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4-Day School Week Workgroup

Key Findings

Work Group Summary

- Anchored each meeting to Vision Statement: “Discover research-based evidence of how a 4-day school week would affect the McCall-Donnelly School District.”
- Collaborated with a diverse group of stakeholders from across all campuses during 10 different 90 minute sessions between February and May.
- Conducted a fact-based analysis to address **6 key topics for the MDSD School Board** (scheduling, student achievement, recruit & retain, funding, childcare, mental health)
- Utilized Idaho-specific or local data whenever possible, and reviewed data comparisons of districts in similar size to MDSD. We also captured national trends as 4 day school weeks is still a relatively new practice.
- Operated with the understanding that participation is greatly valued, but this is not a “vote”. Our objective was to help educate the MDSD board of trustees on a 4-day school week, as well as answer key questions for our community to the best of our ability. **Our job is to inform, not make a recommendation.**
- Many responses raised additional questions, highlighting that this is not a straightforward analysis for or against a 4-day school week. The unanswered questions only prove that this is a very complicated & nuanced topic.
- Remaining questions are summarized at the conclusion of the presentation.

Non-negotiables set by MDSD School Board

Time in School Requirements

- These are state requirements to stay accredited

State Funding for Public Schools

- Can't change how we're funded

Accreditation Requirements

- Reinforcing what is already in statute

MDSD Graduation Requirements

- Our standards are higher than state requirements

MDHS Maintains Block Scheduling

- Allows for diverse set of elective options

No Earlier Bus Routes

- Snow plow routes in winter require same times.

SCHEDULING QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS

- Will a hypothetical 4-day schedule create any scheduling roadblocks for elective offerings that may include CTE, Fine Arts, AP & Dual Credit programs at the High School? Will any roadblocks spill over to PLMS?
- What's the impact on instructional time lost due to district authorized athletic/activities travel during a 4-day schedule?
- Will we be able to use the same bus routes with start and end times for Elementary, Middle and High School?
- What will athletic practice times look like for High School Sports? What's the latest a late practice would be allowed to run?

Hypothetical Calendar Options

PLEASE REMEMBER

In order to consider the questions asked by the board, the workgroup needed to create a hypothetical option to be able to consider constraints, demands, and opportunities.

All of the following charts and options are **purely hypothetical** and have not been thoroughly vetted by the calendar committee, administrators, or the school board. They were used for discussion and research purposes ONLY.

They should be understood as entirely hypothetical, and not a suggestion, recommendation, or definitive example.

Hypothetical Calendar Options Considered to Help Address Key Topics

OPTION 1

- Keep the same number of student days as the current calendar and start earlier and/or go later in the summer; vacation lengths could also be reduced.

OPTION 2

- We could lengthen the school day to absorb the time from the Friday's off.

OPTION 3: HYBRID of 1 & 2

- A combination that also included adding select Fridays to optimize start and end dates to the calendar*

Hypothetical option that stays close to current calendar but requires **going to school on 10 Fridays**

	Current (24/25)	Hypothetical 4 Day
First Day of School	August 27	August 26
Last Day of School	June 5	June 9
Thanksgiving Break	5 days	5 Days
Christmas Break	10 days	10 Days
Spring Break	5 days	5 Days
In-school Fridays	27 days	10 days

Hypothetical Calendar: Hybrid with **10 Fridays Built In**

	Current Days (24/25 School Year)	4 Day School Week Days	Difference In Days	Minimum Required Days	Current Hours (24/25 School Year)	4 Day School Week Hours	Difference in Hours	Minimum Required Hours
Elementary (K-5)	170 Student 186 Staff	156 Student 169 Staff	14 Student 17 Staff	152 Student	1076	1027	49 Hours	900 Hours K-450 1st-3rd 810 5th 900
Middle School (6-8)	170 Student 186 Staff	156 Student 169 Staff	14 Student 17 Staff	152 Student	1076	1053	23 Hours	900 (6th-8th)
High School (9-12)	170 Student 186 Staff	156 Student 169 Staff	14 Student 17 Staff	152 Student	1076	1076	0 Hours	990 9th-11th 990 12th 979

(This was calculated with taking out the time for a 30 minute lunch each day)

Hypothetical School Schedules

Times adjusted to accommodate bus routes and ensure similar timing for both elementary schools.

