

Exploring a Four Day School Week Community Forum

Tuesday, December 3, 2019

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Purpose

Engage Hallsville stakeholders regarding the exploration of the four day school week.

After reviewing survey results from students, PreK-12 families, faculty, and staff, the Four Day School Week Study Group. The goal of the study group is to:

- *Review summary data and research*
- *Review and analyze community input*
- *Identify and address local issues*
- *Explore potential calendar options*
- *Seek additional community input*
- *Report to the Board of Education on progress*

The Community Forum is one way the committee is seeking additional community input.

School Calendar

Public Comments:

- There is concern over loss of instruction hours if moving to a four-day calendar.
- What about students that do not need extra class time?
- Where would extra time be added in?
- How does this affect the state funding formula with all the hours missed if moving to a four-day schedule?
- Not much difference in childcare days needed
- Concern: No desire for the school year to be extended into June
- Potential Benefit: Shortened spring break
- IEP Students: Concern on the amount of time or changes to their schedules. How would the extra day loss affect his care and learning retention?
- Timing: Length of the school day with children sitting at a desk. Small children's attention span is lower than older children.
- Where is family time added?

Childcare:

Public Comments:

- Concern possible extra days of care needed based on four-day calendar
- What childcare options could be available?
 - HHS students
 - A+ students
 - Daycares
 - Number of kids allowed per law
 - Paras/Hourly staff
 - A+ students
 - Adventure Club: Is this a possibility?
 - University Child Development students
 - MACC
 - ARC options
 - Churches
 - Liberty Baptist for children in south part of our district
- Could the school facilities be used?
- What about unattended children?
- Ease of taking Friday off is better than taking a Monday off

Food Insecurity:

Public Comments:

- Why were families only sent an email for the survey? Some families do not have access to internet.
- How many buddy packs are really needed?
- Does the buddy pack provide the most nutritious food?
- What is the cost to feed needy children for the additional days off?
- Is this parental or school responsibility?
- Who could assist with additional food?
 - Churches
 - Prengers
 - Dollar General
 - Fundraiser for Buddy Packs
 - No Kids Hungry Organization
 - Food Pantry
 - Meals on Wheels? (Is there a branch for children?)

- Could this need be filled through a grant through the school lunch program?
- Inter-Church Council
- Could the school support the extra funds needed for the additional days?
- Take home sack lunch?
- Columbia offers free lunch to children during the summer. Is this something that can be offered in Hallsville?
- Transportation to food is an issue. With the increased money for childcare, families that are already struggling are going to have less money for food.
- Food insecurity is a concern now even with a five day week.
- What are the eligibility requirements for F&R lunch?
- Why are only K-5 families receiving food?
- How many families are unreported to receive assistance?
- Leftover buddy packs end up on school buses or sometimes taken by the family.
- Can the school hire/offer any social work/outreach counselor to help support individual family needs?
- The community can not support the long term needs of families. Community groups have seen a reduced membership on an annual basis.

Academics:

Public Comments:

- Need to track our own student data if moving to a four-day week, and if not working, go back.
- With the longer school day, what will teachers do to maintain focus?
- On Fridays of a five day week, some students do not function well on that last day.
- Some students want to go straight to work, they didn't come to learn about academics.
- Don't gamble on something that may not work.
- Getting up earlier is not good for some learning.
- Brainstorm other ideas that may work instead of a 4 day week.
- Would like to see academic data that shows a four-day week works
- What is the impact of special education students?
- Higher quality teachers could affect academics

- For some teachers, it is not how many hours, but how many times they see them.
- Why not have a consistent 5 day week?
- We have too many collaboration days, can those be consolidated?
- Data does not show that academics goes up. Why not if you get better teachers with a 4 day?
- Consistency in academics is difficult with more days missed
- Will that Monday give student more time to get into bad habits? (lazy, drugs, apathetic)
- Have the HS considered a block schedule, less switching, more time to complete homework?
- Desire to keep instructional hours as high as possible.
- Students would be rested physically and mentally
- How many students are going to work that day?
- 3 day weekend will make students forget.
- SPED & GATE: Will students still be able to get in their minutes? What would their schedule look like? What about retention of material?
- Will they get more homework?
- What about year round school?
- What other options are there?
- That Monday is a day they can relax, rest. Rest is good for academics.
- Will students be tired and lack focus with the extended day?
- Will adding a few minutes in the secondary actually benefit instructional time and make up for a loss of a day?
- How are we going to keep momentum in curriculum if we're missing 3 days of instruction in a row?
- With time away from school, kids who have no structure at home behave worse when coming back to the structure of school making it difficult for them to learn.
- How will a longer day affect learning?
- Nontraditional schedule does not prepare them for the future (college and/or career)
- A+ less days
- Will students have more homework?
- Online schooling: Why should students come to school at all?
- Homework is completed now late at night. Monday is a day that this could be completed.
- Day off is a day you're not having to "engage"
- Improve mental health
- More planning time for teachers
- Add extra time to core classes

- Core in morning, specials in the afternoon?
- Need to track data
- Improve academics through better teaching possible
- Benefit for HS students working
- How will losing a day impact band, electives, drama, language?
- Data changes based on changing curriculum. What could be used to track data?
 - Track reading levels of younger students?
- More rested with day off
- K-6 students may be more negatively impacted with less days

Recruiting and Retaining Quality Staff & Other Potential Benefits:

Public Comments:

- Need to be proactive in recruiting for open positions
- How does our base salary compare to Centralia & Harrisburg?
- How many applicants is Harrisburg seeing for open positions?
- Could we consider paying our teachers more money?
- Is increasing taxes an option?
- What happens when all the rural schools are 4-day, then our leverage to recruit & retain is gone?
- How are the surrounding schools' applicant pools?
- Perhaps publicly provide teacher names with their performance results. Make them accountable, maybe they will work harder if it's public information.
- What is Hallsville's staff turnover % over the years?
- What is Columbia's & surrounding communities' staff turnover %?
- How long do teachers stay?
- Can we do a tax levy just for salaries?
- Would OPAA employees have a decrease in income with the 4-day?
- If we went to 4-day, how would teachers that have multiple grades accommodate even fewer days to see the number of students they have? (Gate, band, etc.)

Community Outreach:

Public Comments:

- General:
 - Desire to share resources at the beginning of the school year
 - Who do I turn to if I need food? Clothing? Mental Health?
 - If we can provide better quality education with a 4 day week and provide a better education, that should be the decision-maker. The district's job is to educate, not provide childcare.
 - A consistent schedule would be a benefit

General Comments:

Public Comments:

- Has a tax levy or increase been considered to address financial support for salaries?
- What is the cost for childcare for families on the four-day calendar vs the cost of a tax increase?
- Need to plan for next year
- Need for more data
- Recruitment and retention is not just a Hallsville problem
- The problem could be fixed with having a higher salary, which is the root of this issue.
- Increased family time concerns
 - 2 working parent households
 - Single parents
 - How does this benefit them?
 - Don't claim increased family time when it really about compensating teachers
- 10 years ago this was brought up as a financial issue, is this not the case anymore?
- What are the long term effects if we move to a four day calendar?
- People outside the district get votes (teachers) but taxpayers in district don't get a voice
- Teachers that are also parents get 2 surveys, double-counted in the survey results.