

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

### **Q: What is a 4-day school week?**

4-day school week means students attend school for four days instead of the traditional five. In Washington State, the school days/annual calendar must still meet the required instructional time, so student days are longer. In Washington this option is called the Economy and Efficiency Waiver.

### **Q: How does the Economy and Efficiency Waiver work in our state?**

The Economy and Efficiency Waiver is a program offered by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) that allows school districts to apply for a flexible school calendar. This waiver helps districts offer a 4-day school week, aiming to improve efficiency and reduce costs without compromising the quality of education for students.

### **Q: Which schools can apply for an Economy and Efficiency Waiver?**

Only schools with fewer than 1,000 students can apply for this waiver. About 55% of schools in Washington State are eligible to apply for this waiver based on enrollment. Currently, state law limits the number of participating schools to 30 available slots. About 21 slots are filled at this time.

### **Q: How common is the 4-day school week in Washington State?**

18 Washington State schools use the model. Nationwide, in the Fall of 2023, nearly 900 school districts were using a 4-day schedule, up from 650 in 2019. About 50% of states have school districts using a four-day school week. Some states with more than 20% of their school districts adopting a four-day schedule include Oregon, Idaho, South Dakota, Colorado, and New Mexico.

## **Q: What other WA State school districts have adopted a 4-day schedule?**

Waterville School District

Selkirk School District

Cusick School District

Mary Walker School District

Paterson School District

Bickleton School District

Orondo School District

Pateros School District

Finley School District

Wahkiakum School District

Mansfield School District

Manson School District

Washtucna School District

Republic School District

Nespeelem

Lake Roosevelt

Winlock School District

Lincoln

## **Q: How do schools apply for the Economy and Efficiency Waiver?**

Schools must submit an application to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), which reviews and approves applications on a first-come, first-served basis. **Schools must also provide data on student learning and efficiencies after the change and reapply every three years.**

## **Q. Why is Lind-Ritzville Cooperative Schools considering a 4-day school week?**

The idea of a 4-day school week has been under consideration since May

2024. Our primary goals are to support student learning, recruit and retain great educators, and ensure long-term sustainability for our rural schools. While 89% of the staff and 71% of initial respondents support the proposal, we recognize the importance of including as many community stakeholders as possible while we continue exploring both the benefits and concerns. A flyer summarizes the key considerations and community input to date, including outcomes from recent strategic planning meetings with educators, parents, and community members.

### **Q. What are the benefits of a 4-day school week?**

Benefits include:

1. More focused time for staff professional development and collaboration leading to increased student learning ( hours of professional learning and planning for teachers in a 5-day model = 73 hrs; hours of professional learning and planning for teachers in a 4-day model = 97 hrs).
2. Over 10 more instructional hours per year for students
3. More predictable schedules for families with no late starts or half days
4. Better staff retention and recruitment
5. Improved student and staff attendance as families and staff use Fridays for appointments and trips
6. Cost savings
7. Increased family time and vacation flexibility

### **Q: How long would the school days be under a 4-day schedule?**

Student days would be approximately 7 hours and 20 minutes long. Estimated school hours would be from 8:25 AM to 3:45 PM (TK-5 dismissed at 3:40)

### **Q: How many instructional hours does LRCS currently offer?**

In the 2024-2025 school year, LRCS offers about 1,039.22 K-12 instructional hours over 176 days.

### **Q: How would instructional hours change under a 4-day school week?**

Under a 4-day school week, LRCS would offer, PK-12, an average of 1,049.41 instructional hours over 155 school days, an increase of about 10 hours compared to the current schedule. This total does not include Academic Intervention Days, which would increase the instructional hours to 1080.91.

### **Q: Could the proposed schedule be adjusted to make the days not quite so long?**

Typical 4-day schedules are between 45-60 minutes longer with around 145 school days. Our proposed schedule is 35 minutes longer with 155 school days. To further reduce the number of minutes in a day would not provide enough required instructional hours to accommodate a 4-day week.

### **Q: How would teacher work hours change with the 4-day school week?**

Teachers would not work fewer hours. Total teacher work hours would remain the same, but professional development, planning, and collaboration time would be added on non-school days (about once per month), with teachers also working longer hours on student days.

### **Q: How would other employee hours change under the 4-day school week?**

Current classified employees (such as office staff, paraprofessionals, and bus drivers) will maintain their current hours, so **there would be no reduction in payroll for these staff members.** (please see Employee Hours & Compensation document [HERE](#))

### **Q: Does moving to a 4-day week save money?**

The savings from moving to a 4-day school week range from 1% to 3% of

a district's budget. For LRCS , this would translate to savings between \$90,000 and \$150,000. Savings typically come from reduced substitute costs, utilities, fuel, and food services.

**Q: Why is this financial saving important for LRCS?**

State funding for education is not keeping pace with inflationary costs. This means an ever-widening funding gap. Cost savings help sustain current staffing and programs.

**Q: What are some challenges and positive outcomes of a 4-day school week?**

Please see Community Forum Handout [HERE](#)

**Q: Will there be food available to students on the selected day off?**

An impact survey for families of elementary students asked if access to meals on the 4-day schedule would be a significant challenge, minor inconvenience, or no impact? Results of this phone survey indicate 0% of families believe that meal services on the 4-day schedule will be a significant challenge, and 23.6% responded it would be a minor inconvenience.

**The district will provide take home meals and has partnered with “Bite 2 Go” to provide weekly, Friday, Saturday, & Sunday backpack meals for participating students.**

**Q: How will teachers fit all the curriculum into 4 days?**

Teachers will modify their curriculum to fit within the instructional minutes. LRCS will exceed the state's weekly required minutes and yearly required hours of instruction.

