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Thank you for your request to our REL Reference Desk for **research on the four-day school week**. **Ask REL Southwest** is part of a collaborative Ask A REL reference desk service provided by the 10 regional educational laboratories (RELs). By design, this service functions much in the same way as a technical reference library, by providing references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations for research-based education questions.

**Please note that REL Southwest has not done an evaluation of the resources themselves but offers this list to you for your information only.**

## BACKGROUND

Requests for research on a 4-day school week were previously submitted to and fulfilled by multiple RELs in other regions. The response prepared by REL West has been forwarded to the requestor. Following an established REL Southwest protocol, we have provided an update to the response previously forwarded for this request. The sources included educational databases, and general Internet searches. See the methods section at the end of this Ask A REL for additional information on how the following sources were identified.

## QUESTION

### What does research reveal about the four-day school week?

Anderson, D. M., & Walker, M. B. (2015). Does shortening the school week impact student performance? Evidence from the four-day school week . *Education Finance and Policy*, 10(3), 314–349. Retrieved from. Retrieved on June 13, 2016, from [http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/abs/10.1162/EDFP\\_a\\_00165?journalCode=edfp&#.Vhaepist0sL](http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/abs/10.1162/EDFP_a_00165?journalCode=edfp&#.Vhaepist0sL)

*From the abstract:* “This study uses school-level data from Colorado to investigate the relationship between the four-day week and academic performance among elementary school students. The results generally indicate a statistically significant impact on math scores for fifth-grade students, while reading scores were not affected. These findings suggest there is little evidence that moving to a four-day week compromises student academic achievement.”

Hill, P. T., & Heyward, G. (2015). The four-day school week in rural Idaho schools. Retrieved from Rural Opportunities Consortium of Idaho website: <http://www.rociidaho.org/the-four-day-school-week-in-rural-idaho-schools/>.

This paper is based on interviews with over 20 Idaho district leaders implementing the four-day school week calendar. The findings indicate that none of the districts have

seen any substantive cost-savings. Nor have these districts rigorously assessed the effects of the four-day week on student achievement. Just one had set out criteria for reviewing its impact and returning to a five-day week if necessary. This means that the educational consequences of the four-day week, at present, are virtually unknown, though Hill and Heyward note that their interviews and research suggest positive outcomes for families and communities. However, they recommend that districts take a more measured approach to this transition, with a greater emphasis on assessment and pull-out strategies as well as greater support and guidance from the state.

Tharp, T. W., Matt, J., O'Reilly and Frances L. (2016). Is the Four-Day School Week Detrimental to Student Success? *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 4(3), 126-132.

School districts across the United States are implementing four-day school weeks. This study looks at the relationship between student achievement in the four-day school week compared to student achievement in the five-day school week. This analysis focused on a common criteria referenced test given to all students over a period of seven years in a single western state. The study provided conclusive evidence that students in the four-day week did not performed as well, over time, when compared to students in the traditional five-day week settings.

### **ADDITIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCES TO CONSULT**

We also searched for appropriate organizations and resources that may be useful. We have not done an evaluation of these organizations or the resources themselves but offer this list for reference only.

Farbman, D. (2011). Learning time in America: Trends to reform the American school calendar. Boston, MA: *National Center on Time and Learning and the Education Commission of the States*. <http://www.timeandlearning.org/?q=learning-time-america>.

The National Center on Time & Learning (NCTL), an organization dedicated to redesigning and expanding school time to improve opportunities and outcomes for high - poverty students, and the Education Commission of the States (ECS), with a mission to foster both the exchange of ideas on education issues among the states and long - range strategic thinking, have joined forces to produce this review. Our goal is to help education leaders to better understand the complexities of time - related policy and its far - reaching educational implications.

In exploring how policymakers and educators have dealt with the matter of school time at the federal, state, and local levels, NCTL and ECS hope to accelerate the national conversation on how we can best leverage the power of time to realize the vision of a high - quality education for all. We also offer a number of recommendations highlighting fresh ways that policy and research can best support efforts to expand learning time in schools.

2013 and 2015 updates to the original 2011 document are available at:

- <http://www.timeandlearning.org/publications/lta>.
- [http://www.timeandlearning.org/sites/default/files/resources/learningtimeinamerica\\_2015\\_0.pdf](http://www.timeandlearning.org/sites/default/files/resources/learningtimeinamerica_2015_0.pdf)
- <http://www.timeandlearning.org/sites/default/files/resources/lta2013update.pdf>

Education Northwest website: <http://educationnorthwest.org/eb/4day-school-week>.

- Webpage provides information and further readings on the 4-day school week.

Despite slim savings, more Colorado districts opt for 4-day week

[http://www.denverpost.com/ci\\_21669058/despote-slim-savings-more-colorado-districts-opt-4](http://www.denverpost.com/ci_21669058/despote-slim-savings-more-colorado-districts-opt-4).

- This article on 4-day school week also includes references to one report from the Colorado Department of Education and one national report.

## METHODS

### Keywords and Search Strings Used in the Searches

Four-day school week

### Search of Databases and Websites

- Institute of Education Sciences (IES) website (<http://www.ies.ed.gov>) and IES sources: Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Program, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), National Center for Education Research (NCER), What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)
- ERIC database ([www.eric.ed.gov](http://www.eric.ed.gov))
- Google Scholar ([scholar.google.com](http://scholar.google.com))
- Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com))
- Bing ([www.bing.com](http://www.bing.com))

### Criteria for Inclusion

NOTE: We have included sources from a REL Northwest response retrieved from the “REL Intranet”.

REL Southwest selected resources that provide research on effective assessments to use with Pre-K students to determine kindergarten readiness. When REL Southwest staff reviewed resources, we considered – among other things – three factors:

1. Date of Publication: The most current information (primarily published from 2011 to the present) is included.

2. Source and Funder of the Report/Brief/Article: Priority was given to publications written in relevant, peer-reviewed journals or reports or produced by well-known research organizations.
3. Methodology: sources include reported studies, literature reviews and policy reports.

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