

Frequently Asked Questions About District Calendar

Q: What are the benefits of going to a four-day school week?

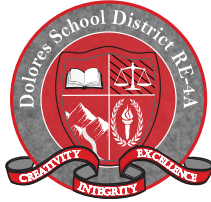
A: Currently 111 out of 178 school districts have gone to a modified schedule which is less than the 160 days and more than the minimum of 140 days required. Many of the rural districts have transitioned to this schedule in order to provide competitive recruitment of quality teacher candidates, retention of current employees, extended family time, and extra-curricular options for Friday that does not remove students from academic instruction.

Q: What is the reasoning behind the four-day schedule?

A: There are several reasons (list in not exhaustive):

- Many of the rural districts have transitioned to this schedule in order to provide competitive recruitment of quality teacher candidates, retention of current employees, extended family time, and extra-curricular options for Friday that does not remove students from academic instruction.
- The research that is provided by the Colorado Department of Education states, “The general feeling is that students do no worse on the four-day week than on the traditional schedule. If student performance is judged by satisfaction, then the results are very favorable.

An academic comparison study of Colorado school districts operating four-day and five-day calendars was completed by Dianne L. Lefly, Ph.D., Director of CDE Research & Evaluation and Jhon Penn, Executive Director of CDE Field Services in 2011. At the time of the study, there were sixty-seven Colorado school districts that operated all their schools on a four-day week rather than a five-day week. Because Colorado law requires that all districts provide a specified amount of ‘contact time’ for students, the shorter week includes longer days so the actual ‘contact time’ is the same as the schools

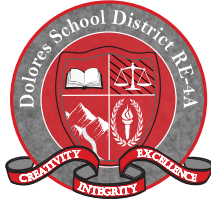


with longer weeks. The study compared the academic achievement and student growth of the four-day districts to the academic achievement of five-day districts of similar size. Overall, the results indicated that both groups of districts performed similarly on the state assessments and that their students showed very similar amounts of academic growth as reflected by the Colorado Growth Model. The study may be accessed at

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/research/download/pdf/coloradofourdayandfivedaydistricts.pdf>

Few districts have changed from five to four days with the expressed purpose of improving student achievement; it has not been a significant issue.” Retrieved from Colorado Department of Education website at <https://www.cde.state.co.us/>

- The system in our country is not working for all students and geographical areas. American students are 21st in the international rankings. Many believe one of the reasons is that we have taken the childhood from our kids and replaced it with stress, testing, long days, and no activity. The top performing countries tend to have shorter school days and much longer recess and breaks for the students. Families who have been involved in four-day schools report more quality time with their children, rested children, and time to engage and explore.
- In our school district it is very difficult to attract teachers. Our pay is near the bottom of the pay scale and our facilities are lacking. Why would a teacher choose Dolores over another district they can work 20-30 days less for more pay?
- Our state is currently last in the nation for teacher pay. Taking care of our teachers is essential to our students having what is best for their education. We often hear that children need more “seat time” at school to get everything possible. That is only possible when the teachers standing in front of them are able to pay their bills and get adequate planning and rest to do their jobs well.



Q: How can a year's worth of curriculum fit into a shorter calendar with less days?

A: Our elementary uses the Core Knowledge Sequence© which has an adapted plan for pacing. It covers the same material in an adapted pacing sequence. The secondary school losing so much time on Fridays due to extra-curricular activities and student absence support this move to improve and increase student learning and achieving.

Q: How would moving to a four-day calendar impact the community?

A: The community would be an integral part of the Friday success. The leadership in Mancos has shared how going to four days has brought their community together.

Q: Will there be offerings for our children on Fridays?

A: There are plans going into Friday offerings. Proposed ideas will be presented to the board in the March meeting.

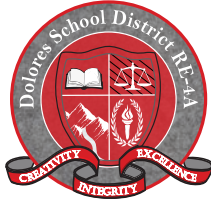
Q: How will bus drivers avoid getting a pay cut?

A: The pay scale for the drivers will be adjusted in order to compensate for their missed time. It is our desire to see that no employees get less due to this adjustment in schedule.

Q: How many student contact hours do we have to reach to be compliant and how many are we currently over by?

A: The state requires that students are in school for a minimum of 990 hours in elementary (900 for kindergarten) and 1,080 hours in the middle and high school. Certain unstructured times are not calculated in those hours.

Q: Is there any cost savings from one calendar to another?



A: The answer is “not really.” There may be less activity on one day but it would not account for enough savings. Cost would not be a factor in the decision.

Q: Is there any research on student academic performance in schools that are five days versus schools that are four days?

A: The Colorado Department of Education provides this information:

- “The general feeling is that students do no worse on the four-day week than on the traditional schedule. If student performance is judged by satisfaction, then the results are very favorable.

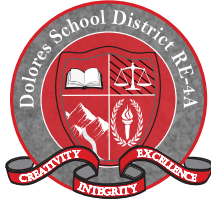
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Q: Will students who need it still have access to food services on Friday?

A: Absolutely. The details will be outlined at a later date once plans are finalized.



Q: Aren't the days much longer for four-day weeks?

A: The current and proposed times are:

Current

Elementary: 8:15 am – 3:35 pm

Secondary: 8:04 am – 3:35 pm

Proposed

Elementary: 8:00 am – 3:45 pm

1,103 Contact hours

(990 required hours for grades 1-5 and 900 for kindergarten)

Secondary: 7:40 am – 3:45 pm

1,184 Contact hours

(1080 required hours)

Q: Won't this hurt the staff that works by the hour (classified staff)?

A: The district administration will propose a comprehensive plan to the board that would keep all classified staff from any decrease in pay (and would include annual raises). The state funding would not change for the district.

Q: Can you provide some reasons for the calendar change and some possible outcomes?

A: See bulleted list below:

- Parents and teachers can schedule doctor's appointments and other weekday commitments for Fridays rather than during school hours.
- During a four-day school week, teachers use the fifth day for professional development and in service. This would help keep the calendar consistent for families.



- Lengthening the school day enables longer class periods involving more hands-on learning
- Tutoring on Fridays for students that are failing classes or missing too much school becomes a possibility
- Enrichment activities and outdoor education becomes a possibility on Fridays
- Extra-Curricular Activities moved as much as possible to Thursday, Friday, and Saturday
- Can improve academic performance when students and staff learn to work smarter
- More attractive for recruiting teachers in areas where it is consistently difficult to attract new staff
- Staff and student attendance improved
- The extra day helps with teacher workload. Teachers feel more prepared for the week and less stressed
- Flexibility to teachers schedule and class time
- Positive school climate
- Decline in discipline
- Cleaning/maintenance improves – gives another day for deep cleaning