



#ourWHY

China Spring ISD

2023-2024 SCHOOL CALENDAR PRESENTATION

Current Challenges in Public Education

- Teacher Shortage
 - Nationwide but more importantly in Texas
 - Most Importantly in China Spring ISD
 - We have had 9 classroom teachers and 7 support staff this year get out of education during the school year. (Many filled with subs for an extended time and non-certified or retired teachers)
- Attendance Concerns
 - Student attendance has declined by almost 2% since pre-covid. District funding decreased by \$300,000 due to lower attendance.
- Substitute Teacher Shortage
 - Due to flexible work schedules in the workforce many have chosen to seek employment elsewhere
 - When no subs are available, teachers spend their conference and planning time teaching absent teachers' classes. (causes burnout in staff which leads to seeking other employment)
- Mental Health
 - Student Mental Health has declined over the last 5 years and we have seen a huge increase in attempting self harm, threatening self harm, depression, stressed out, etc.
 - Staff Mental Health has declined, as well, due to the stress of the job, love for their students, and a mountain of requirements required by TEA.
- School Funding
 - Increase in supply costs, utilities' costs, etc. with no new money coming into the district since 2019.



A Possible Solution could be a 4-Day Calendar

- **Our Process**

- Administrative team meetings to discuss challenges/solutions
- Meetings with other districts in Texas and in Central Texas to discuss challenges/solutions
- Meetings with all of our campuses (teachers, aides, administrators) to look for solutions
- Community Meetings to look at solutions
- Surveys to stakeholders (Late February)

- **Growing Trend**

- Across the country and in Texas the 4 day-week school calendar is rapidly growing
- Started as a rural/small school incentive
- Grown to schools our size and larger than us such as Mineral Wells, Athens, Graham, Rockdale, Mt. Vernon, LaVernia, Academy, Whitney, and even Killeen ISD had it on the board agenda for January.
- Every campus we met with brought this up as a possible solution.
- It is coming very quickly to Central Texas and if it is right for CS it only benefits us to be one of the first to adopt a 4 day calendar. It will give us the advantage on teacher recruitment.

- **Benefits to a 4-day Calendar**

- High Quality Staff Retention and Recruitment
- Improved Student and Staff Attendance
- Student and Staff Mental Health and Morale
- Increased Teacher Planning and Training Opportunities
- Maintenance and Housekeeping Opportunities and Productivity
- Operational Cost Reduction
- Allow older students and moonlighting staff opportunities to work on Fridays



Staff Retention and Recruitment

Turnover Rates

| | Athens ISD | Jasper ISD | China Spring ISD | State |
|-----------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| 2018-2019 | 32.4% | 21% | 15.2% | 16.5% |
| 2021-2022 | 20.7% | 19.3% | 19.9% | 17.7% |

Recruitment

- Athens ISD had a 23% increase in the applicant pool when they switched to a 4-day instructional calendar and 53% of their hires had 6 or more years of experience.
- Mineral Wells ISD doubled/tripled applicant numbers



Improved Attendance

- **Students**

- Student attendance pre-covid was 96.6%. Today it is 95.09%. If the 4-day week improves student attendance just to pre-covid rates it will increase funding by a little over \$300,000. It also increase student achievement and success. If kids are not here, we cannot teach them.
- Mineral Wells had a 3% increase in student attendance from August to November this year already.
- When students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic performance.

- **Staff**

- Substitute Shortage - One district we met with reduced their sub needs due to teachers having the Friday to attend appointments, etc. They saved \$12,000 from August to November in subs.
- If we improve staff attendance, we also increase student learning. Substitutes are wonderful when we need them but are not as effective as classroom teachers.



Student and Staff Mental Health

- With seat time in class, homework, studying and extra-curricular activities, the average student will spend 50-60+ hours a week at school or on school related activities.
- After surveying teachers, 60% of our teachers spend up to, and in many cases more than, 10 hours a week outside of the official school day on grading, lesson design and prep. Staff sponsors and coaches of extracurricular activities spend even more time on school related activities when meeting the academic and extra-curricular needs of the students.
- As each school year begins, adequate time for teachers to participate in planning meetings and ongoing training opportunities is scarce. A 4-day calendar will provide adequate time for teachers to plan for meaningful instruction and to be fully prepared to meet the individual needs of their students.
 - This would be especially beneficial for teachers new to the profession who require additional training and support.
- A 4-day calendar will provide increased time for students and staff to schedule needed appointments, travel for weekend activities and family time. The health and wellness of our students and staff must be a priority.



