happening in the ages of 13 and under, while the ages 14 through 19 are showing a slight increase.
- The college population (age 18-24) is growing due to increased college enrollment.
- The 25-34 age range shows a decline in the 1990's due to college age students leaving and the baby boom generation growing older.
- There is a large increase in the age groups between 40 and 59, which is due to the baby boom generation getting older.
- There is an increase in the people over 80.

#### Housing

- The number of persons per household decreased from 2.51 in 1980 to 2.26 in 2000. This means that fewer people are occupying the same number of units.
- From 1990 to 2000 the number of householders living alone increased by 11.4%.

### New housing

- Based on building permit data, there have been over 1,500 housing units added to the City of Duluth from 1996 to October 14, 2004. The most significant growth occurred in the Central High School area (see Figure 3).
- From 1996 to 2003, there has been an average of 176 new units per year built within the City of Duluth.
- There are a possible 1,857 housing units that could be built in the next 5 to 10 years.
- According to the 2000 census, the average household size is 2.26. Using this number, the potential number of additional residents based on these developments would be 4,197 people.
- The number of potential new family units is 1,227 units with a potential 1,313 new students (1.07 children per family).

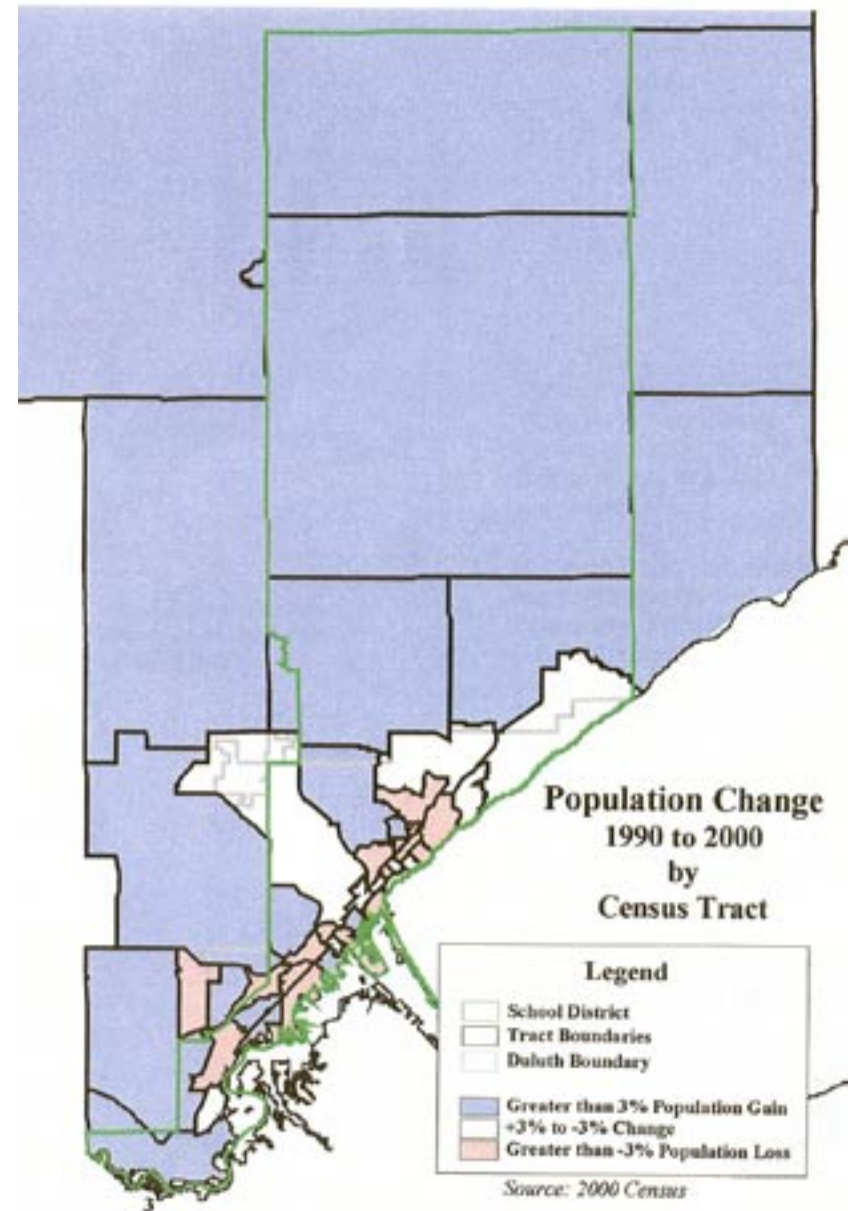
### **Duluth School District 709**

Duluth School District 709 serves virtually the entire City of Duluth as well as townships north of Duluth. As described in the District's Resolution of Purpose, Independent School District 709 is to provide a quality education that prepares all students for successful lives in the home, community and workplace.

