

Consideration of the Four-Day School Calendar

Community Presentation

Why are we considering the
four-day school week?

Why Consider the Four-Day School Week

The first question to address is, “How did we get to the point that we are considering moving to a four-day school calendar?”

- There are two primary considerations that the administration and school board have looked at in consideration of a four-day school calendar, ultimately leading us to present information to the community. Those considerations are:
 - **Student Academic Performance and Growth**
 - **Staff recruitment and retention (hiring and keeping high quality staff)**
 - District administration and the school board recognize that there are a number of other factors that would be impacted by this decision if the district were to move forward. We will attempt to address the majority of those factors throughout this presentation.

Student Academic Performance and Growth

- District administration and the school board recognize the need to see improvement in both student academic performance (how Orrick students perform academically) and student academic growth (the rate of academic growth shown by Orrick students).
- At first glance, reducing the academic calendar from five-day weeks to four-day weeks would seem counterproductive to this goal. However, administration and the board believe a transition to a four-day calendar would have a direct, positive impact on student academic growth and performance.
- The rationale behind that belief rests on the recruitment and retention (hiring and keeping) of high-quality staff.

Recruitment and Retention of Staff

- District administration and the school board recognize that the greatest way to impact student learning is through high-quality instruction from high-quality teachers.
- While the district has confidence in current school staff, and is working diligently to see student academic growth, the district is also aware of a few realities when filling open positions:
 - A very real teacher shortage exists regionally, state-wide, and nationally.
 - When competing over an undersized pool of applicants, Orrick struggles to compete with salary offered by several larger districts within a 20-30 minute drive of Orrick.
 - Recent applicant numbers for open positions put Orrick at a disadvantage in hiring high-quality, or experienced applicants.
 - 5 year retention rate of employees hired over the last 7 years is roughly 30%. Said another way, 70% of certified personnel hired over the last 7 years no longer worked for the district 5 years after being hired.
 - The four-day calendar has been shown regionally to have a significant impact on applicant numbers, qualifications of applicants, and retention of staff.

Orrick Long-term Success & Sustainability

Before diving into pros and cons of the four-day school calendar it is important to stress the rationale for why the district is considering a transition.

- This would **NOT** be to jump on any kind of education trend.
- This is **NOT** being pushed by teachers. While we expect most teachers to be supportive, this was not driven by teachers asking the school to make this move.
- This would **NOT** be change for the sake of change.

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- This is driven by the desire to improve academic performance and the belief that one of the greatest ways to do that is to create the strongest applicant pool possible for open positions, and incentivize high-quality staff to stay at Orrick.
 - The administration and the board believe this is about creating a district built for success now and capable of sustaining that success into the future.

What would we hope to address
by moving to a four-day
calendar?

Intended Consequences

- Increase current number of applications for open positions
 - Recent trends have us receiving less than two qualified applicants per open position.
 - Our belief is that movement to a four-day calendar would increase the number of applications per open position. Greater choice in applicants would help reduce turnover and help the district continue to build a high-quality staff.
- Reduce the turnover rate, and keep qualified teachers from leaving
 - Two areas that turnover negatively impacts the district are in (1) time and effort in replacing staff and (2) losing teachers, especially high-quality teachers. A significant, but often unrealized impact is the time spent on training, orienting, and developing new staff who may not stay with the district. Not only is this a costly process in regard to time in and of itself, but it also demands resources (both time and money) that could be used elsewhere.
- Increase student academic performance
 - As mentioned previously, the number one way to impact student academic growth and achievement is through high-quality classroom instruction. We believe that transitioning to a four-day calendar will help the district be more competitive in filling openings and keeping staff who will or currently do bring high-quality instruction to the classroom.

What would be the benefits of moving to a four-day calendar?

Perceived Benefits

- Academic Growth (discussed previously)
- Teacher Recruitment & Retention
 - Local four-day school districts point to an increase in recruitment (number of applicants per position) and retention (turnover rate decreases).
- Attendance
 - Nationally, studies show no statistical change in attendance. Locally, however, almost all schools reported increased attendance in both staff and students.
- Fiscal Responsibility
 - Possible small benefits (not a significant factor in consideration)
 - Possible areas of cost savings include building operations, transportation, and reduced staff absences leading to less usage of substitute teachers

Perceived Benefits Continued

- Student & Staff Mental Health/Morale
 - Local four-day schools as well as national studies point to the following:
 - Improved building morale among staff and students
 - Staff are more content in the workplace
 - Parents and students report feeling less stressed about balancing school with other things
 - High school students on a four-day calendar report having more time to spend on school work, working, doing chores, and participating in extracurricular activities and hobbies compared to students on a five-day calendar
 - Elementary students report getting more sleep and high school students report feeling much less tired compared to studies of students in five-day districts
 - The vast majority of parents and students in four-day districts report favoring the four-day calendar over a five-day calendar

What about the drawbacks of moving to a four-day calendar?

