

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF HOW A 4-DAY SCHOOL WEEK IMPACTS  
EMPLOYEE ATTENDANCE, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION, AND  
WELLNESS/WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

Eugene Elden Blalock Jr.

**A DISSERTATION**

Presented to the Faculty of Miami University in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Department of Educational Leadership

The Graduate School  
Miami University  
Oxford, Ohio

2024

Dr. Joel Malin, Director  
Dr. Guy Parmigian, Reader  
Dr. Brady Nash, Graduate School Representative

©

Eugene Elden Blalock Jr.

2024

## ABSTRACT

As a superintendent of a small urban school district in the Midwest with just over 1,300 students, I have struggled to hire and retain teachers post-pandemic (i.e., COVID-19). In my district, teachers have communicated how stressed they are and how the stress affects their mental and physical wellness. Nationally, teachers are leaving the profession due to burnout and a paucity of college students completing teacher preparation programs is making hiring qualified teachers difficult. The purpose of this action research-based report was to examine teachers' perceptions of switching from a 5-day school week to a 4-day school week. This study used surveys and structured interviews to address the following questions: Do you believe a Blended "4-day school week" Learning Schedule will improve employee attendance, teacher recruitment and retention, and wellness/work-life balance? The study's results indicated that teacher perceptions improved after switching from a 5-day school week to a 4-day school week. This study ends with the implications for educational leaders and Boards of Education considering a 4-day school week and recommendations for further research.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Content.....	iv
List of Tables.....	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
Dedication.....	viii
Acknowledgement.....	ix
 Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION.....	 1
A Potential Solution: The 4-Day School Week.....	2
Problem Statement and Significance of the Study.....	3
Limitations.....	4
Definitions of Key Terms.....	4
Organization of this Dissertation.....	5
 Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	 6
The 4-Day Work Week: Relevant Context.....	7
The 4-Day School Week: Relevant Context.....	8
Student Achievement and the 4-Day School Week.....	11
Financial Implications and the 4-Day School Week.....	12
Teacher Wellness and the 4-Day School Week.....	13
Work-Life Balance and the 4-Day School Week.....	16
Teacher Attendance and the 4-Day School Week.....	17
Teacher Recruitment and Retention and the 4-Day School Week.....	17
Employee Perceptions and the 4-Day School Week.....	18
Chapter Summary.....	19
 Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY.....	 21
Research Approach.....	21
Data Collection Instruments.....	23
Participants.....	25
Researcher.....	26
Data Collection.....	27
Data Analysis.....	28
Ethical Concerns.....	29
Chapter Summary.....	29

Chapter 4: FINDINGS.....	31
Guiding Questions.....	32
Survey.....	33
Interviews.....	36
Chapter Summary.....	43
Chapter 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	44
Research Purpose.....	44
Conclusions.....	44
Implications for Practice.....	45
Recommendations for Practice.....	46
Recommendations for Future Research.....	47
Chapter Summary.....	47
References.....	48
Appendix A.....	54
Appendix B.....	55
Appendix C.....	57
Appendix D.....	59

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1</b> Participants.....	25
<b>Table 2</b> Staff Absenteeism 2022-2023.....	27
<b>Table 3</b> Interview Question One.....	36
<b>Table 4</b> January 2024 Staff Attendance Report.....	38
<b>Table 5</b> Interview Question Two.....	38
<b>Table 6</b> Interview Question Three.....	40

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1</b> States with Four-Day Districts.....	10
<b>Figure 2</b> Issues Facing Educators.....	14
<b>Figure 3</b> Action Research Framework.....	23
<b>Figure 4</b> Pre- and Post-Survey Questions.....	24
<b>Figure 5</b> Qualitative Data Analysis Framework.....	29
<b>Figure 6</b> Guiding Questions.....	32
<b>Figure 7</b> Survey Results.....	34
<b>Figure 7</b> Survey Results.....	47

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the men and women who continue to work in a profession where they are often overlooked and taken for granted. Teachers are responsible for leading, teaching, and inspiring the next generation of leaders; they are superheroes in my eyes. Thank you for everything you do for your students, parents, and communities.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank God, who continues to use me as a vessel. I would also like to thank my parents, Gertrude and Eugene Blalock Sr., and my brother Lamarr, who have always supported and believed in me. I would like to thank Lynne, my wife and my two daughters Janae' and Jasmine for their encouragement and prayers.