The District's Resolution of Purpose describes several underlying beliefs that provide the foundation for decisions and actions. The beliefs include the following:

- It is our responsibility to educate all children.
- It is our responsibility to operate the District with fiscal stability.
- We need to act as partners with teachers, parents, community members and students.

**Figure S-2: Population Change 1990-2000 by Census Tract**

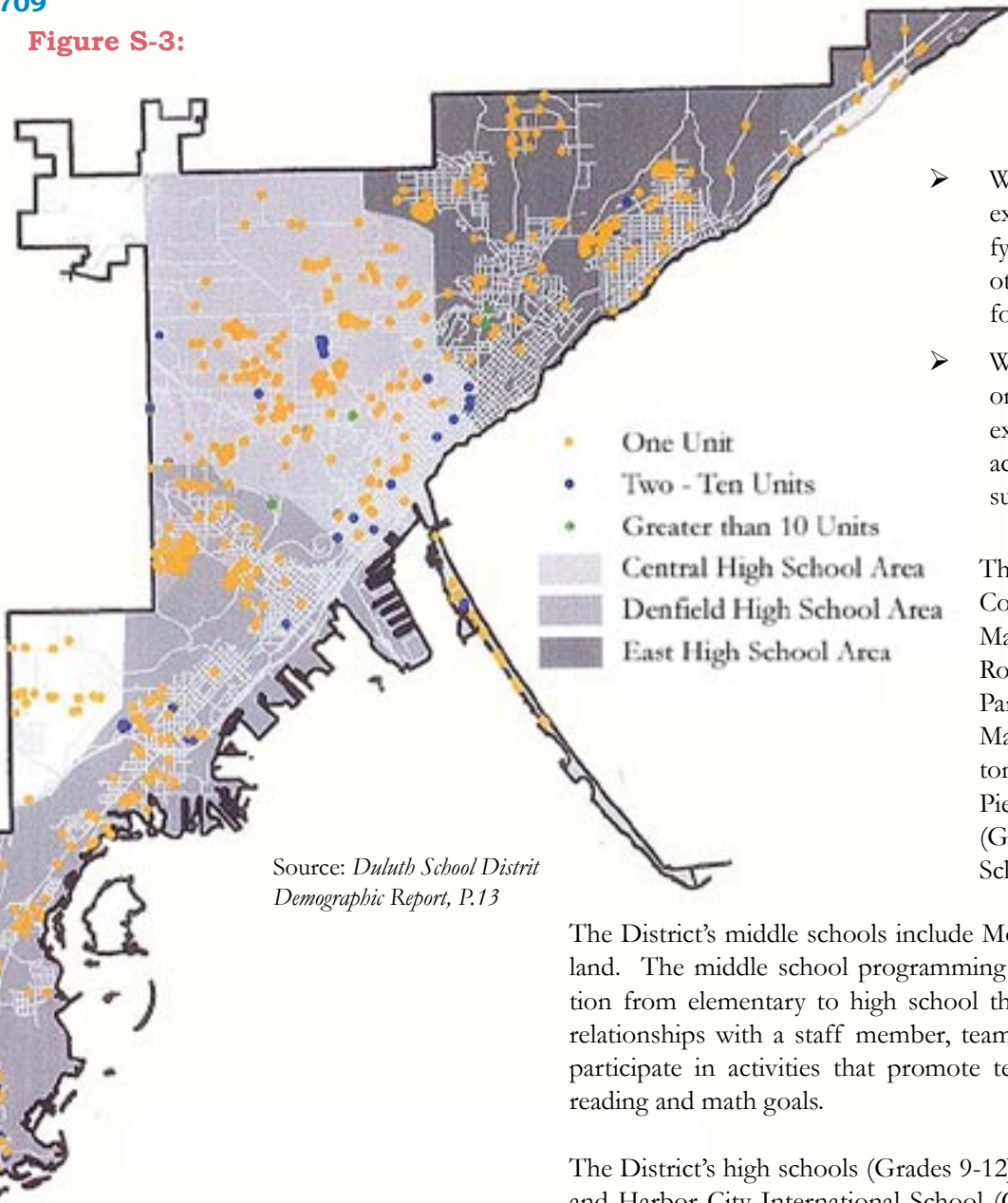


<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://www.duluth.k12.mn.us/schoolboard/purpose.html>

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**Duluth School District 709**

**Figure S-3:**

During the time period from 1996 to October, 2004, the majority of new housing units created within the Duluth City limits were created in the Central High School area of Duluth, where 673 new housing units were built. This was followed by the Denfeld High School area with 585 units, and the East High School area with 298 units.



