

The student's name was blacked out for online publication.

Stephen Womack

English 1, Honors- First Period

1 March 2006

### One Less Day Keeps Bad Things Away

Currently, students and teachers go to school five days a week. This gives them about 45 minutes to an hour's worth of learning per class a day, 5 days in a row of learning, and 2 days to relax and prepare. This system seems to be working fine, but most sensible people aim for the best things in life. There is a way in which school systems can have the same number of school days, but give kids a longer relaxation and preparation time. By making each class only about 20 minutes longer every day, schools can take off an extra day of the week. A four-day school week is more effective than a 5-day school week, because it saves money, gives students and teachers more time for preparation and relaxation, and creates better students.

On the subject of money, there is no arguing with how much money schools have on the off day. If there are little or no people present on the off day, then the janitorial staff has nothing to clean. The teachers don't have to teach on the off day either. A Louisiana school district speculated that they would save \$114,000 a year on utilities and staff salary, if they adopted the four-day schedule (Peters Online).

Schools on a four-day calendar also save on energy costs. Many schools on the four-day week completely shut down their schools on the off day. In one school system, their electrical consumption was reduced by 23%, and their heating fuel consumption was reduced by 7-25%. (Gardener Online).

MLA Style no longer requires online sources to be labeled as online in parenthetical citations

The 2002 World Book Encyclopedia states, “In many communities, financing schools is the largest public expense.” (Nelson) Because of the four-day school week, not only do schools on the schedule save money, but the communities surrounding them save tax money as well.

Even more can be saved on gas money for the schools’ public transportation, the buses. Custer County in South Dakota saves \$70,000 a year, mostly in transportation costs, because of the four-day week (Delisio Online). With all the money saved, schools can use their boosted budget to enhance their sports, facilities, and academics. Money is not the only favorable factor, however.

A very common thing among teachers and students alike is called burnout. This is the period of time near the end of the week where students and teachers don’t want to learn/teach any longer. With the added off day, students have more time to relax. They can blow off their stress, hang out with friends, or schedule any necessary appointments that normally might require missing school. They could take mini-vacations with their families, which brings them closer and lets them relax. (de Steiguer Online) Most importantly however, they can take this extra time to study for their classes. This will benefit them greatly.

The teachers also get a great benefit, because they have an extra day of planning. According to studies, teachers reported less burnout and more preparation time due to the extra day off (Madewell Online). Tracy Harmon, a math teacher at Franklin High School said, “I would love a four-day school week. I would feel so much more prepared for class every day.” (Harmon Interview) Evan O’Lannerghy, a student at Battle Ground Academy, also had input on the extra day off. “It gives a kid a chance to loosen up more than a two day weekend and gives them more time to do homework. It also gives the teachers more time to relax and get the noisy

kids off their minds.” (O’Lannerghty Interview) With extra teacher preparation and student study time, better teachers and students are inevitable.

There is an obvious correlation between the four-day school week and student performance. The Custer County school district saw gains in annual achievement scores after switching to the four-day week (Reid Online). It is shown in studies that increased blocks of learning time improve academic performance. (“The 4-day Week” Online)

Not only do students perform better, but it has also been shown that there are fewer absentees on a four-day schedule. Custer County saw a 31% decrease in student absenteeism. (“The 4-day Week” Online) A school district in Saratoga, Arkansas even saw a decrease in teacher absenteeism. (Guignon Online) The four-day week also creates more disciplined students. Midland High School makes failing students come to school on Friday, their off day. Suspended kids also come and work on Friday. (Chmelynski Online)

The goal for high school completion among 18-24 year olds was 90% in the year 2000. (Quiran 69) The four-day week helps accomplish the goals of school completion, because there are fewer dropouts. Many schools have found that the student disciplinary referrals decreased, and more importantly dropout rates decreased. (Fager Online) All these elements combined make terrific students in the end.

Many people think that parents who work outside the home might find it hard to find childcare on the off day. (Vitaska Online) There are very simple solutions to this “problem.” A four-day school district in Arizona worked with the YMCA to provide \$25 childcare on the off day. (Shelton Online) Parents could also take advantage of the middle and high school students on the off day by employing them as babysitters. This keeps children safe while teaching the teenage babysitters responsibility.

Given all these beneficial reasons, the four-day calendar can and will change schools across America. There is so much that can be done with increased budgets, better teachers and great students. All these things come from the four-day system, so there is every reason in the world to switch to it. Public schools have the potential to create magnificent things, and there is only one question to ask. How soon will they switch to the four-day calendar?

## Works Cited

Barbara, Davis G. "Preparing to Teach the Large Lecture Course." Tools For Teaching.

31 Jan. 2006. University of California, Berkeley. 8 Mar. 2006

<<http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/largelecture.html>>.