I want to recognize the people who supported me in my early years which go back to where I was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio; my Sunday School teachers at St. Paul United Methodist Church, my taekwondo instructor S Jamal Oden, and my grade school teachers, who all told me that I was a leader, not a follower.

I want to thank Marcus Blalock and Raymond Hudson, who protected me from the street life and made it clear when I left home to go to college that coming back home to run the streets was non-negotiable. I want to thank the brothers of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Incorporated, Alpha Alpha Chapter who taught me the true meaning of tenacity. More importantly, I would like to thank my inner circle, Michael Bates, Darryl Draper, Ramiz Bivens, Daimon Wiley, Kenneth "Scooter" Johnson, and Brian Middleton, for over thirty years of friendship and camaraderie.

I want show appreciation to my Mt. Healthy and North College Hill school families and the participants who volunteered to be a part of this study. Finally, I would like to thank the amazing forward-thinking professors at Miami University and my Ed.D. Cohort 7 family.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The U.S. Department of Education (2017) defines a teacher shortage in three ways:

1. Teaching positions that are unfilled.
2. Teaching positions that are filled by teachers who are certified by irregular, provisional, temporary, or emergency certifications.
3. Teaching position that are filled by teachers who are certified, but who are teaching in academic subject areas other than their area of preparation.

Teacher vacancies and shortages continue to increase, causing schools nationwide to struggle to keep their classrooms staffed with certified teachers. The shortage has been magnified by the number of teachers leaving the profession and the decreasing number of college students completing teacher preparation programs. Based on data over the last two years or the post-pandemic years it is estimated that there are at least 55,000 vacant positions and 270,000 underqualified teachers in school districts throughout the United States (Nguyen et al., 2022).

The teacher shortage is at an all-time high; school districts and superintendents like myself need help filling teaching positions. In October 2022, I saw a very concerning spike in staff absences. As a district, we could not find substitute teachers, and teachers on a daily basis were being forced to lose their planning time so they could work as internal substitutes to fill these gaps. I had principals, district coaches, the Pupil Personnel Director, the Assistant Superintendent, Board members, and even myself, the Superintendent, consistently going to the building to cover classes or provide supervision during lunch to assist and support the buildings. Like many districts across the United States teacher shortages have become more widespread and severe (Pettypiece, 2023). My school district, a small district in the Midwest with approximately fourteen hundred students, was struggling. Most significantly, we were dealing with increased workloads caused by not having a consistent plan bell due to high teacher absence rates and internal substituting to fill our building teaching position daily. My teachers and staff were struggling; they were tired, and you could see it in their eyes.

At this time, as part of my job as the district superintendent, I decided to send the staff a Climate Survey so they could voice their concerns when they were asked to answer this question\: On a scale of one to ten, with ten (10) being the highest, Name one thing that would move the climate closer to a ten (10). Several of the teachers' concerns resonated with me. Teachers said they consistently lost their planning bell because they had to serve

as substitute teachers when their peers were absent. Also, they explained how stressed they felt when classes had to be split, which increased their class sizes when there were no available substitutes. But the one that hit home and confirmed what I had been seeing in the buildings was when a teacher wrote that they felt the Central Office does not value the teachers. The words Central Office does not value the teachers did not sit well with me because I understood that when they said Central Office, they meant me the Superintendent. They did not know I was doing everything possible to hire substitute teachers. I raised the daily pay rate, recruited on social media platforms, and spoke to early graduates. As a district, we were still really struggling to hire substitute teachers. I found myself in a quandary. I felt horrible and powerless.

I knew my teachers were tired or burnt out. I also knew that nationally; teachers were leaving the profession at alarming rates due to teacher burnout. Around this time, the National Education Association, the nation's largest union representing nearly three million educators, found that educator burnout was the number one issue facing educators, with 67% reporting it as a very serious issue and 90% a very serious or somewhat serious issue (NEAMedia, 2022). I knew that we needed to do something about this alarming and challenging situation—and, more and more, I was seeing this as a teacher wellness issue.