	Current Schedule Start/End Times	Current Schedule Total Day Hours	4 Day Week (Hypothetical Timing) Start/End Times	4 Day Week (Hypothetical Timing) Total Day Hours
Donnelly Elementary	8:00 - 2:50	6 Hours 50 minutes	8:00 - 3:05	7 Hours 5 Minutes
Barbara Morgan Elementary	8:05 - 3:00	6 Hours 55 minutes	8:05 - 3:15	7 Hours 10 Minutes
Payette Lakes Middle School	8:15 - 3:05	6 Hours 50 minutes	8:15 - 3:25	7 Hours 10 Minutes
McCall-Donnelly High School	8:00 - 2:50	6 Hours 50 minutes	8:00 - 3:34	7 Hours 34 Minutes

Elementary schools Donnelly will go approx. **49 hours less or approx. 2980 minutes lost over a school year.**

BRMES will go approx. **50 hours less and 3050 minutes lost over a school year.**

PLMS will go approx. **36 hours less or approx. 2200 minutes lost over the school year.**

MDHS will go the approximately the same amount of time with each class being 1 hour and 42 minutes long instead of 1 hour and 30 minutes. Breaks and transition times could change these calculations.

Impact on instructional time due to athletics & early release

Note: These minutes can change drastically depending upon the exact calendar designed and which, if any, Fridays are included as in-school days.

Red - More missed minutes

Green - Less missed minutes

	Current Minutes Missed During Season per athlete (based on 24/25 calendars)	4 Day Minutes Missed During Season per athlete (according to Hypothetical Calendar)	Difference per seasonal sport over the course of the season
PLMS Fall Sports	2,021	2,250	229 Minutes
PLMS Winter Sports	3,165 Minutes	3,615	450 Minutes
PLMS Spring Sports	345	405	60 Minutes
MDHS Fall Sports	3,170	3,548	378 Minutes
MDHS Winter Sports	1,720	1,711	9 Minutes
MDHS Spring Sports	8,709	9,319	610 Minutes
Overall Total:	19,130	20,848	1,718 Minutes

Athletic Practice Times

- **Specifics of scheduling practices would need to be worked out among athletics and building staff and are TBD.**
- **Due to snow and weather/lighting needs, sports currently share the practice space inside buildings for a portion of the year until practices can be moved outdoors.**
 - There may be a concern for too late of practices in Winter and Spring due to shared practice space, **possibly causing practices to run until 8:30pm (Winter) or 10pm (Spring)** based upon adjustments to current times.²²
- **There are concerns by current MDSD Athletic directors:²²**
 - Less practice time if there are no or only-optional Friday practices
 - Potential reduction in teacher coaches in sports with competitions scheduled on Fridays due to reduced family time, increased child care needs, and increased working time.
- **A 4-day schedule “would greatly limit” the McCall Nordic & Biathlon Ski Club opportunities:²³**
 - School end time later than 3:30 would push the program start time late enough to not have meaningful practices
 - Friday practices may not be possible since coaches are volunteers and may not be able to get work off on Fridays mid-day; transportation of students may also be a problem with Friday practices.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS

Does a 4-day school week impact student achievement in a positive or negative manner?

- If possible, provide data in a pros and cons manner.
- Ideally, utilize Idaho data and similar size district comparisons whenever possible

Student Achievement Takeaways

- Students in 4-day school schedules often show lower academic performance, though other factors may be responsible.
- Although a 2020 study found the negative effect was not statistically significant; More recent studies, however, show greater statistical significance.
- While the negative effect of a switch to 4-day could potentially be avoided, there is no clear guidance on how to achieve this based on research.
- Compared to a 5-day schedule, data generally does not support positive academic achievement effect from a 4-day schedule. Positive impacts for a 4-day schedule are primarily in other areas.