Perceived Drawback/Disadvantage

There are a number of concerns that often come up when considering a four-day calendar. We will attempt to address the concerns below on the following slides:

- Possible loss in academic growth
- Parental burden, lack of childcare/supervision
- Nutritional/wellness needs of students
- Length of the school day
- Unrealistic expectation of future work culture

Loss of Academic Growth

- Would reducing 1 full day a week lead to a decrease in student achievement?
 - While you can find studies and information to support either side of this question, we believe student academics will improve.
 - Student academic hours remain roughly the same four-day or five-day (within a 1/2 hour over the course of the full year). Our time teaching students remains the same and regression (or academic loss) over a three day weekend has not been shown to exist.
 - As stated previously, we believe that over time through increasing high-quality applicants and reducing the district's turnover rate, our level of academic instruction will increase.
 - Other areas like student and staff attendance, building morale, and student mental health all play a factor in student academic growth.

Childcare and the Burden on Parents

- We understand that this would be a significant concern and factor in a transition to a four-day calendar. This would be addressed by:
 - Offering childcare on Mondays, paid for by parents, if the demand was justified. This would be staffed by the district personnel but not by teachers.
 - Compiling and making available a directory of high school students willing to babysit on Mondays.
 - Protecting or “blocking-off” school practices/meetings on Mondays during the traditional school time to ensure that older students were not pulled away from supporting in supervision of younger students.

Nutrition and Wellness Needs of students

- One frequent concern is about nutrition and wellness needs of students who rely on the school for consistent meals and nutrition.
- The district would partner with local organizations to expand our “Cat Pack” program to ensure that student hunger was not an issue and that students were receiving food to compensate for the additional day away from school.

Length of the School Day (7:45-3:30)

- While the additional 35 minutes is a legitimate concern, especially for our younger students, this can be addressed by how we structure the school day:
 - For Elementary Students:
 - In the elementary this additional 35 minutes will create more consistent chunks of our core content like math and reading while allowing for the mental breaks needed throughout the day for students to be successful.
 - For High School:
 - The addition of 35 minutes allows for slightly longer class periods which we anticipate to be beneficial for students.

Income for Hourly Personnel

- One major concern with the four-day schedule is what happens to hourly workers who may lose hours?
 - Hourly workers will continue to make the same amount of money per month/annually that they did on a five-day calendar.
 - This would likely be accomplished in one of two ways, or a combination of ways.
 - Some hourly workers may continue working five days a week.
 - Some hourly workers may continue working the same hours as before, but on a four day schedule (i.e. 4, 10 hour days)
 - Some workers may have hours reduced, but receive a raise in wages to compensate for lost hours.

Unrealistic Expectation of Future Work Culture

- As we have researched the possibility of a four-day calendar two themes have appeared related to work culture:
 - (1) The recognition that the American labor market has changed significantly over the last few years, even in “blue collar jobs.”
 - A number of jobs still exist as an 8 hour day 5 days a week, or industries that work 5, 10 hour days, or work sunup to sundown.
 - That being said there are a number of jobs that have started running crews 3 days a week, 12 hour days, or work crews 4 on and 3 off, or 8 on and 6 off.
 - (2) Communities very similar to ours (small, rural, agricultural) that have transitioned to a four-day calendar report the Monday off provides students the opportunity to get hands on experience and internships that they would have never been able to access as a part-time after school job.
 - These communities often report believing their high school students have a better understanding of what employment looks like after high school.

What would a four-day vs a five-day calendar look like?