### **A Potential Solution: The 4-Day School Week**

What if teachers had a day off to collaborate with other teachers and use that time to develop lesson plans to meet the needs of their students? School administrators and districts are responsible for creating structures and systems that support teacher wellness. Districts around the country are discussing plans to adopt a four-day school week believing it will lessen teacher burnout. This approach, used mainly by school districts to save money, is now being used to recruit and retain teachers (Tamez-Robledo, 2022). The well-being of teachers is essential, and reimagining how the school calendar looks may present a viable solution. A four-day school week might demonstrate to teachers that we see and value them as people, not just employees (Melhado, 2021).

In January 2023, I explained to the Board of Education that I was exploring what a 4-Day Blended Learning Calendar would look like for the 2023-2024 school year, whereas the students attended school Tuesday through Friday and worked remotely online on Mondays. The teachers would use Mondays to plan lessons, collaborate with peers, and use data to drive instruction. The Mondays could be a solution to our teachers' high absenteeism and mitigate teacher burnout.

I scheduled meetings with teachers and staff to discuss potential barriers for our students, parents, and the community. During those focus group meetings, we identified two significant barriers: childcare and meals. We felt it was important to have something available for parents who needed childcare for grades K through 8<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, we decided to create a Monday Extension Program for our students. Parents could enroll their students in our Monday Extension Program monitored and supervised by our classified and support staff to address their childcare needs. We worked with our food service department to address providing meals to students on Mondays and agreed that all students would be invited to come up and have lunch at the high school on Mondays.

The district held two Town Hall Meetings to share the 4-Day Blended Calendar plan with the staff, parents, and community members. Then, a family survey was sent to parents asking if they supported a 4-Day Blended Calendar, where 78% supported the proposed calendar. A similar survey was sent to the staff, and it revealed that 83% were in support of the proposed calendar. The Board of Education unanimously approved a 4-Day Blended Calendar for the 2023-2024 school year at the March 2023 Board Meeting.

My district is the first school district in the Midwest to implement a 4-day school week. The students attend school Tuesday through Friday and work remotely from home on Mondays. Students complete online assignments; therefore, parents are not being asked to teach their children. The teachers will be in school on Monday, developing lesson plans, reviewing student data, and collaborating with their peers. I firmly believe a 4-day school week will benefit students. Mondays will allow teachers the opportunity to create lessons to meet the individual needs of their students, which will have a positive effect on student achievement. Teacher wellness is essential, and teachers who care for themselves are better prepared to care for students.

### **Problem Statement and Significance of the Study**

Understanding teachers' perceptions of the four-day school week will help the district to begin exploring the possibilities of creating a Blended Learning Calendar. If teachers support the four-day school week model, we will later also engage our stakeholders (i.e., Board of Education, Families, and Community) in conversation through family surveys and focus groups. It is also possible that teachers will offer some feedback that is constructive in nature and that results in refinement of our Blended Learning Calendar; this would be very valuable to the district as well.

With this study, I hope to investigate whether a 4-Day Blended Learning Calendar will improve teachers' perceptions regarding employee attendance, teacher recruitment and retention, and teacher wellness/work-life balance. I plan on writing my dissertation to

provide an Action Research-Based report on teachers' perception of the 4-Day Blended Learning Calendar using a mixed method study with surveys and interviews. I want to see if changing the teaching calendar will positively affect teachers' experiences, mitigating teacher burnout.

## **Limitations**

Although this study will provide useful and valuable data in relation to teacher perception regarding the four-day school week, it is important to acknowledge that this study (like all studies) also includes certain limitations. For example, in this study my focus is limited to the experiences of teachers in one school district. Accordingly, we should recognize that some findings may be particular to the context being studied and/or the specifics of the workweek model put into place in this district. Also, this study looks at teachers' perceptions during one academic school year, which does not allow the collection of data related to student achievement or the effect a four-day school week has on recruiting and retaining teachers in the district.

