
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: BOYD
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: NSBA: 4-DAY SCHOOL WEEK
DATE: 1/3/2003
CC: FILE

See attached *School Board News* article regarding the growing number of schools and districts stretching their budgets by going to a 4-day school week. School districts in 8 states (Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota and Wyoming) have switched to a 4-day week. Most of these districts have been small, rural districts.

The article states that the *Denver Post* reported that as many as 100 districts across the country have gone to the 4-day week, mainly to cut costs, improve attendance, allow children to work on family farms, and give teachers more time with students. Schools that have made the switch lengthen the school day or year, or both, to make up for the shorter week.

The following results have been reported:

- Merryville, LA: Test scores have increased. Teachers report less absenteeism, fewer discipline issues, increased teaching time due to block schedule, and more time for one-on-one with students. The biggest savings have been on substitute pay, utilities and hiring employees.
- Midland High School, LA: Students with failing grades are required to come on Fridays for 3 hours of remediation. Students are motivated to work harder to avoid Friday remediation.
- Lexington, OR: Saved \$250,000, but some savings on backs of cooks, bus drivers and teacher aides. Achievement level has basically been flat.
- Colorado: Many districts have been able to cut 20% from transportation.
- South Dakota: Survey results show staff, parents and secondary students are happy with the 4-day week that added 63 minutes to each school day. Staff reports that middle and high school students seem more focused. However, teachers are tired and are not as flexible as the students are with the longer day.

The Education Commission of the States warns that any downside of a 4-day week is probably countered by savings in rural areas that require a lengthy bus ride, but that 4-day weeks in urban areas raise the issue of child care. Others have stated that students in urban areas could use the day off to watch TV, play video games or roam the streets. Also, teachers in rural areas must strive to make the most of the 4-day week and to use their time efficiently.