

# 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 Drexel students attend?**

**A – We currently operate with a 168 day calendar and typically attend between 1060 and 1070 hours, which allows us to meet the hour requirement.**

**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 day 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 – the MAP tests and the End of Course 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 administrators 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 schools we must provide additional time for our teachers to work together to; develop 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.**

**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 1060 to 1070 range. The students would attend class for 150 days as opposed to the current 168. The school day would run from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. – an additional 44 minutes daily for Tuesday through Friday of each week.**

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

**A – I will list several: (1) consistency in the calendar – in the traditional five day calendar we currently have only 23 out of 38 weeks that are not interrupted by time off for professional development, holidays, or other scheduled breaks. In the four day calendar, 37 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 student and staff attendance rates to improve (4) because attendance rates improve, often grades and graduation rates also improve (5) there are financial savings (6) student and staff morale improve (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 work day 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 high 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 44 minutes longer per day than they do currently. While 44 minutes is not really that long a period of time we will have to be sensitive to the students 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. It is true that some will work fewer hours and, if they are paid hourly will therefore receive less pay. We have discussed this issue with our staff and they understand the situation. An additional concern is the impact on students who are currently served breakfast and lunch on Monday who will no longer receive that service. This is again a legitimate concern. Recently, some of our churches began a program called “backpack buddies”. Each Friday this program provides a backpack of food for students who are signed up. The food is nutritional, free to the students, and is intended to meet their needs throughout the weekend. This program could possibly be expanded to serve more students. And finally, it must be acknowledged that change is difficult and is not often met positively.**

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

**A – The financial benefits come from five areas. They are transportation, food services, substitute teachers, utilities, and salaries. The projected savings from these five areas adds up to \$30,000 to \$40,000 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. Teams would also conduct practices as needed on Mondays.**