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TO: School Board Members

FROM: Superintendent Peter Olson-Skog

DATE: February 3, 2025

RE: Approval of Resolution and Transition Plan for School District 197 School Board General Elections Held after 2023 to be Moved to Even-Numbered Years

**BACKGROUND:**

Information on this item was shared with School Board members at their meeting on January 21, 2025. To recap, administration recommended that School District 197 switch their odd-year school district elections to the even-year cycle. The reasons school districts are considering this change to even-year elections include:

- **School District/Tax Payer Costs** - In odd years, the school district election clerk is responsible for conducting absentee voting, direct balloting, election judge hiring and training, equipment pick up/testing/delivery/return, Public Accuracy Test, ballot printing, ordering election precinct supplies, printing and publishing of all required notices, and all other miscellaneous costs associated with elections; A change to even-year elections would allow the neighboring and affected City Clerks and staff to conduct the election and save the school district and taxpayers money.
- **Voter Confusion** - Odd-year election polling locations are conducted at different locations than in even-year elections.
- **Surrounding School Districts Changing to Even Years** - In May of 2023, surrounding school district superintendents and administrative assistants began meeting with Dakota County Election Officials to work on a Joint Powers Agreement to assist with odd-year elections and the impact of new legislation surrounding election requirements. It was highly recommended at that time to consider switching from odd-year to even-year elections as there are not many remaining school districts on an odd-year election cycle.
- **Time** - The school district election clerk assists with the election administration from June through December. The amount of responsibility it involves substantially takes away from day-to-day duties.

Minnesota Laws 1994, Chapter 646, Section 26, Subdivision 1, states “that a political subdivision that initially chooses odd-numbered year elections and later determines to change to even-numbered year elections may do so by the adoption of a new resolution that contains an orderly plan for the transition.”

This would not prohibit a school district from running a special election in an odd year and/or an off month from the General Election date.

The attached resolution provides that the terms of office of school board members that would otherwise expire on the first Monday of January 2026 would be extended to expire on the first Monday of January 2027. The terms of office of school board members that would otherwise expire on the first Monday of January 2028 would be extended to expire on the first Monday of January 2029.

The transition plan and timelines are also attached.

**RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION:**

***BE IT RESOLVED*** by the School Board of School District 197 to approve the resolution and transition plan for School District 197 School Board General Elections held after 2023 to be moved to even-numbered years.