Student Achievement Findings: Pro 4-Day

1. Not all schools demonstrated a negative outcome in achievement attributable to the 4-day schedule, so it is theoretically possible to avoid a negative effect on student achievement while being on a 4-day schedule. One older study from 2015 showed positive impact to achievement from the 4-day schedule.¹
2. The negative effect found in the studies is not considered statistically significant based upon one study. In other words, although a negative effect is measured, there is not enough of a difference in the achievement levels that prove it is due to the 4-day schedule.²

1. [Does Shortening the School Week Impact Student Performance? Evidence from the Four-Day School Week](#)

2. [ACADEMIC IMPACT OF RURAL IDAHO SCHOOLS ON THE FOUR-DAY SCHOOL WEEK: A QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY A Dissertation](#)

Student Achievement Findings: Con 4-Day

- Multiple studies documented a negative achievement impact with 4-day district/schools.^{3,4,5,6,7,8}
- 5-day school districts generally had a higher percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced than 4-day schools.^{4,5}
- 4-day schools had a lower level of achievement growth than 5-day schools.⁴
- The gap in achievement increases the longer a school is on a 4-day schedule as the negative impact builds over time.^{4,5,8}
- The negative impact was statistically significant in multiple cases and studies.^{4,5,6}
- Math appeared to be more heavily affected than reading.^{4,5,6,8}
- Negative impacts could reach levels similar to the disruption caused by the pandemic within 8 years.⁵

3. [What the research tells us about four-day school weeks](#)

4. [RAND Research Report: Does Four Equal Five?](#)

5. [2023-2024 ISBOE Data Committee Findings](#)

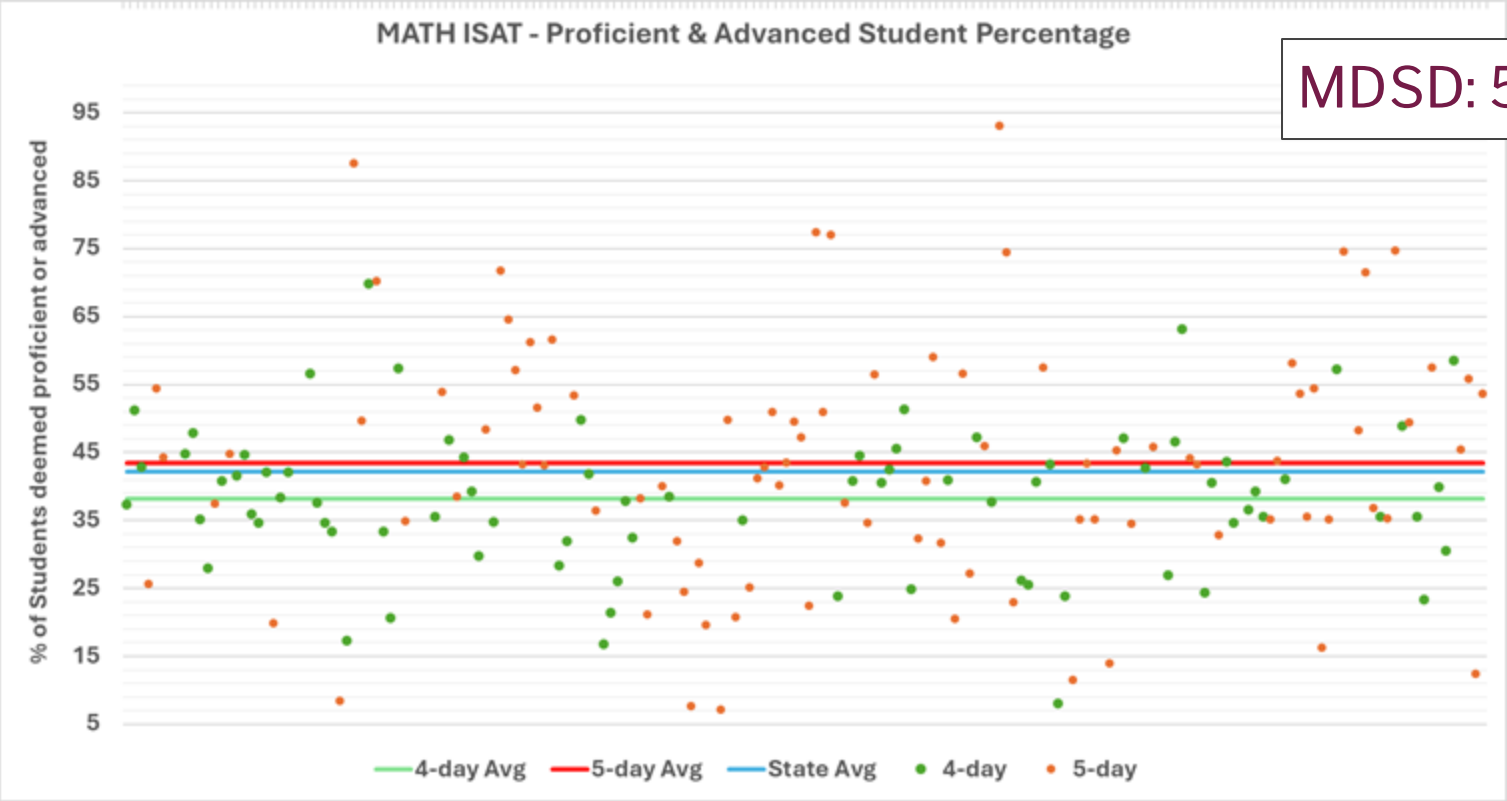
6. [Student Outcomes in Idaho School Districts with a Four-Day Week](#)

