

## **LCSD Calendar Committee Research Analysis: Presented Winter 2019**

The Lake County School District calendar committee has created a research sub-committee to examine the multitudes of research in regards to school calendars. The sub-committee focused on analyzing research surrounding the switch to four-day school weeks and extended year calendars. All research was examined, but merit was given to the most recently published studies. Studies and findings that were more than ten years old were deemed less valid due to the shifts in education that have occurred in that given time.

Research examination was completed by four members of the sub-committee and their findings have been compiled in this document for ease of reference. If you would like to view the research in its entirety, please use this link to access the folders where the research has been stored: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1EUHRkrXVbs7MBAFzpW72HVjQA8yqVeyb>

In order to make the data easily accessible and comparable, we have compiled a “pro-con” list for you to examine.

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### **❖ Four-Day School Week(traditional calendar, not extended year)**

- Pro's discovered in the research:
  - Increased teacher retention
  - Increases ease of recruitment for new teachers and gives district an advantage over other competing districts
  - Potential to save money for district (transportation, food, facility costs, etc) Granby school district experienced significant savings when they switched their district to four-day weeks.
  - Decrease in suspensions and code of conduct violations
  - CDE has found that students, parents, and teachers overwhelmingly favored the shorter week.
  - Removing one day from the standard school week and lengthening the school day showed an increase in math scores in small rural districts.
  - Potential to increase collaboration and planning time among teachers which in turn improved academic rigor and lesson preparation.
  - Some evidence in labor studies show that a four day work week enhances productivity.
  - Very little evidence has proven that a shorter school week would compromise academics. Standardized test scores show that students do “no worse” than those on the traditional five day calendar.
  - “Research suggests that improving the quality of instructional time is at least as important as increasing the quantity of time in school.” (Silva)
  - Potential increase in student attendance. Provides flexibility for parents to schedule medical appointments on the weekday that school is out.
  - Increase in teacher attendance and decrease in “Friday Flu” for teachers
  - Flexibility for high school students to attend college on weekday or to obtain a job on a weekday
  - Can allow student athletes to attend Friday games without missing out on the same classes every week.

- After the switch to four day weeks was made, the families and staff were pleased with the switch.
- There are 181 districts in Colorado. 89 have completely made the switch to four-day weeks, 12 have made a partial switch to four-day weeks.
- Con's discovered in the research:
  - Can be tough on lower-income or dual-income parents due to possible child-care costs.
  - Lower-income families often rely on public schools for almost half of their children's meals during the school week. (breakfast & lunch)
  - Effects on student achievement were not as substantial as the financial gain
  - The school day would be lengthened for some students in order to meet the hourly requirement set forth by the state
  - Can be hard on hourly employees.

#### ❖ **Extended Year Calendar (four or five day weeks)**

- Pro's discovered in the research:
  - Student contact days are the same, there are just more frequent small breaks.
  - Students from medium to high income families show slightly higher retention of learned materials with extended year calendars. This is worse for low income families.
  - Schools that show positive growth or experience with this calendar offer enrichment and remediation programs during the frequent breaks.
  - Deepened relationships between adults-children
  - Potential lower child care costs for parents
  - Some districts have seen fewer behavioral issues due to shorter breaks and classroom/school routines
  - Remediation can occur when it is most needed during the school year
  - A few meta-analyses indicate a positive relationship between a year round schedule and academic performance.
  - Of 33 studies, 27 found "significant" positive effects.
  - Parents and staff that participated in a modified calendar were quite positive about their experience.
- Con's discovered in the research:
  - In reference to many short breaks or a few longer breaks, no matter when the child is out of school, they experience the same inequality.
  - Students from low-socioeconomic levels can benefit from the extended year calendar only if the school provides intentional learning opportunities during break.
  - Von Hippel states: "...year round schools don't really solve the problem of summer learning set back, they simply spread it out across the year." Von

Hlppel found mixed results for summer set back, including hispanic and low-socioeconomic families.

- Dividing a long summer break into more frequent shorter breaks does not have a positive impact on achievement as measured through standardized test scores. (McMullen and Rouse)
- More research has been focused on the elementary level, so less is known about achievement at the secondary level
- Teacher and administrator burn-out due to extended days/hours
- May interfere with summer vacations or other family time
- Has not had a positive correlation on student attendance or grades.
- Extracurricular activities and band can suffer from problems with scheduling out of school practices and competitions.
- Studies have been inconclusive as to the extended year's academic benefits.
- Mixed results were found in the studies that investigated the interaction of year round schooling and student attendance rates, teacher absenteeism, teacher attitudes, and teacher professional development.
- "Current research suggests that improving the quality of instructional time is at least as important as increasing the quantity of time in school."  
(Silva)
- Some extended year calendars are making the switch back to traditional after many years.