Source: *Duluth School District Demographic Report, P.13*

- We must continue to explore and expand our partnerships to identify ways in which we can hold each other accountable and responsible for student success.
- We need to review change in an ongoing way. This includes both external (technology, legislative action) and internal (student results and research) changes.<sup>2</sup>

The District's grade schools include Congdon Park, Grant Language Magnet, Homecroft, Lakewood, Rockridge (Grades K-1) and Lester Park (Grades 2-5), Lowell Music Magnet, Laura Macarthur, Nettleton Science and Math Magnet, Piedmont, Stowe, Lincoln Park (Grades K-8), and Edison (Charter School, K-8).

The District's middle schools include Morgan Park, Ordean, and Woodland. The middle school programming (Grades 6-8) provides a transition from elementary to high school through ongoing advisor/advisee relationships with a staff member, team teaching, and opportunities to participate in activities that promote team building and contribute to reading and math goals.

The District's high schools (Grades 9-12) include Central, Denfeld, East, and Harbor City International School (Charter). In addition, there is a Secondary Technical Center (located near Central High School) that offers high school career and technical education programs.

Alternative schools and programs

District 709 offers several learning opportunities for students facing special challenges or experiencing difficulties in a regular classroom setting.

- **Chester Creek Academy** - A private, not-for-profit, multi-service agency providing professional care, education, and treatment for boys and girls with emotional, behavioral, and learning disabilities.
- **Truancy Intervention Program** - For students age fourteen or fifteen, in grades nine or ten, identified by schools or the court as being chronically truant.
- **Pathways** - For pregnant students in (Grades 9-12) however, such students have the option to remain at their regular high school.
- **Unity** - An alternative senior high school program available to students by referral from other high schools within the district. Unity provides a smaller learning environment, smaller class sizes, and support services designed to assist students in proceeding toward graduation, while attempting to help them successfully address the issues that caused a lack of educational progress in the regular high school setting.
- **Woodland Hills Academy** - Offers highly successful delinquency prevention, intervention and rehabilitation services for youth and their families from throughout the upper Midwest. Woodland Hills recognizes the potential that exists in all youth, and its mission is to instill values and build the assets in youth and their families so they may lead positive, successful lives.
- **Adult Learning Center** - For adults either working to obtain their diploma or working to develop better basic education skills.

### Private schools

Duluth has a number of private schools in addition to its public school system. Each private school is listed below with 2004-05 enrollment totals.<sup>3</sup>

- Holy Rosary (288)
- Stone Ridge Christian School (7)
- Lakeview Christian Academy (226)
- Marshall High School (498)
- Montessori School of Duluth (24)
- Summit (5)
- St. James (149)
- St. John (138)
- St. Michael (98)
- Home School (unknown)

### **Colleges**

An extensive range of higher educational institutions are located in Duluth. These institutions include the College of St. Scholastica, Duluth Business University, Lake Superior College, and University of Minnesota Duluth.

**College of St. Scholastica** - The College of St. Scholastica is the only independent private college in northeastern Minnesota. It was founded in 1912 by a group of pioneering Benedictine Sisters who offered college courses to six young women. Today St. Scholastica educates more than 2,800 men and women and has graduated more than 13,000 alumni. The 186-acre campus is set on a hill overlooking Lake Superior. Campus buildings include: the Science Center, Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel, the Myles Reif Recreation Center, the 500-seat Mitchell Auditorium, the College Library, the Little Theatre, majestic Tower Hall, a newly-expanded Student Union, Somers Residence Hall and five apartment complexes. Adjoining the campus are St. Scholastica Monastery, home of the Benedictine Sisters, and the Benedictine Health

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<sup>3</sup> Source: [http://education.state.mn.us/html/intro\\_data\\_enroll\\_nonpub.htm](http://education.state.mn.us/html/intro_data_enroll_nonpub.htm)

Center, which serves the needs of the Duluth area and provides opportunities for practical experience for many of the College's health science and behavioral arts and sciences students.<sup>4</sup>

**Duluth Business University** - Duluth Business University has been around since 1891. It is privately owned and operated and has maintained a clear focus on career specific training. DBU has recently added allied health and technical computer training programs to their curriculum. In May of 1994, DBU obtained degree-granting status from the state of Minnesota and offers its students the option of an Associate in Applied Science Degree. The campus is a 27,000 square foot facility built specifically to better serve DBU's students and allow for future expansion.