7. [What the research tells us about four-day school weeks](#)

8. [New Research Examines the Benefits and Drawbacks](#)

2024 ISAT Math Data⁹

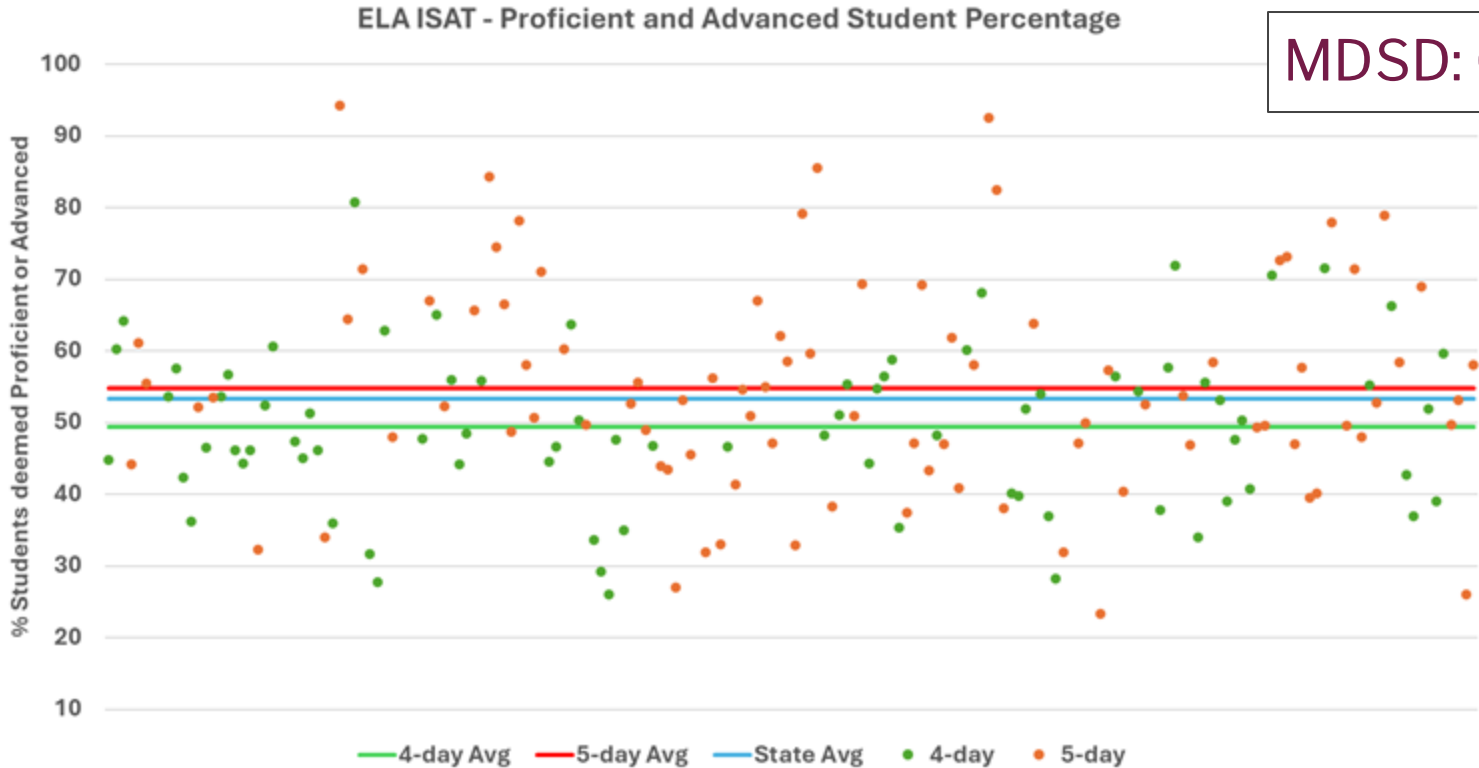
Note: Each dot represents a single school's rating for the percentage of students deemed proficient or better.