"Blue Mango Learning System." 8 Mar. 2006. Blue Mango Learning System. 8 Mar.

2006 <<http://blog.mangomultimedmedia.com/2005/08/index.html>>.

Personal interview. 23 Feb. 2006.

Chmelynski, Carol. "Small schools save money by switching to a four-day

week." National School Boards Association. 2 Oct. 2002. 22 Feb. 2006

<[http://nsba.org/site/doc\\_sbn.asp?TRACKID=&VID=58&CID=313&DI](http://nsba.org/site/doc_sbn.asp?TRACKID=&VID=58&CID=313&DI)

Delisio, Ellen R. "Could Four-Day Weeks Work for You?" Education World. 3

Sept. 2002. 26 Feb. 2006

<[http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_admin/admin/admin279.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin279.shtml)>.

De Steiguer, John. "REVISITING THE FOUR DAY SCHOOL WEEK." 24 Feb.

2003. 26 Feb. 2006

<[http://www.azalea.net/osac/Council\\_info/Newsletters/nl\\_sept2002.html](http://www.azalea.net/osac/Council_info/Newsletters/nl_sept2002.html)>.

Fager, Jennifer. "Scheduling Alternatives: Options for Student Success."

Feb. 1997. NW Regional Educational Laboratory. 26 Feb. 2006

<<http://www.nwrel.org/request/feb97/schedalts.html>>.

"The Four-Day Week." 30 Dec. 2005. Hot Springs School District. 26

Feb. 2006 <<http://www.hssd.k12.sd.us/4day.htm#background>>.

Gardener, Clark. "Energy Conservation in Small Schools." ERIC

- Digests. 5 Oct. 2005. 22 Feb. 2006 <<http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-922/energy.htm>>.D=8209>LUMNISTS02/509270420/1006/NEWS01>
- Guignon, Anne. "4-day School Week." *Education World*. 18 May 2000. 22 Feb. 2006 <[http://www.education-world.com/a\\_issues/issues038.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_issues/issues038.shtml)>.
- Harmon, Tracy. Personal Interview. 2 March 2006
- Holladay, Ruth. "With 4-day school week, districts may save on fuel." The Indianapolis Star 27 Sept. 2005. 22 Feb. 2006 <<http://www.indystar.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050927>>.
- Madewell, Mary. "Shorter Week Cuts Expenses." The Paris News 17 Oct. 2005. 27 Feb. 2006 <<http://theparisnews.com/story.lasso?wcd=23137>>.
- Jacquelyn F. Quiran et al. Education: Reflecting Our Society? Spring ed. Wiley, TX: Information Plus, 1998. 69.
- Nelson, Jack L. "Schools." *World Book*. 2002. CD-ROM.
- O'Lannerghty, Evan C. Personal interview. 26 Feb. 2006.
- Peters, Emily. "Teacher jobs, salaries on chopping block." *The Town Talk* 6 May 2005. 26 Feb. 2006 <<http://thetowntalk.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050506/NEWS01/505060321/1002>>.
- Quiran, Jaquelyn F. Education: Reflection Our Society? Spring ed. Wiley, Texas: Information Plus, 1998. 69.
- "Reasons Why the Four-day School Week is Not a Good Idea." *Keep Five Alive*. 8 Mar. 2006. 8 Mar. 2006 <[www.keepfivealive.ca/downloads/reasons\\_why.pdf](http://www.keepfivealive.ca/downloads/reasons_why.pdf)>
- Reid, T.R. "Seven States Adopt Four-Day School Week." *The*

Washington Post 26 Dec. 2002. 26 Feb. 2006 <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A37906-2002Dec25?language=printer>>.

"School District #51 Boundaries." 8 Mar. 2006. 8 Mar. 2006

<[www.bcssa.org/topics/4dayweek/FourDayWeek.03.03.03.pdf](http://www.bcssa.org/topics/4dayweek/FourDayWeek.03.03.03.pdf)>.

Shelton, Shelley. "Pinal County: 4-day week for schools?" The Arizona Daily Star 16

Feb. 2006. 8 Mar. 2006 <<http://www.azstarnet.com/sn/education/117104>>.

Vitaska, Sara. "Four Day School Week." National Conference of State Legislatures. 11

Mar. 2005. National Conference of State Legislatures. 7 Mar. 2006

<<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/educ/4DaySchWeek.htm>>.

Wesloski, Kevin. "Alternate School Year Organizations." 12 Apr. 2004. The

Saskatchewan Educational Leadership Unit. 8 Mar. 2006

<[http://www.ssta.sk.ca/research/school\\_improvement/99-08.htm](http://www.ssta.sk.ca/research/school_improvement/99-08.htm)>.