Teacher Planning and Training Opportunities

- Fridays that staff work will be used for trainings, planning with grade levels and subject levels, vertical alignment, creating student centered learning opportunities, etc.
- Providing teachers with more time to prepare will have a huge impact on teaching and learning as far as the quality of instruction.
- Each year, educators are required to complete a certain amount of training. Often, teachers have to request a substitute to cover them while they are away for training sessions. With a four-day school week, teachers could attend training without any concern on missing in-class time with their students.
- Teachers will be able to work with teachers they otherwise would not be able to due to scheduling conflicts. This will lead to better alignment both within the subject area and the grade level, as well as among other subject areas and grade levels. By aligning curriculum both vertically and horizontally students will be better prepared and better able to apply learning in a variety of applications.
- Recent surveys of teachers who work a four day week report that they are better prepared for classroom instruction and have more time to spend with their family.



Student Benefits

- There are more opportunities to engage in other activities, such as volunteer activities, private lessons, employment, family time, and performing household chores.
- Students on a 4-day calendar have more time for rest and downtime which could improve their health and school performance.
- Students and teachers involved in extracurricular activities on Fridays will not miss class while leaving early.
- Late student activities on Thursdays will not impact student performance on Fridays.
- Most importantly - Students are being taught engaging, well prepared lessons by HQ Teachers where learning can be maximized.



Student Academic Achievement

- There are multiple studies with mixed results.
- There should be a robust monitoring system.
- China Spring ISD has always monitored student academic performance closely and will continue to do so no matter what calendar is chosen.
- We researched 35 school districts in Texas using a 4-day calendar: only 1 lowered their rating while 4 raised their rating and 30 remained the same during a 3-year period.



Maintenance and Custodial Productivity

- Being able to deep clean on Fridays will provide us a healthier and cleaner campus which will cut down on illness.
- Allows maintenance staff more time to complete routine maintenance when students are not in the building.
- Allows for larger maintenance projects that have to be scheduled when students are not present can be addressed sooner.
- Allows technology department to address district wide issues without interrupting daily school operations.



Operation Cost Reduction

- Areas of Potential Savings
 - Diesel Fuel (No buses on Fridays)
 - Electricity - Reduced Usage
 - Water - Reduced Usage
 - Sewer - Reduced Usage
 - Substitute Expenditures
- Non-Saving Areas
 - Instructional Budgets
 - Salaries of Employees
 - Extra-Curricular Budgets
 - Custodial/Maintenance Budgets



Fridays (Possibility)

- Open to PK-4th grade
- Summer application process
- What most typically consist of
 - Academic instruction outside of the 75,600 minutes
 - Supplemental instruction for mastering required core content and skills
- Transportation not provided.
- Cafeteria is not allowed to serve food on non-instructional days
- Required attendance for those who apply
- Regular School Hours



Sample 4-Day Week Calendar

- It continues to meet the required 75,600 instructional minutes (has an additional 1200 minutes) (Current calendar only has 540 additional minutes)
- First Day of School - August 7th (Second week of August)
- Last Day of School - May 30th
- Most Fridays off for students (7 Mandatory Friday School Days)
- No early release days during the year
- Thanksgiving, Christmas and Spring breaks will be similar in length as prior school years
- Staff works 1-2 Fridays a month at school



School Day Hours

480 Minutes a day

Sample Schedule -

Primary - 7:40-3:40

Elementary - 7:45-3:45

Intermediate - 7:50-3:50

MS/HS 8:00-4:00 or 8:00-4:15 (depending on CTE)



Questions?

China Spring ISD

4 DAY INSTRUCTIONAL WEEK

BENEFITS



INFORMATION



WHY?



Recruitment & Retention of High Quality Staff



Reduced Student & Staff Absences



Increased Planning Time for Teachers



Reduced Need for Substitute Teachers



What will the calendar look like?

- Will continue to meet state instructional minute requirement of 75,600 minutes
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- Most Fridays off for students
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PROS

- Retain and attract high quality teachers
- Increased planning & collaboration time for teachers
- More family time for students, families and teachers
- Increased time to support new teachers
- Increase in applicants & experienced applicants
- Improved attendance rate for students & teachers
- Helpful for families to have an "off-day" for appointments, travel and family time
- By being able to hire and retain the highest quality teachers and support staff, the quality of our instruction and student success will increase
- Students & teachers involved in extracurricular activities on Fridays will not miss class
- Late student activities on Thursdays will not impact student performance on Fridays
- More well-rested and well-prepared students & teachers
- Reduced need for substitutes