MDSD: 56.5%

2024 ISAT ELA Data⁹

Note: Each dot represents a single school's rating for the percentage of students deemed proficient or better.



2024 ISAT Data Comparisons

Caveats:

- There is no causal link for outcomes, as this has not been studied long enough to draw those conclusions
- On average, schools with 4-day schedules tend to perform worse on ISAT than those with 5-day schedules. However, this is not universally true; Some outliers perform well, and it's often unclear how those schools were performing before the switch.

Comparing SRV Data

via [IdahoEd News](#)

We spent time comparing MDSD data with other data from schools in the SRV District, as well as other comparable districts. This data can be found in the additional resources packet, or by clicking the link above.

Key Takeaways from these comparisons:

- Our district is entirely unique in many critical categories.
- It is not a reasonable comparison in most respects to compare MDSD to the other districts in SRV & beyond.
- We are ranked much higher in the published school rankings.
- We are much higher in per-pupil spending.
- Teacher retention rates are higher and only Fruitland has similar average teacher pay.
- Our location and proximity to alternate districts for hiring is unique.
- We score significantly higher on ISAT and SAT tests at all applicable grade levels tested (Elementary through High School)
- Our funding is different (due to the \$5.7MM in supplemental income)

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS

- Do current MDSD staff desire a 4-day school week?
- Does a 4-day school week create more applicants or deter applicants?

Recruit & Retain Findings

MDSD Staff Survey Results

SUMMARY: The Staff Survey surfaced far more questions than answers, and many answers are dependent on other factors like funding, benefits, and annual negotiations with MDSD School Board.

Some teachers are in favor of the 4-day school week **if their pay is not decreased and they do not have to come in on most Fridays.**

Teachers have concerns, and their support for the 4-day school week depends on how those concerns are addressed.

Here are a few of those concerns:

- Would teachers get Fridays off? Or would they be required to be at the school?
- If required to be at school, many have childcare concerns for their own children.
- Will their pay be decreased?
- Could they meet the district's high academic standards expected with a reduced schedule?
- Concerns about negative effects on their students both academically & emotionally (ie. unstable home life, lack of food, special education requirements, etc.)

Recruit & Retain

Data & MDSD Information Findings

- Studies have mixed results on the effect of the 4-day schedule on recruitment and retention of staff.^{4,10,11}
- There can be a recruitment benefit, but some studies show a retention problem follows.^{12,13}
- Recruitment and Retention is a big reason why some districts adopt the 4-day schedule, but there is little evidence to support it as a positive outcome overall.⁴
- MDSD currently does not have a recruitment or retention problem for teachers.
 - Among highest average paid teachers in Idaho where surrounding districts are among the bottom ten
- MDSD might have a problem with recruitment and retention for classified staff (data is incomplete)
 - Many classified staff do it for the benefits, which could be lost with a 4-day schedule, depending upon specifics.

