



# The Four-Day School Week

## Outcomes & impacts

**Elizabeth Day & Sean Grant**

HEDCO Institute for Evidence-Based  
Educational Practice

University of Oregon

[eaday@uoregon.edu](mailto:eaday@uoregon.edu)

[spgrant@uoregon.edu](mailto:spgrant@uoregon.edu)



# About us

At the HEDCO Institute we conduct systematic reviews of education research, working alongside K-12 educators to empower them with research that works.

- Funded by the HEDCO Foundation
- Follow rigorous standards for best practices in synthesis research
- Strictly non-partisan educational approach

## No studies of schools only in Alaska

- Rural districts have been studied more rigorously than non-rural overall.
- Most areas of Alaska would be considered 'rural' by these studies.



# The 4DSW in Tribal Communities

No studies of Alaska Native communities, but one study gathered perspectives of the 4DSW from an American Indian reservation, specific to physical activity:

“Participants in our study discussed how the 4DSW lengthened each school day, decreased the duration and frequency of recess, intensified academic requirements (homework and tests), and prevented many children from participating in after school activities.”

Grant, V., Swaney, G., Harris, K. J., Burdeau, Z., & Brown, B. (2016). Assessing barriers and enhancers to increasing physical activity during the school day in children on an American Indian Reservation: a qualitative research study. *Health Behavior and Policy Review*, 3(5), 429-438.

Four studies:

1. 1999-2017 data from across the U.S.<sup>1</sup>:
  - District budgets decreased 1%-2% on average with the 4DSW adoption
2. 2004-2017 data from Oklahoma<sup>2</sup>:
  - District budgets decreased 2% on average with the 4DSW adoption
3. 2003-2020 data from Colorado<sup>3</sup>:
  - Adopting the 4DSW reduced (a) federal revenue and (b) support service, food service, and transportation expenditures
4. 2006-2023 data from Montana<sup>4</sup>:
  - Total difference in instruction, maintenance, transportation, and food services was an increase of 1.5% above average inflation rate (8% increase in total budget)

Authors of all these studies caution that potential consequences for student outcomes may outweigh cost savings.

**Overall: No evidence of large positive effects for student outcomes.**

Academic achievement	Math and reading test scores, proficiency, and gains
Academic attainment	Graduation rates, dropout rates, and on-time progression
Attendance	Average daily attendance, fraction of students absent, chronic absenteeism
Criminal activity	Frequency of crime at school, crime not at school, property crime, violent crime, and drug violations
Disciplinary incidents	Days missed for discipline, and frequency of substance use, vandalism, bullying, fighting, weapons, truancy, and school bus disciplinary instances

**Our study did not include financial outcomes.**

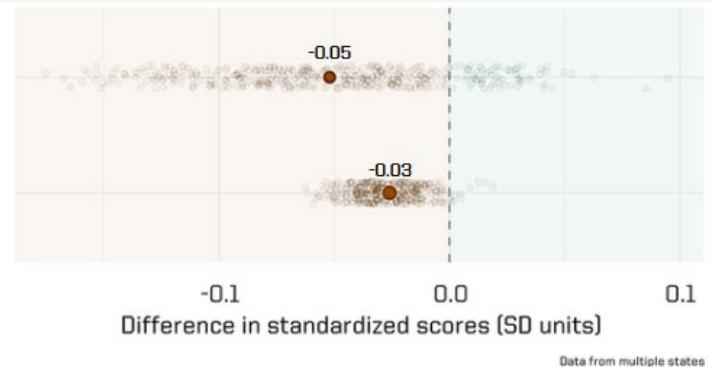
# Rural K-8 Schools

- Data from multiple states
  - **Decreased** achievement
- Data from Colorado
  - **Increased** proficiency

