

October 24, 2023

Dr. Jill Underly, State Superintendent  
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
PO Box 7841  
Madison, WI 53707-7841

Dear Dr. Underly,

On behalf of the Board of Education I am requesting the School District of River Valley be allowed to have an earlier start date of the 2024-25 school year to provide for the mental health support of our students and staff within the School District of River Valley and for remodeling of schools to start during the summer of 2025 due to a capital referendum in April 2024.

Allowing for the earlier start time, not only meets the desires of our families, staff, and students (as demonstrated through survey results) but also allows the District to provide a more natural and meaningful break for our students and staff at the midpoint of the school year around the holiday season (already a stressful time for families).

By allowing the District to start on August 26, 2024, this allows for the end of the semester to fall prior to the December holiday break. This allows students (and families) to have a true holiday break versus spending time studying over this break for upcoming end of the semester projects and exams, which adds stress to students and families.

This calendar also provides a clear break for our staff, as they are not working over this break finalizing plans for the last few weeks of the semester and answering student and family communication about ongoing projects and assignments. In addition, with this proposed calendar, the District would plan to build in a work day at the end of the holiday break for staff, giving them the resources they need to take an actual break (and supporting their mental health) and allow them to come back more refreshed and reinvigorated to meet the needs of our students.

There is also the likelihood of a capital referendum in April 2024 for remodeling of schools to start during the summer of 2025, and an earlier school start allows for an earlier school release for remodeling to begin and end on time.

Enclosed with this letter requesting an early start date is:

- A copy of the official posting for the October 23, 2023, Board of Education meeting
- Draft minutes from that meeting where the Board took official action to request a start date waiver
- The resolution that was passed at that meeting requesting to commence the school term early
- The 2024-25 school year calendar that was passed at that meeting with a start date of August 26, 2024, pending approval of this request

**We do request that DPI act on this request as soon as possible so we can get a calendar out to our families as soon as possible.**

The District response to the needs of our students, staff, and families necessitates the need to request this early start date for the 2024-25 school year.

Thank you for your consideration of this request on behalf of the Board of Education, staff, and students of the River Valley School District.

Sincerely,

Kathy Jennings, Board of Education President  
School District of River Valley

cc: Board of Education

Enclosures: 10/23/23 Board Meeting Posting  
10/23/23 Board Meeting Minutes  
10/23/23 Board Meeting Resolution – Commence the School Term Early  
2024-25 School Calendar – Commence the School Term Early