**Lake Superior College** - Lake Superior College offers extensive pre-baccalaureate majors for students interested in transferring to senior educational institutions as well as over 75 certificate, diploma and degree programs in career/technical fields. The Continuing Education/Customized Training division collaborates extensively with area businesses and industry to design specialized opportunities for entry-level and advanced education. While typically offered in traditional classroom and lab settings, LSC also offers over 150 courses in an individualized learning format, through interactive television, and through the internet.

**University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD)** – UMD is a comprehensive regional university. Undergraduate students can choose from 12 bachelor's degrees in 75 majors. In addition to the two-year program at the School of Medicine and a College of Pharmacy program, UMD offers graduate programs in 20 different fields, plus six cooperative programs offered through the Twin Cities.

The college began in 1895, when Minnesota Legislature created the Normal School at Duluth, which was located at 2205 E. Fifth St. In 1921, the institution became the Duluth State Teachers College, and in 1947 it became a coordinate campus of the University of Minnesota. A tragic fire destroyed its centerpiece, the proud Old Main building, in 1992, but the building's arches have been preserved and its former site is used by the City of Duluth as a park.

Today UMD's campus consists of more than 50 buildings on 244 acres overlooking Lake Superior. UMD is also home for the Tweed Museum of Art; the Marshall W. Alworth Planetarium; Weber Music Hall, and the Marshall Performing Arts Center. Other facilities include the Research and Field Studies Center; Glensheen Historic Estate; the Lower Campus; the Large Lakes Observatory; and the Natural Resources Research Institute.

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<sup>4</sup> Links to the websites for each of these institutions can be found at [http://www.duluth.k12.mn.us/KK\\_Pages/Parents\\_Community/com\\_rec.html](http://www.duluth.k12.mn.us/KK_Pages/Parents_Community/com_rec.html).



## **Duluth School District Consolidation Planning**

The Duluth School District has engaged in an extensive planning effort over the past five years in an effort to prepare for population changes as well as financial issues facing the school district. The problems facing the school district are not unique, and can be seen across the nation.

The District has determined that consolidation alone will not solve the district's projected \$6.2 million deficit in 2004-05.<sup>5</sup> The district and school board must also look at other cost-saving measures including changing transportation guidelines and trimming administration, the possibility of an excess tax levy, and sale of existing properties to meet the budget. Below is a brief timeline of consolidation planning efforts since 2001.

- October 2001: Three day planning session held with parents, community members and staff (approximately 175 attendees) to “create a collective future” for our children and community. The task force from the outcomes created a vision, a common understanding, a set of principles, and recommendations to help direct that future. Action items were created for major topic areas including curriculum, school consolidations, small schools, marketing, boundaries/corridors, fund raising, diversity, athletics, continuous planning, and transportation.
- September 2002: District administrators proposed the consolidation of Chester Park and Grant Elementary schools and conducting public meetings for community input.
- February 2003 – September 2003: Principals worked with community members, parent representative and staff to develop a consolidation plan. This process included community input and feedback. See details on this effort below.
- October 2003: School board adopted Principals consensus plan as a framework.
- February 2004: School board considered closing Grant and Chester Park schools. They voted not to close elementary schools for the 2004-05 school year. They did approve the consolidation of three non-school buildings.
- June-August 2004: Principals provided an update of information to the school board regarding elementary, middle, and high schools and the challenges faced due to tight resources.
- August 2004: Principals and administration present consolidation proposal to school board.

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<sup>5</sup> Source: [http://www.duluth.k12.mn.us/KK\\_Pages/School\\_Board/Vision2007/Vision2007Home1.htm](http://www.duluth.k12.mn.us/KK_Pages/School_Board/Vision2007/Vision2007Home1.htm)



- December 2004: Chester Park School to be closed, but a moratorium was placed on the closing of any more elementary schools for at least five years. The resolution did not preclude the school board from considering a consolidation of the Lester Park and Rockridge schools, which share the same attendance area.

In February 2003, Duluth School principals offered to assist the school board in creating a consolidation plan. After several preliminary meetings, the Duluth Board of Education asked administration (School Principals) to research and develop three new configurations for the district. The three scenarios were presented at the regular school board meeting in June 2003. The scenarios included a one, two and three high school configuration.

