Frequently Asked Questions: Family Edition

Why do elementary and secondary schedules start and end on different dates?
Different schedules are intended to support developmentally appropriate learning and improve transportation efficiency. Staggering can reduce congestion, improve reliability, and support more predictable routines for families.

What are the start dates for 2027–28?
Grades 6–12 begin August 23, grades 1–5 begin August 26, and kindergarten begins August 31, 2027.

Why does kindergarten start later?
The staggered start is intended to give the youngest learners a more gradual transition into school. Because Labor Day is September 6, kindergarten's opening schedule includes two consecutive four-day weeks, allowing time to establish routines and build stamina.

Why do secondary schools begin earlier?
Grades 6–12 begin August 23. The earlier start supports the instructional-hour plan and allows secondary classes to end before Memorial Day and graduation weekend. Starting secondary learners with grades 1–5 would require added instructional days at the end of May or changes to breaks and other non-school days.

Do elementary and secondary learners have the same last day?
No. The last day for secondary learners is May 25, 2028, while May 31, 2028, is the last day for elementary. Secondary graduation is May 28. Families with learners in more than one school level should check both calendars when planning.

Will the adopted calendar meet North Dakota instructional-hour requirements?
North Dakota law requires at least 962.5 hours for elementary learners and 1,050 hours for middle and high school learners. This calendar provides more than the required minimum hours at all grade levels.

Why include Early-Out Fridays?
Early-Out Fridays are new to WFPS in 2027–28. They create recurring time for planned educator learning and other date-specific work without adding a full day away from learners. The end-of-day plan varies; it includes Building Focus, Choice Board, Grading Day, and planned Back-to-School Compensation.

Which Fridays are early releases?
The 12 dates are September 17, October 1, October 29, November 19, and December 10, 2027; and January 14, January 28, February 18, March 3, March 24, April 28, and May 19, 2028. Learners are dismissed one hour early on each date.

Does the educator activity change the learner schedule?
Learners are dismissed one hour early on all 12 dates. Schools follow an alternative bell schedule that provides equitable time to all periods. The end-of-day allocation is for educators and varies by date.

How will an early release affect transportation?
District-provided transportation will be offered at all levels and schools on an adjusted schedule for those 12 early release days.

What childcare or supervision will be available on early-release days?
The district is not promising a district-provided childcare or supervision option at this time. The YMCA has communicated that its after-school programs can begin earlier on Early-Out Fridays, supporting consistent supervision for learners enrolled in those programs. Several local childcare agencies that serve WFPS families have also confirmed they can accept learners earlier on those days. Families should contact providers directly to confirm availability, eligibility, cost, hours, and arrangements. The district will continue exploring options; no district-provided supervision arrangement is confirmed.