

# Is a 4DSW beneficial for students?

## It depends, but probably not.



Our systematic review identified all empirical studies on the four-day school week (4DSW) in the U.S. that provided **reliable causal evidence** on student outcomes.

When considering findings from the 11 highest-quality studies, there was **no evidence of large positive effects** of the 4DSW on student outcomes.

Rural districts have been studied more rigorously than non-rural overall.

Most areas of Alaska would be considered 'rural' by these studies



Increases in math scores, as well as on-time and 5-year graduation rates for high school students



Decreases in math and reading achievement for K-8 students  
Decreases in on-time progression and increased chronic absences for high school students

For non-rural (suburbs, cities, towns):

Little effect on K-8 achievement.  
Decreases math scores, decreases on-time and 5-year graduation rates, and increases absences for high school students

For studies combining rural and non-rural:

Decreases math and reading achievement, increases absences and chronic absences, and decreases 5-year graduation rates across grades K-12

Our review can't yet answer questions about the impact of the 4DSW on teacher or budgetary outcomes, but other studies have suggested:

- Both savings and added expenses, with two studies showing average savings of 1%-2% total budget, and another showing an increase of 1.5%
- Reduction in federal revenue the first years following 4DSW adoption
- Reductions in support service, food service, and transportation expenditures

View the findings from the [full report](#) and explore all studies on the four-day school week using [our interactive database](#), last updated May of 2025.



Based on our review of the literature and consultation with decision-makers, **two key questions are crucial to consider:**

**1**

## How does a schedule switch impact overall instructional time?

Will formal calendar hours change? How much of an actual change will this be for students: are students already missing a fifth day of instruction frequently enough - due to things such as sports - that their instructional time is close to a four-day week already?

Maintaining instructional hours is important for minimizing negative impacts on student achievement.

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

**2**

## What's available at school, in the community, and at home for students on the fifth day?

A collaborative decision-making process involving schools, families, and community organizations should ensure every student has age-appropriate activities available. These might include:

### SCHOOL

remedial instruction, co-curricular activities, or sports

### COMMUNITY

youth programs, childcare, or work-based learning

### HOME

adult supervision, homework time, or other home responsibilities

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

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