## **Definition of Key Terms**

This dissertation study uses several key terms that are defined here:

*Teacher Burnout*- a condition in which an educator has exhausted the personal and professional resources necessary to do their job.

*Stress*- increase anxiety and depression caused by the feeling that you are doing your best or enough to meet the needs of your students.

*Mental Health*- the emotional and psychological factors that affect a person's thinking, mood, and/or behavior.

*Workload*- the amount of work that a person is required to accomplish their job.

*Internal Substitute Teacher*- when a teacher loses their planning bell to substitute in a classroom.

*Planning Period*- the uninterrupted time a teacher is provided to develop daily lesson plans.

*4-Day Work Week (4DWW)*- employees work four days a week.

*4-Day School Week (4DSW)*- students attend school four days a week.

*4-Day Blended Learning Calendar*-students attend school four (4) days a week, Tuesday through Friday, and work from home remotely one (1) day a week, on Mondays. Teachers use Mondays to collaborate and disaggregate data to customize educational lesson plans to meet the needs of their students.

### **Organization of this Dissertation**

This study will be organized into five chapters. Chapter One has provided an extensive overview of the problem and my dissertation study. Chapter Two provides a thorough review of the relevant literature. Chapter Three describes this study's methodology and research design. Chapter Four provides the data collected and analyzed from surveys and interviews. Chapter Five will discuss the findings and recommendations derived from the data collected and analyzed.

## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter includes a review on relevant literature of the 4-day school week (4DSW). It begins with looking at how the 4-day work week (4DWW) has been used for more than fifty years by businesses to cut costs and increase job satisfaction to reduce turnover, and provides relevant context to understand why 4DWW has been increasingly adopted. Then, it provides context regarding the increasing adoption of 4DSW. Following this, I review research regarding 4DSW, focusing on such areas as: student outcomes; financial impacts; and employee perceptions.

#### **The 4-Day Work Week: Relevant Context**

The 1997 Changing Workforce survey (Bond et al., 1998) revealed that the vast majority of employees at the time wished that they worked at least 5 hours less per week. The survey focused on the links, tensions, and conflicts between work and family, and the findings indicated that most employees felt overworked (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). In June 2008, in response, Utah's Governor Jon Huntsman implemented a 4DWW for state employees. The employee survey reported that 80% of the respondents had a positive experience with the 4DWW (Facer & Wadsworth, 2010).

There have been some important political/policy and contextual factors leading to an increased adoption of the 4DWW. Importantly, for example, the Federal Employees Flexible and Compressed Work Schedules Act was introduced in the 1970s. The Clinton administration in the early 1990s encouraged using a compressed work schedule to build a family-friendly workplace (Travis, 2009). There has also been a shift in work attitudes and behaviors post-COVID. Increasingly, people are quitting and leaving the labor force, a phenomenon called the "Great Resignation," termed by psychologist Anthony Klotz (as cited in Josifidis & Supic, 2023). The "Great Resignation" has created a tighter labor market on a global scale, which in turn has made the 4-day work week even more attractive to some businesses and organizations.

A growing body of research also appears to be underscoring some benefits of 4DWW, which in turn is strengthening the argument and push for increased adoption. For example, an annotated bibliography of compressed work weeks (Hung, 1996) revealed that employees perceived personal benefits and improved job satisfaction related to adopting the 4-day work week. Managers also associated the 4DWW with increased job satisfaction and reduced absenteeism. The evidence appeared to confirm that a 4DWW helped to make employees and managers happier (see also Hartman & Weaver, 1977). Research drawing on thirty-one academic articles on the 4DWW demonstrated favorable results when looking at increased morale, job satisfaction, and reduced turnover and absenteeism. The quantitative results relied on opinion data showing higher perceptions of work-life balance, job satisfaction, and stress reduction (Campbell, 2023).