Funding questions that could impact recruitment & retention

- **Does MDEA support a proportional reduction in salary / benefits to the contract adjustments?**
 - No
- **What's the district cost to purchase current teacher personal leave allocations?**
 - Subject to school board negotiations
- **What would the current vs. new salary look like for classified staff, specifically instructional aids and food service?**
 - If hours are reduced, pay would most likely be reduced proportionately unless otherwise negotiated; many classified could lose benefits if too many hours are reduced which may help the budget, but may also cause staff to leave.
- **What's the financial impact on the Harlow's bussing contract?**
 - Subject to school board negotiations
- **What Idaho school districts have seen cost savings from a 4-day school week? What line items saw the reductions? Conversely, any increases in costs? (If available provide percentages saved or increased)**
 - No specific data; studies show nationally districts saw an average cost savings of ~2% or \$57k; a second study suggested between 0% and 3%.^{4,7}

CHILDCARE

QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS

- What is the potential cost impact to families to obtain child care on Fridays?
- What are the current local options for Fridays and is it sufficient?
- Is transportation available to child care or food resources on Fridays?
- How would we work with food insecurities?

Childcare Questions for 4-Day Week

- **What's the estimated cost per child for parents who would need childcare on Fridays?**
 - Ranges from \$33-\$65 per day, many do not allow drop-ins.
 - After-School programs range from \$12-\$24 per afternoon or 2-3 hours. This rate would increase if the care was for a full day on Fridays and would likely be similar to other child care centers.
- **Does the cost vary depending on the age of the child?**
 - Generally not for school-age children.
- **What's the childcare availability in the district communities on Friday? How many per age group?**
 - Legally 24 children (≥ 5 yo) per adult employee caregiver
 - Less than 20 open slots currently, most are space and employee-restricted
- **Are food services provided?**
 - In some cases snacks are provided, in all cases parents provide lunch/meals
- **Are there transportation services available?**
 - Generally no, although three are on city transit routes and one does offer transportation services.

MENTAL HEALTH & BEHAVIOR

QUESTION TO ADDRESS

Are there data-supported pro's and con's to consider?

Mental Health & Behavior Findings: Pro 4-Day

Note: Mental Health consequences in 4-day schedules has not been studied thoroughly. **Most research has utilized surveys only and not quantitative measures.**

- Study surveys typically support students getting the same or more sleep during the school week.⁴
- Study surveys typically support reduced feelings of stress and burnout.⁴
- Study surveys reported more free time per week with the 4-day schedule (3.5-4 hours)⁴
- Study surveys indicate 4-day allowed more flexible family time.⁴
- Research supports less bullying and fighting in high school on a 4-day schedule.^{3,14}
- Some studies indicate more time spent in homework, sports, extra-curriculars, hobbies, jobs, and chores with 4-day students.⁸
- Study surveys indicate no difference in parent/student ratings of school climate 4-day vs. 5-day and some studies indicate no difference in stress levels.³

3. [What the research tells us about four-day school weeks](#)

4. [RAND Research Report: Does Four Equal Five?](#)

8. [New Research Examines the Benefits and Drawbacks](#)

14. [Effects of 4-Day School Weeks on Older Adolescents](#)

Mental Health & Behavior Findings: Con 4-Day

Note: Mental Health consequences in 4-day schedules has not been studied thoroughly. **Most research has utilized surveys only and not quantitative measures.**

- Students on a 4-day school week spent more time on sports, chores, homework, jobs, and hobbies, but data shows that 80% of high schoolers and 90% of elementary students just stay home on their off day.
https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA373-1.html
- Study surveys report more consumption of sugar sweetened beverages and less water for students on 4-day schedules.¹⁵
- Study surveys report fewer days of physical education with a 4-day schedule.¹⁵
- Study surveys report a greater likelihood of students being food insecure with a 4-day schedule.¹⁵
- Study surveys show students are more likely to report* drug use, specifically marijuana, with a 4-day schedule.¹⁵
Note: this is reported use which may or may not indicate a greater actual use.
- Data shows an increase in juvenile crime (by nearly 20%) concentrated in property crime when school is out of session with 4-day schedules.¹⁶
- Earlier data showed an increase in arrests for property crime (particularly larceny) by 73%; the increase was across the whole week.¹⁷

15. [Impact of Reduced School Exposure on Adolescent Health Behaviors and Food Security: Evidence From 4-Day School Weeks](#)

16. [Juvenile crime and the four-day school week](#) from 2018

17. [Juvenile Crime and the Four-Day School Week](#) from 2016

ADDITIONAL and UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

Many of the questions and responses in our sessions raised additional questions, and in some cases, there was no data to provide clear answers for important issues.

