

School Board Meeting Agenda Item

Topic: Four (4) Day School Week
Presenter(s): Bob Jaszczak, Superintendent

Nature of Action Requested

Board Action
Board Information X

Background Information

In Minnesota, some school districts are exploring and implementing four-day school weeks, with the goal of potentially saving money, improving teacher recruitment and retention, and boosting student attendance.

- **Districts Adopting Four-Day Weeks:**
Roughly a half-dozen districts have switched to four-day weeks, with Carlton being the only district to make the move in 2024-25. Other districts that have implemented this schedule include Atwater Cosmos Grove City, Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa, Blackduck, Lake Superior, MacCray, and Ogilvie.
- **Reasons for the Shift:**
Some districts are considering or have implemented four-day weeks due to budget deficits, declining enrollment, and challenges in hiring teachers.
- **Potential Benefits:**
Proponents of the four-day week argue that it can lead to cost savings, make it easier to recruit and retain teachers, and potentially improve student attendance.
- **Potential Challenges:**
Concerns about childcare for working parents and potential negative impacts on student academic performance are also raised.
- **Minnesota Legislature:**
A bill was discussed in the Minnesota House Education Policy Committee that would allow school boards to implement a four-day school week without getting approval from the state's Department of Education (MDE) Commissioner.
- **Current Status:**
In 2024, 7 districts in Minnesota operate on a four-day week.
- **Carlton Public Schools:**
Carlton Public Schools, near Cloquet, adopted a four-day school week for the 2024-25 school year.

- **Instructional Time:**
Students on a four-day schedule still need to spend the same minimum number of hours in class as students on a five-day schedule.
- **Teacher Retention:**
Some school districts have found that a four-day week can help with teacher recruitment and retention.