In the creation of the three scenarios the principals took into consideration all levels of the district, from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade, in order to address quality programs for all children. To develop the three scenarios, the principals recruited a steering committee to guide the process. The steering committee included representatives from school principals, teachers, parents, the business community and senior citizens, among others. The principals divided into three subgroups to gather data for each individual scenario. Each scenario took into consideration financial stability, the ability to maintain or enhance educational programs and school/district culture. The scenarios sought to optimize facility use following building size and geographic locations that are financially and educationally sound and considered potential areas of growth in our community. Each task force took into consideration information from:

- public input via email, letters and conversations, and survey results;
- steering committee members;
- other school districts;
- the district's business, curriculum and school operations offices;
- other resources considered helpful.

The steering committee developed the three draft scenarios and sought formal public input. They conducted meetings with teachers, parents, senior citizens and members of administration, among others. Two community meetings were held to gather input. The Principals made a presentation to the school board in June 2003, which included the three configurations plus a single plan that incorporated elements from all three plans.

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### School Issues – Land Use and Infrastructure

Conclusions from the consolidation plan included the following:

- Maximum savings on any plan for consolidation fails to meet budget needs;
- There's strong community support to maintain/enhance middle level education;
- Consolidation of high schools requires smooth transition, recognizing student and community needs;
- Declining enrollment is significant in the elementary schools and is beginning to affect high schools;
- Community support that utilizes facilities and provides opportunities for all community members is important;
- Long range planning must be dynamic and ongoing.<sup>6</sup>

### School Issues – Land Use and Infrastructure

Comprehensive Plan issues include assessing the impacts of private and public planning processes and investment by the various educational institutions in the City of Duluth.

#### Public education

The public education system in Duluth is a major form of public infrastructure, including physical assets (buildings, land, other facilities) transportation systems (busing or other transportation options), and non-physical assets (curriculum, administration, labor force, students). The District is independent of the City of Duluth and thus the planning processes and decision-making structures are independent of the Comprehensive Plan. The decisions have and will continue to affect other land use patterns in the City, tax levies, and quality of life.

- **Land use** – the location and condition of schools affects housing decisions and values. The Plan can consider recommendations for school infrastructure that will enhance property values and encourage investment in the City's housing.
- **Fiscal** - Like many school districts across the state, Duluth Public Schools faced a budget deficit in 2003-04. This deficit is attributed to a variety of factors, including a lack of state funding, the rising cost of doing business, and an expected decline in student enrollment. The budget deficit projected for 2004-05 is \$6.2 million with expected deficits each year through 2007 and beyond. School tax levies are the single largest

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<sup>6</sup> Source: [http://www.duluth.k12.mn.us/KK\\_Pages/School\\_Board/Vision2007/Vision2007Home1.htm](http://www.duluth.k12.mn.us/KK_Pages/School_Board/Vision2007/Vision2007Home1.htm).

component of property taxes, and thus affect private economic and housing decisions in the City. What consideration needs to be given to the fiscal interaction of District plans and the principles, goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan?

- **Quality of life** – Quality educational institutions are a primary factor in many residential location choices, and even some business location decisions. What recommendations can the Plan make to improve the quality, and perception of quality, in the public school system in order to sustain Duluth's high quality of life into the future?

### Private education

Private elementary and secondary education facilities offer alternatives to the public education system and enrich the quality of life for many Duluth families. These institutions are small enough that management decisions are unlikely to have substantial land use or infrastructural impacts for Duluth. The Plan can consider, however, how private education can be encouraged to enhance the public education infrastructure, or to create opportunities for reusing underused or empty public school facilities, and whether private education enhances or detracts from the preferred mix of land uses in specific areas.

### Higher education

Duluth's higher educational systems are a tremendous asset to the City. As enrollment increases, and as the demand for state-of-the-art facilities prompts new investment in higher educational facilities, the City and the colleges must make a number of choices regarding land use around the campuses, transportation systems to serve educational and research locations, and ancillary private investment such as off-campus housing for students and commercial areas to serve the student population market. The Plan can also consider the impact of Duluth's alleged 'brain drain' - that most students leave the Duluth area upon graduation and do not create the educated labor pool necessary to attract certain types of commercial or industrial investment.

## Schools Profile

### Sources

### Sources

Duluth Public Schools Website <http://www.duluth.k12.mn.us/>

Duluth Public Schools Long Range Planning Data

City of Duluth Planning and Development Department. Duluth School District Demographic Report. November 2003; Updated November 2004.

Duluth Public Schools. Community Planning Project Reports. October 2001.