

## School Calendar for the 2020 – 2021 School Year

### Legal Considerations:

*Iowa Code §§ 279.10, School year — beginning date — exemption*, places the school calendar in the sole authority of the board of directors of a school district. It further states that the “school calendar shall begin no sooner than August 23” and include “not less than one hundred eighty days or one thousand eighty hours of instruction during the calendar year.”

### Review of Research:

Research on school calendars is limited. The latest research simply says that students learn and retain better if they have breaks between their instructional terms. This may suggest some days off for students between each quarter.

### Background:

Each year, it is the responsibility of the school board to approve a school calendar for the next year. The superintendent holds the responsibility to make recommendations to the board for calendar adoption. School board policy 601.1, School Calendar (which needs to be updated), reads in part, “It is the responsibility of the superintendent to develop the school calendar for recommendation, approval, and adoption by the board annually.”

### Draft C of the Calendar:

Draft C is the preferred calendar of 68% of teachers and support staff who shared their opinion on a survey. According to the survey, here is what the majority of teachers would like to see in their calendar for next year:

- a. 72% would prefer a week and a half break at Christmas over two full weeks.
- b. 45% want to see the semesters even in length and breaking in January; 21% prefer the split at the holiday break, with 35% with no preference.
- c. 57% like to see Presidents' Day as a professional development day.
- d. 62% like to see spring break in March; 35% want to see it connected to Good Friday.
- e. 52% would like to see a full week of spring break next year.

As a matter of personal importance, most teachers prioritize parts of the calendar as follows:

1. Most important is a full week of spring break.
2. Second most important is to end the school year as early as possible.
3. Third in importance is two full weeks of Christmas break.

### Recommended Action:

I recommend the board adopt Draft C of the calendar.