Orrick R-XI School District

2023-2024 Five-Day Academic Calendar

Daily Schuedule 8:00 am - 3:10 pm
 Late Start Schedule 10:00 am - 3:10 pm
 Early Release @ 11:30 am or 1:00 pm

Teacher Work Day NO SCHOOL
 First Day of School End of Quarter
 Late Start Wednesday Early Release
 Parent-Teacher Conference

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August 15th & 16th New Staff Work Days	
August 17 Teacher Work Day	
August 17 Open House	
August 21 Back to School ALL STAFF	
August 22 Back to School Certified Staff	
August 23 First Day of School (Full Day)	
September 4th NO SCHOOL	
October 13 - END OF 1ST QUARTER (37)	37
October 19 NO SCHOOL - P/T Conference	
October 20 NO SCHOOL	
Nov. 22, 23 & 24 NO SCHOOL	
December 15 - END OF 2ND QUARTER (40)	77
Dec. 18 - Jan 2 NO SCHOOL	
January 2 - Teacher Work Day	
January 3 - Classes Resume	
January 15th - NO SCHOOL	
February 16 - NO SCHOOL	
February 19 - NO SCHOOL	
March 1 - END OF 3RD QUARTER (40)	117
March 7 1:00 Release - P/T Conferences	
March 8, 11 & 12 - NO SCHOOL	
March 29 - NO SCHOOL	
April 1 - NO SCHOOL	
April 19 - NO SCHOOL	
April 22 - NO SCHOOL	
May 5th or 12th GRADUATION	
May 17 Last Day, 11:30 Release	
May 17 END OF 4TH QUARTER (48)	165
SNOW MAKEUP DAYS MAY 20-28	
5/31 - Last Possible Inclement Weather M	
170 Staff Days, 165 Student Days	

5-Day Option

1063.2558 hours

Orrick R-XI School District

2023-2024 4-Day Academic Calendar

Daily Schuedule 7:45 am - 3:30 pm
 Parent-Teacher Conference on 4/14
 1:00 pm release

Teacher Work Day NO SCHOOL
 First Day of School End of Quarter
 No School-Staff PD Day Possible Snow Makeup
 Parent-Teacher Conference

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August 9th & 10th New Staff Work Days	
August 15 Back to School All Staff	
August 16 Back to School Certified Staff	
August 17 Teacher Work Day	
August 17 Open House	
August 22 First Day of School	
October 13 - END OF 1ST QUARTER (32)	
October 19 NO SCHOOL - P/T Conference	32
October 20 NO SCHOOL	
Nov. 22-24 NO SCHOOL	
December 19 - END OF 2ND QUARTER (34)	66
Dec. 19 - Jan 2 NO SCHOOL	
January 2 - Teacher Work Day	
January 3 - Classes Resume	
February 16 - NO SCHOOL	
March 8 - END OF 3RD QUARTER (38)	104
March 14 1:00 Release - P/T Conferences	
March 15 - NO SCHOOL	
March 29 - NO SCHOOL	
May 12/19 GRADUATION	
May 22 Last Day	
May 22 END OF 4TH QUARTER (40)	144
Possible Snow Makeup May 6, 13, 20	
Possible Snow Makeup May 23-31	
5/31 Last Possible Inclement Weather Mak	
155 staff days, 144 student days	

4-Day
Draft
Option

1062.8357 hours

Observations on the 4-Day vs 5-Day Calendar

- Four-Day option, starts one day earlier, goes two additional days at Christmas break, goes two additional school days at the end of the year, reduces breaks in the spring.
- Student instructional hours have less than a half hour difference over the course of the full year.
 - Five-Day: 1063.2558 hours
 - Four-Day: 1062.8357hours (.4201 hours difference, or 25 minutes)
- The four day option presented does include a few Mondays
 - Thanksgiving week
 - The week released for Christmas Break
 - Possible Weather make-up days in May
 - Could also consider the final week of school

Other Considerations

Vo-Tech

- Vo-Tech would continue to run on a five-day calendar.
- Is there concern that this would lead to a decreased number of students participating in vo-tech?
 - Most schools report that students serious about exploring a trade continue to enroll in vo-tech and that numbers are not significantly impacted.

Four-Day School Week and our CSIP

- We believe that a transition to a four-day school week address several key areas of our CSIP (Comprehensive School Improvement Plan)
- Priority Area 1 Student Achievement
 - Goal 1: Increase individual student academic achievement
- Priority Area 2: Staff Recruitment, Retention & Development
 - Goal 2: High-quality professional development will be established
 - Goal 3: Hire and retain qualified and effective staff
- Priority Area 3: Culture
 - Goal 5: Develop a climate and culture focused on staff and student mental health and physical well-being.

Where do we go from here?

- Staff will be surveyed for their feedback on a 4-day calendar
- Please complete the four-day calendar survey to let the district know whether or not you believe this is something that would be good for the Orrick School District.
- A community forum will be held in the near future to discuss survey results, explain aspects of the districts perspective, and field questions or concerns.