These data suggest that moving to a 4DWW may also benefit employee wellness and work-life balance. Many employees in and beyond education feel overworked and seek balance and flexibility in their work lives (Bird, 2010; Travis, 2009). The 4DWW could allow employees to spend more time with family and focus on their physical and mental health (i.e., self-care). Bond et al. (1998), for example, reported that most employees preferred working fewer hours and felt increasingly torn between work and family. Research conducted by sociologists Rex L. Facer II and Lori Wadsworth (2008) analyzed whether a 4DWW affected self-reported levels of work/family conflict in a group of city government workers in a small Western community. Overall, the results supported the view that a 4DWW facilitated lower work/family conflict levels than a more traditional work schedule on five of the six variables examined (Facer & Wadsworth, 2008).

Findings like these catch my eye because K-12 education is definitely a sector where, in my opinion, restoring staff wellness and work-life balance currently needs to be a top priority. In the next sections, I move into the education sector and focus on the 4DSW; first, I seek to provide relevant context about this reform.



## **The 4-Day School Week: Relevant Context**

Early on, school districts primarily implemented a 4DSW to address volatile energy prices and the rising cost of educating students. It was seen as a means to reduce expenditures and increase the efficient use of limited resources (Donis-Keller & Silvernail, 2009). The idea of a 4DSW began more than 90 years ago, in the early 1930s. The Maine School Administrative District 3 (MSAD 3) embarked on a three-year 4DSW experiment during the 1971-72 school year to decrease the district's operating expenses by ten percent. The 4DSW was showcased nationally when the MSAD 3 superintendent addressed the State House of Representatives in a special report to Congress. The 4DSW, they found, yielded cost savings and improved professional practice in this district. Still, with an easing of energy concerns and an increase in the required in-service days for teachers, the Commissioner of Education denied the School Board's request to continue the 4DSW after the three-year experiment (Roeth, 1985). Another example comes from the Cimarron Municipal Schools located in Cimarron, New Mexico, which has operated a full-time 4DSW calendar for more than 50 years dating back to the 1973-74 school year (Feaster, 2002). Cimarron moved to a 4DSW to save money. It was intended to cut transportation and electric bills during the energy crisis.

Districts facing budget shortfalls have argued that reducing the number of days students attend classes can save money on transportation, facilities, and personnel costs. A report shared by MSAD 3 after the first year of implementing the 4DSW showed that it had yielded a savings of \$18,794 (\$92,190 adjusted for inflation). The savings in transportation alone was 1.5% of the total operating budget reflected in salaries, bus depreciation, fuel, the operation of the physical plant, school lunch, and teachers' aides (Feaster, 2002).

The financial pressures in the aftermath of the Great Recession (Leachman et al., 2017) caused districts to look for ways to address budgetary problems. Traditionally, districts would look to cut costs by laying off teachers or would seek to increase revenues by raising local taxes as ways to alleviate fiscal issues. The 4DSW proved to be an

alternative way to cut costs. School districts implementing a 4DSW calendar increased in the wake of the Great Recession (December 2007 to June 2009).

Adoption of 4DSW has also increased during/after the COVID-19 pandemic. It was estimated that 662 public school districts were using a 4DSW calendar in the of Spring 2019 before the pandemic; that number climbed to 876 during the 2022-23 school year (Ordway, 2023). Most schools switched to a 4DSW to recruit teachers, save money, and boost student attendance.

A national survey by Thompson et al. (2021) found that student attendance was the second most common motivation for adopting the 4DSW. Based on some research (to be reviewed in more detail in subsequent sections), there was reason to believe that 4DSW implementation could lead to improved student attendance and decreased student dropout (and officials have assumed that student attendance would improve with a 4DSW (e.g., see Koki, 1992; Grau & Shaugnessy, 1987; Sagness & Salzan, 1993). This is important to educators because a large body of research links student attendance to learning and achievement (e.g., see Garcia and Weiss, 2018 & Gottfried, 2009).

According to Natanson (2022), the teacher shortage in America has recently hit crisis levels. School officials everywhere have needed to work hard to ensure that, as students returned to classrooms following the pandemic, there would be enough educators to meet student needs. It has been difficult to precisely identify how many classrooms have been short of teachers. However, state and district reports show staffing gaps in the hundreds to thousands. In June 2023, about 51,000 teachers and other educational staff quit their jobs in the United States (Statista Research Department, 2023).

