

Concept: 4-day School Week

4-day school systems largely exist in seven predominantly rural states (Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, New Mexico, South Dakota, and Wyoming), and the systems are largely located in small, rural communities. "Of the nearly 15,000 school districts nationwide, more than **100** of them in 17 different states use a 4-day school system, 0.6% (Wall Street Journal, 2010)." More recent school systems to adopt **4-day** school week include states such as Georgia and Hawaii.

Perceived Advantages:

- Intuitively appealing
- Transportation savings, especially for rural districts (13-20%)
- Some district employees have reduced jobs from 40 **hours/week** to **32 hours/week** (classified employees)
- Food costs reduced (up to 20%)
- Reduction in student and employee absenteeism

Perceived Disadvantages:

- Daycare** issue for parents
- Longer hours may be difficult for younger students
- Substantial savings may not be realized when teachers remain full-time.
- Energy costs remain largely the same
- Disruption to extracurricular activities
- Disruption to professional development activities done before- and after-school
- More than **8-hour** work days
- Teacher prep time outside of the school day?
- Loss of veteran employees reduced to **32** hours, to full-time positions elsewhere
- Limited research on 4-day school week systems impact on student achievement

Outstanding Considerations

- Building usage (may not be less, no savings)
- Public reaction to **4-day** schedule
- Student achievement
- Other uses for 5th day of the week
- Professional development would be required to adapt strategies to longer day
- Would shortening the school week send a mixed message re education?
- Advantages for a rural school system may not be realized in larger, less rural districts, with potential problems related to increased demand for child care, working with special needs students, and delinquency.
- 4-day work week savings are not realized without personnel pay being reduced.

Financial analysis of a 4-day school week system was done in Indiana:

www.indiana.edu/~iepc/inpolicy .

"In brief, substantial savings are unlikely to be realized without reducing personnel costs.

Reducing teacher, administrator, and support staff compensation would be very difficult, and unwise, if the total contact hours remain constant when moving from the five- to four-day week.