### **Q: Won't this longer day be too much for the Elementary kids?**

Elementary students will be given more content but provided with brain breaks and movement activities throughout the day.

### **Q: How will the district measure the academic effectiveness of a 4-day school week?**

To ensure the effectiveness of the 4-day school week, the district will closely monitor and evaluate its impact through multiple data points. We will compare pre- and post-implementation data on key indicators such as student and staff attendance rates, student behavior and discipline referrals, and academic performance, including grades, state assessments, and growth measures like NWEA, i-Ready and Smarter Balanced Assessment. In addition, we will collect feedback through staff and student surveys focused on job satisfaction, engagement, and overall well-being. This ongoing review process will help us make data-informed adjustments and ensure that the new schedule supports both student success and staff retention.

### **Q: What would Academic Friday's look like?**

School would run from 8:25 AM to 12:35 PM. Students needing academic support or intervention would be invited to attend and work with teachers. A variety of enrichment options could also be offered if there are enough interested participants. Breakfast and lunch will be provided on Academic Fridays

### **Q. Would Friday School transportation to the school be available?**

Limited transportation (bus routes) would be available on Fridays. In addition, there would be limited transportation to and from the school for scheduled activities.

### **Q. Friday School Potential Student Activities:**

- Coaches can hold practices and other activities.
- Potential for a non-profit agency to provide a Friday event or activity.
- College visits/field trips.
- Interventions and tutoring supports provided by teachers
- Internships/Apprenticeships can be provided for older students.
- Some students may work on Fridays.
- SAT/ASVAB/FAFSA/WAFSA/Scholarship Support time would be available.
- Youth sports could be scheduled for practices on this day.
- Community service opportunities
- Club and activity events

### **Q: How will this affect school sports?**

- The Athletic Director will work on adjusting schedules, as feasible to do so. The purpose would be to move longer sports trips around the proposed day off so students will miss less school and be well-rested.
- We will carefully review and possibly adjust departure times for athletics contests Monday- Thursday to keep students in class as much as possible.

### **Q: How will this affect practice times?**

- Currently, MS & HS practices start at 3:45 PM. MS practices end at 5:30PM; HS practices end times vary between 5:30-6:00 PM. Split HS basketball practices end at 5:30 PM and 7:20 PM
- 4-day MS & HS practices will start at 4:00 PM. MS practices will end at 5:45 PM; HS practices end times will vary between 5:45-6:15PM. Split HS basketball practices will end at 5:45 PM and 7:35 PM.

### **Q: When will the decision be made?**

Lind and Ritzville Boards will revisit the waiver in September 2025, allowing ample time for planning and implementation if the 4-day week is adopted. To apply for the waiver, each board must pass separate resolutions.

### **Q: How can I provide my input?**

Parents and community members are encouraged to participate in the surveys that will be distributed. Your feedback is crucial to this decision-making process.

### **Q: When would the 4-day school week begin if it's adopted?**

If approved, the new schedule would begin in Fall 2026.

### **Q: What does research say about learning in a 4-day model?**

Research on the 4-day school week is growing, and while the impacts are mixed, schools with less than 30 hours of school time per week tend to see less academic growth. For a detailed look at the research, visit the following websites:

#### **1. Academic Performance**

**Study:** *Does Shortening the School Week Impact Student Performance? Evidence from the Four-Day School Week*

**Authors:** D. Mark Anderson and Mary Beth Walker

**Published in:** Education Finance and Policy, 2015

**Findings:** Analyzed data from Colorado and found a positive relationship between the four-day week and student performance in reading and mathematics.

**Link:** [journalistsresource.org](http://journalistsresource.org)

**Article:** *Four-Day School Week Can Improve Academic Performance, Policy Study Finds*

**Source:** Georgia State University News, 2015

**Summary:** Research indicated that a four-day school week had a statistically significant positive impact on fifth-grade math scores, with no negative effects on reading scores.

**Link:** [news.gsu.edu/komoneews.com](https://news.gsu.edu/komoneews.com)

## 2. Teacher Recruitment and Retention

**Article:** *Embracing the Four-Day School Week*

**Source:** AASA – The School Superintendents Association

**Insights:** Districts adopting a four-day week reported reduced teacher attrition and substitute teacher costs, with staff expressing higher job satisfaction.

**Link:** [aasa.org/aasa.org](https://aasa.org/aasa.org)

**Study:** *The Use of a Four-Day School Week to Recruit and Retain Teachers in a Rural District*

**Authors:** Liz Hollingworth and B. P. An

**Published in:** The Rural Educator, 2025

**Findings:** The study suggests that a four-day school week can aid in teacher recruitment and retention in rural districts.

**Link:**

[scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu+3scholarsjunction.msstate.edu+3nwea.org+3](https://scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu+3scholarsjunction.msstate.edu+3nwea.org+3)

## 3. Student Behavior and Well-being

**Study:** *Effects of Four-Day School Weeks on Adolescents*

**Institution:** Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis

**Findings:** The study found that four-day school weeks decreased bullying incidents by approximately 31% and fighting incidents by approximately 27%, indicating improved student behavior.

**Link:** [cepa.stanford.edu/cepa.stanford.edu](https://cepa.stanford.edu/cepa.stanford.edu)

#### 4. Cost Savings

**Overview:** *Brief Four-Day School Week Overview*

**Source:** National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)

**Summary:** Implementing a four-day school week can lead to cost savings in transportation, food, and energy expenses, which is particularly beneficial for rural districts.

**Link:** [ncsl.org](https://www.ncsl.org)

If you have any other questions or want more information, feel free to reach out to Lind-Ritzville Cooperative Schools. We are committed to keeping our community informed as we explore this potential change!