These unresolved issues remain critical to consider. The following slides highlight key questions that should be explored further.

Special Education & GATE Students

Unanswered Questions

How will the 4-day schedule affect the delivery of IEP services?

- Will students be able to receive the same number of minutes for therapies (OT, PT, SLP), resource room time, and other supports?
- Is Special Education staff on board should demand in workload change due to 4-day week?
- How does one less day per week impact Special Education staff's ability to meet the 60 calendar day requirement for evaluations & 30 calendar day requirement for IEP meetings, per federal law?

Will longer school days and longer weekends be manageable for students with cognitive, emotional, or physical disabilities?

- Fatigue, sensory overwhelm, and attention challenges may be exacerbated due to a longer day.
- Some BRMES Special Education teachers and providers report behaviors increase after long weekends and longer breaks.

How will paraprofessional, aide, and therapists schedules be adjusted?

- Will support staff be available during longer days, and will their contracts/hours reflect the change?

Special Education & GATE Students

continued

What will happen on the fifth (non-school) day for Special Education students?

- Will there be any enrichment or respite care options for families who rely on school structure and services throughout the week?
- Can IEP meetings, evaluations, and intervention therapies be scheduled on the 5th day?

What are the potential risks to disabled students having one less day among their peers? Will they impact the following, and how will this be tracked at MDSD?

- a. Increased isolation?
- b. Reduced opportunities for socialization & social skill building?
- c. Regression in communication and behavioral progress?
- d. Opportunities for inclusion?
- e. Wider equity gaps?
 - i. If typical peers are using the off-day for enrichment, sports, or social activities, and developmentally disabled students are not able to access the same opportunities, the divide grows.

Special Education & GATE Students

continued

- How will a move to a 4-day week impact the social, emotional, and mental health outcomes for families & caregivers with students with disabilities?
- Will the condensed schedule still allow adequate time for GATE enrichment, pull-out programs, or acceleration opportunities?
- How will a 4-day week impact student achievement outcomes for our gifted learners over time?
- Will curriculum pacing change, and how will that affect both Special Education and GATE students?
- How will teachers continue to differentiate for both Special Education and GATE students effectively in a more compressed schedule, with one less day per week, that also meets all goals and federal requirements (in IEPs)
- How will equity continue to be measured and assured?
 - Will the district track how different student groups are faring academically and emotionally over time if we move to a 4-day week? How?

Childcare

Unanswered Questions

- Could local employers lose staff due to having to stay home with children on Fridays?
- What is the financial impact on local families having one less day of school?
- What percentage of parents need to have older siblings stay home to take care of younger siblings?
- What percentage of children be left home alone without proper supervision due to parents having to work?
- Adams County: Sheriff deputy states rates of incidents involving minors is higher on Fridays when kids are not in school. Will this impact MDSD?
- Could High School students be available to help babysit for money or could fill in some jobs on Friday? Will this impact their academic/social/emotional/sports participation & performance?
- Could High School students work on Fridays in the community?
- Are some children more vulnerable physically and emotionally if left home alone?

Recruitment & Retention

Unanswered Questions

- Housing has long been identified as the most acute need to recruit and retain staff. MDSD recently built 8 units to address housing for staff. Occupancy is scheduled to begin this spring. Will increased staff housing impact MDSD's ability to recruit and retain teachers & classified staff?
- Would teachers get Fridays off? Or would they be required to be at the school?
- Will teacher pay be decreased?
- Could teachers meet the high academic standards expected with a reduced schedule?

Thank you for your time.
We will now proceed to a Q&A session.

For more of our data, research, resources, and more, please
follow the link below to download the appendix.

