



Memorandum to the Board of Education

Meeting in Public

FROM: Peter Dubinsky, Superintendent
DATE: January 15, 2024
SUBJECT: 4-Day School Week Financial Impacts

For Information

Introduction

The Board is currently evaluating the possibility of a 4-Day School Week for all schools in the district and asked staff for an analysis of the financial impacts associated with the proposed change in schedule. This analysis aims to address the key financial considerations that should be taken into account before making any decisions regarding the restructuring of the current school schedule.

Switching to a 4-Day school week will result in various categories of cost savings. However, it is important to note that any changes to instruction or administrative expenses, which represent over 80% of the district's budget, are expected to be negligible. This includes the cost of teachers, educational assistants, and administration. Special purpose fund spending would also be expected to be unchanged, which represents a further 10% of the district's budget. For those categories of expenses where cost savings are expected, it is important to note that there is a complex interplay of financial considerations and uncertainty in estimates, so each category of potential cost savings is provided as a range of possibilities.

Building Operations and Maintenance

Building operations and maintenance is the area of expenses where cost savings are expected to be the highest. There would be adjustments in custodial services, as custodians and custodial supplies would not be required on the day when schools are closed, resulting in a proportional decrease in costs reflecting the reduced number of operating days. Some reduced wear and tear on facilities could also be expected, leading to potential savings in maintenance and repairs. Cost savings are estimated to be between \$73,000 and \$84,000.

Transportation Expenses

Transportation is the second area of expenses where cost savings would be substantial. There would be reduced fuel consumption and maintenance costs for school buses as they operate one day less per week. There would also be a reduction in bus drivers' hours. However, the reduction in costs is not proportionally lower in reflection of the reduced number of school days, given that there are fixed costs in owning and maintaining the buses, and usage of buses from field trips is expected to be unchanged.



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Transportation expenses in 2022-2023 were approximately \$490,000. A 12% to 15% decrease in transportation costs would be \$60,000 to \$74,000.

Note: there would be no expected reduction in bus capital costs or amortization expenses, given that the average cost of owning buses per km would be unchanged.

Utilities

Decreased energy usage in schools due to reduced demand for heating and cooling from the reduced occupancy on the fifth day could result in a reduction in electricity costs. There would be a negligible impact on lighting costs and waste disposal. Utilities expenses for 2022-2023 were \$231,000. Cost savings between 4% and 8% would be expected, bringing estimated cost savings of between \$9,000 and \$19,000.

Administrative Costs

Streamlined administrative costs associated with a shorter school week are expected to bring cost savings estimated to be between \$18,000 and \$25,000.

Employee Replacement Costs

The other school districts in BC operating with a 4-Day week report reduced absenteeism among staff and students. However, there is a lack of specific data on the impacts of the 4-Day school week given the various causes of absenteeism, including the availability of medical, dental, and other health services in each school community, and recently, the impacts of COVID-19. Therefore, it is difficult to quantify the direct impact on replacement costs. However, we can provide an example.

Employee expenses in 2022-2023 were \$392,000. A reduction in absenteeism of 2% to 6%, there would be cost savings of between \$10,000 and \$30,000.

Educational Programs, Extracurricular Activities, Materials and Supplies

Educational programs are expected to be unchanged and any potential savings on materials and supplies, such as classroom resources and consumables, would be negligible. There would also be no expected decrease in the frequency or cost of extracurricular activities.

Professional Development

Professional development schedules would be adjusted to align with days when school is not in session. There is no expected impact on professional development costs.



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Other Expenses

There may be other areas of cost savings or cost increases not identified herein, including changes stemming from unforeseen changes in instruction and operations driven by the move to a 4-Day school week. These areas might include efficiencies in instruction or district administration or childcare provision expenses on the days when school is not in session.

Conclusion

In summary, a switch to a 4-Day week is estimated to yield the following cost savings:

Building Operations and Maintenance: \$73,000 and \$84,000.

Transportation: 60,000 to \$74,000.

Utilities: \$9,000 and \$19,000.

Administrative Expenses: \$18,000 and \$25,000.

Employee Replacement Expenses: \$10,000 and \$30,000.

TOTAL \$170,000 to \$232,000

These savings would represent roughly 1.5% and 2.0% of the district's budget.

Though not insubstantial or negligible, the potential cost savings should be considered in conjunction with other information it has received regarding the possibility of a 4-Day school week.