

TO: School Board Members

FROM: Cari Jo Drewitz, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

DATE: February 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Approval of Final 2026-2027 and Draft 2027-2028 District Academic Calendars

BACKGROUND

Calendar development follows School Board Policy 602 and all Minnesota statutory requirements for instructional days and hours. Draft calendars are reviewed with the Meet and Confer Committee before being brought to the School Board in November. This timeline ensures that high school registration and other systems can be updated in a timely manner.

Each fall, the School Board reviews two academic calendars: the upcoming year for *final approval* and the following year as a *draft*. This two-year review process, developed in collaboration with the Meet and Confer Committee, provides predictability for families and staff while allowing time for refinement before final adoption the following year. The calendars were last reviewed by the board at the November 24, 2025 meeting.

In May 2023, the Minnesota Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act, known as the READ Act, was passed and signed into law. The goal of this legislation is to have every Minnesota child reading at or above grade level every year, beginning in kindergarten, and to support multilingual learners and students receiving special education services in achieving their individualized reading goals.

The second phase requires districts to provide professional development to the following groups and for that training to be completed by July 1, 2027:

- Teachers who provide instruction in the English Language Arts standards in grades 5-12
- Teachers with an elementary license that are teaching at the middle school level
- 5-12 teachers holding English as a second language teaching licenses
- Grades 6-12 Curriculum Directors
- Employees who select literacy instructional materials for grades 6-12

There are four approved professional development programs. The administration has selected CAREIALL Secondary. CAREI Secondary stands for the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, part of the University of Minnesota. ALL stands for Advancing Language

and Literacy. The CAREIALL training includes 45 hours of individual work and 17 hours of whole group training. 8 professional development days are needed to make this training possible.

The current school calendar includes six professional development days, two the week before school starts and four throughout the year. The administration is recommending that 5 of the 6 professional development days are used to support the READ Act training and that 2 student days be turned into professional development days, 1 student day will become a professional collaboration and the March collaboration day will become a professional development day.

For the 2026-2027 school year, the following days would be added to the calendar:

- Monday December 21, 2026
- Tuesday December 22, 2026 - this will be a professional collaboration day
- Tuesday February 16, 2027

To note, March 26, 2027 will be a professional development day instead of a professional collaboration day. These dates were chosen to ensure the CAREIALL training is spread out across the year in manageable chunks and allows time for make-up for any staff member that may miss one of the training days.

An additional change to the calendar includes moving the Monday, October 5 professional development day to Monday, September 21, 2026.

In applying the 4-way equity test to this decision, staff looked at which additional no student days were likely to have less impact on families and students. There were some natural breaks or shortened weeks in the calendar which is where these three additional dates were placed. The district recognizes that additional no student days result in many families needing child care.

The district acknowledges that approval of the 2026-2027 school year is later than normal and has been challenging for some staff and families. The draft of the 2027-2028 is also presented tonight for board approval and there were no changes for 2027-2028. This school calendar will be posted on the district's website and can be used for planning. In the fall of 2026, the district will review the draft of the 2028-2028 calendar. We anticipate the general structure of the schedule remaining the same.

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED by the School Board of School District 197 to approve the 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 District Academic Calendars as presented.