



Memorandum to the Board of Education

Meeting in Public

FROM: Peter Dubinsky, Superintendent
DATE: January 12, 2024
SUBJECT: 4-Day School Week Update

For Information

Introduction

The Board is currently evaluating the possibility of a 4-Day School Week for all schools in the district. The Board asked staff to investigate SD51 and SD64, the two districts in the province currently operating with a 4-day school week. Below is information on each district:

School District 64 (Gulf Islands)

- 4-day school week adopted in 2002.
- The rationale for moving to a 4-day school week was financially motivated based on the high transportation costs of the water taxi service and the need to find savings in the operating budget.
- Four communities feed into one secondary school, and transportation of water taxis and buses created long commutes for students with frequent cancellations of water taxi service due to weather.
- Two schools in the district were closed due to low enrollment, which also factored into the decision.
- Elementary schools have a different start time (8:20 – 3:10) than secondary schools (9:05 – 4:05) in the 4-day schedule.
- The 4-day school week allows for more time in class with fewer transition challenges.
- Schools are normally not open for any programming on Fridays.
- The district added some Fridays throughout the year for instruction to ensure that the minimum instructional hours were met; however, those days are poorly attended.
- At the secondary level, if students miss school due to illness/absence, catching up in a 4-day structure is more challenging.
- There has been a steady increase in their graduation rates and overall student achievement results over the past years.



Memorandum to the Board of Education

Meeting in Public

SD51 Boundary

- 4-day week adopted in 2002.
- The rationale for moving to a 4-day week was financially motivated based on declining enrollment and a need to create savings in the operating budget.
- Elementary schools have a different start time (8:28 – 3:15) than secondary schools (8:17 – 3:30).
- Elementary and secondary students use the same bus.
- A late bus is added on Tuesdays and Thursdays to accommodate after-school programs and sports teams for elementary and secondary students.
- The earliest bus pick-up is at 6:55 am, with the latest drop-off at 4:55 pm.
- The extended school day allows more time for teachers to focus on content with fewer transitions and interruptions.
- At the secondary level, if students miss school due to illness/absence, catching up in a 4-day structure is more challenging.
- The 4-day week has reduced absenteeism and savings in replacement costs.
- Schools do not provide any programming on Fridays.
- It was reported that childcare is needed on Fridays, and the district does not offer childcare programs.

Conclusion

The Board should consider this information in conjunction with other information it has received regarding the possibility of a 4-day school week for all schools in the District, and determine the next steps in the process.