

## FOUR DAY WEEK

Frequently Asked Questions:

**Q- What is the required number of days schools must be in session during a school year?**

A- Until 2009 the law required districts to conduct school for a minimum of 174 days AND 1044 hours. In 2009 the law changed to allow districts to declare a four-day week and conduct school for a minimum of 142 days AND 1044 hours.

**Q- How many days and hours do Strasburg students attend?**

A- We currently operate with a 172-day calendar and typically attend 1111.2 hours, which allows us to meet the hour requirements. A four-day school week calendar would have 148-days and students would attend 1,106.10 hours. (24 fewer days but only 5.1 fewer hours than a 5-day calendar)

**Q- Are there safeguards in place in case academic achievement drops after moving to a four day week?**

A- Yes, the law stipulates that a school district must return to a five day per week, 174 days per year calendar if academic achievement drops over two consecutive years. However, because attendance and student engagement improve with a four-day week, most schools see an increase in academic achievement-not a decrease.

**Q-How is that academic achievement measured?**

A-It is measured on our annual State Assessments- MAP tests.

**Q- If we make a change to the four-day week are we bound to stay with it for a particular length of time?**

A-Each Board of Education adopts the annual calendar in the late winter or early spring for the upcoming school year. We want to gather as much input and data as possible each year when making that decision. A change is certainly not a permanent change.

**Q- How did we get to the place where we are giving serious consideration to the four-day week calendar?**

A- The discussion began with our administration looking at ways to increase the number of hours of professional development for our teachers. We believe that to make the improvements we want to see take place in our school we must provide additional time for our teachers to work together; develop a curriculum that is aligned with the State Standards, study proven and effective teaching strategies, and continue to develop programs that meet the needs of our students. We knew there were other benefits to consider, but the discussion originally centered on the need to add professional development time without having more early dismissal days.

Due to COVID-19 and the increased pressure placed on teachers for servicing District Remote Learners, the four-day calendar would also provide time for teachers to plan lessons for those students.

**Q- If implemented, how many hours would our students attend in a school year?**

A- The hours of student attendance would remain about the same, in the 1080 to 1111 hours range depending on the school year calendar. The students would attend classes for 148 days as opposed to the current 172 days. We currently operate with a 172-day calendar and attend 1111.2 hours, which allows us to meet the hour requirements. A four-day school week calendar would have 148-days and students would attend 1,106.10 hours. (24 fewer days but only 5.1 fewer hours than a 5-day calendar)

The school day would run from 8:00 a.m. to 3:35 p.m.- an additional 40 minutes daily for Tuesday through Friday each week. Doors would open for students to enter the building at 7:40 am.

**Q- Apart from the professional development advantages, what other benefits are there to adopting a four-day calendar?**

A- (1) consistency in the calendar- in the traditional five-day calendar we currently have only 16 out of 38 weeks that are not interrupted by time off for professional development, early out days, holidays, or other scheduled breaks. In the four day calendar, 36 out of the 38 weeks are full, uninterrupted weeks. The consistency will be very helpful as teachers plan and teach their classes (2) many families will have more time together- while this is not the case for everyone it is certainly a benefit many families will enjoy (3) in districts where the four day week is implemented it is very common for students and staff attendance rates to improve (4) because attendance rates improve, often grades and graduation rates also improve (5) there are financial savings for the district (6) student and staff morale improves (7) fewer substitute teachers would be needed (8) no early dismissal days (9) many families would need less child care on Tuesday through Friday because there are no early dismissal days and the length of the school day more closely resembles the workday of the parents (10) moving to a four day week reduces the need to make other cuts in our budget.

**Q- There must surely be some disadvantages as well, what are they?**

A- One of the first objections I hear is usually related to childcare on Mondays. And, that is certainly a legitimate concern. We will do what we can to minimize the impact on parents. We will do as other four day districts have done to help by offering training for our middle school students who are interested in serving as a child care provider. A second objection is the length of the day. Our students will attend class 40 minutes longer per day than they do currently. While 40 minutes is not really that long a period of time we will have to be sensitive to the student's needs. We have discussed providing a snack for the students and allowing the youngest of our students some extra rest time. A third concern is that some of our employees will receive less pay. We have discussed this issue with our staff and they understand the situation, most will be able to make up their hours on the two Monday PD days each month.

**Q-What are the financial benefits of moving to a four-day schedule?**

A- The financial benefits come from four areas. They are transportation, food service, substitute teachers, and utilities. The projected savings from these four areas add up to \$20,000 to \$30,000 annually.

**Q- How would athletic events that take place on Mondays be handled?**

A- Most would not change. There are ball games that currently take place on Mondays that would continue just as they are scheduled.

FOR ADDITIONAL RESEARCH PLEASE VISIT THIS WEBSITE:

<https://sites.google.com/view/four-day-school-week/home>