Mathematics Achievement

Morton 2021

Thompson 2022a

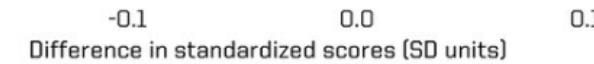


Reading Achievement

Morton 2024a  
(Reading gains)  
Morton 2021

Thompson 2021

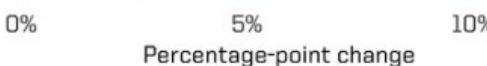
Thompson 2022a



Proficiency

Grade 5  
mathematics

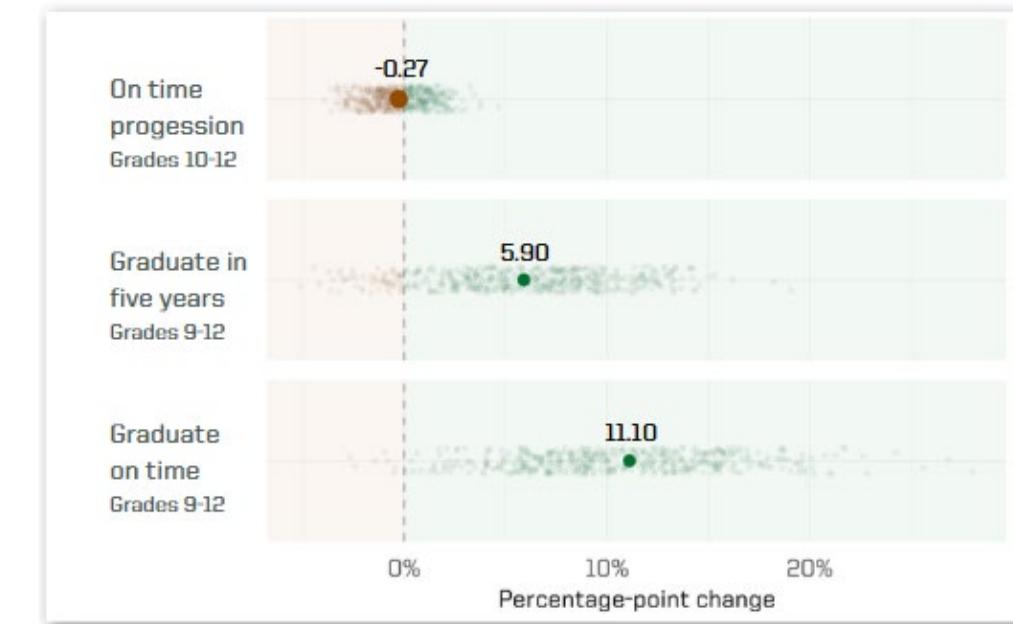
Grade 4  
reading



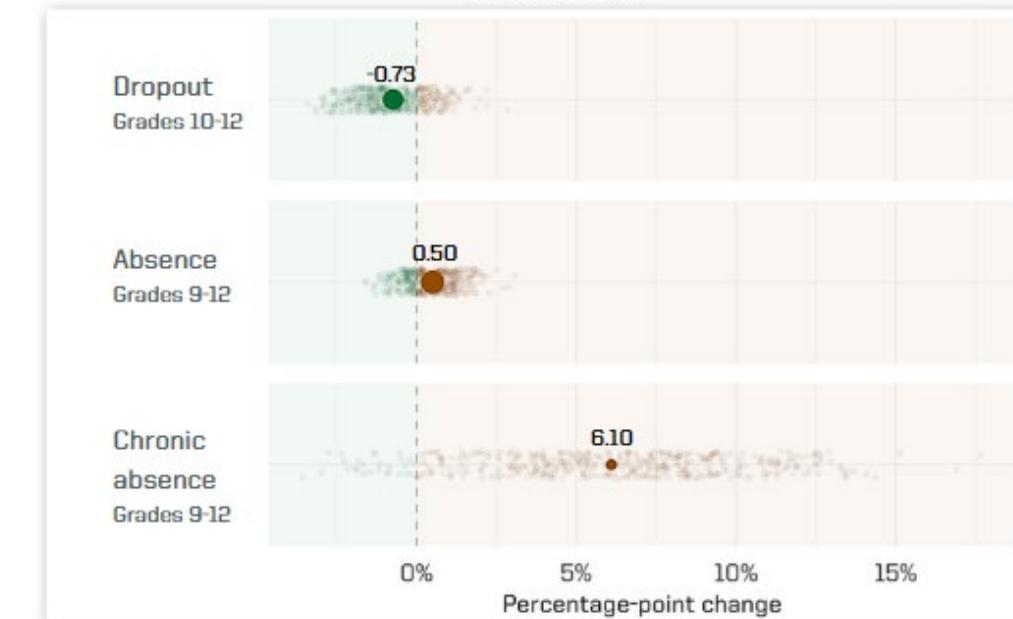
# Rural High Schools

- Data from Oregon & Colorado
  - **Increased** math scores and little-to-no change in ELA
  - **Increased** graduation rates
  - **Decreased** drop-out rates
  - **Increased** absences and chronic absences
  - **Decreased** on-time progression
  - **Increased** criminal activity:
    - Overall crime rate, property crime rate, any crime not at school

Academic Attainment



Attendance



**Loss of learning time risks a loss of learning.**

Question to ask: How does a schedule switch impact overall instructional time?

**Maintaining activities that foster healthy youth development on the fifth day is important for minimizing other negative impacts.**

Question to ask: What's available at school, in the community, and at home for students on the fifth day?

# Other HEDCO 4DSW Resources

- For the full report: <https://hedcoinstitute.uoregon.edu/reports/four-day-school-week>
- For a real-time interactive database of 4DSW research studies:  
<https://hedcoinstitute.uoregon.edu/dashboards/four-day-school-week-research-database>
- Last updated December 2025

Four-Day School Week Research Database

Step 1 - If you'd like to look at studies in a specific state, select that state below:

Tip: You can only select one state at a time. Once a state is selected, click it again to de-select it. There is no data available for states that are not shown in green.



Step 2 - Select any additional filters:

Tip: Filters will show all studies that include, but are not limited to, your selected filter(s).

Community Type (Rurality):

School Type:

Student Race/Ethnicity:

Grade:

Fifth Day Activity:

Outcome Domain Studied:

# Thank you!



Elizabeth Day  
[eaday@uoregon.edu](mailto:eaday@uoregon.edu)



Sean Grant  
[spgrant@uoregon.edu](mailto:spgrant@uoregon.edu)

1. Thompson, P. N. (2021). Does a day lost equal dollars saved? The effects of four-day school weeks on school district expenditures. *National Tax Journal*, 74(1), 147-183.
2. Morton, E. (2021). Effects of four-day school weeks on school finance and achievement: Evidence from Oklahoma. *Educational Researcher*, 50(1), 30-40.
3. Bowser, K. M. (2025). The Four Day Gamble: The Quasi-Experimental Effects of Four-Day School Week Adoption on Teacher, Principal, and Paraprofessional Staff Turnover and District Financial Outcomes. EdWorkingPaper No. 25-1208. *Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University*. <https://edworkingpapers.com/ai25-1208>
4. Allen, E., Matt, J., McCaw, B., Tang, L., & Dean, D. L. (2024). The four-day school week in Montana: A comprehensive study, 2008-2023. *The Department of Educational Leadership, College of Education, University of Montana*. <https://www.umt.edu/education/departments/edlead/4dschoolweek-report.pdf>