Claims of positive outcomes have, especially recently, captured school leaders' attention (Campbell, 2023). Many superintendents have been reimagining what a 4DSW would look like in their districts. Providing teachers an extra day to create lesson plans, grade assignments, and participate in professional development opportunities might help boost teacher morale and improve job satisfaction and teacher wellness (NCSL, 2020).

More and more districts have been moving to the 4DSW. The Chico Independent School District adopted a 4DSW at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year to retain overworked staff and attract new staff. In the Fall of 2023, 14,000 students in Independence, Missouri, moved to 4DSW, with Mondays off. There are over 1,600 schools in the United States using a 4-day school week (Thompson et al., 2021; Allen, 2022; Czachor, 2023).

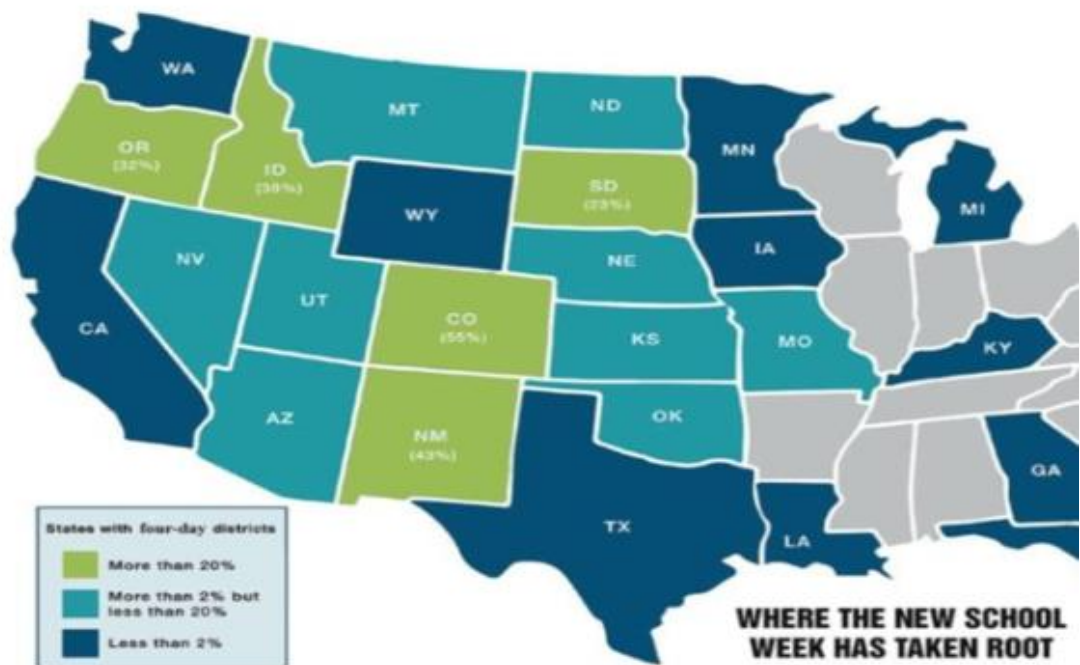


Figure 1: adapted from Heyward, 2018 – CRPE

The four-day school week may look different in schools and districts. Some districts operate by lengthening the typical school day. They have the same number of minutes each week but fewer days. Some school districts have students work remotely or online one day a week. Moreover, some school districts give students and teachers one day off a week. Moving to a four-day schedule is complex; countless things must be factored in. When a community changes its school day schedule, it affects students, parents, teachers, support staff, and community businesses (Heyward, 2017). Therefore, school districts must be able to articulate what they are trying to accomplish by implementing a 4DSW for all their stakeholders. For example, districts have switched to a four-day school week to:

- Attract and retain staff and students.
  - Increase time for collaboration and planning.
  - Improve staff, students, and family quality of life.
  - Improve school culture by reducing absenteeism.
- Provide students with additional learning opportunities.

Given the focus of this dissertation, next I focus on reviewing research and theory related to key outcomes in the 4-day school week. I begin by discussing research focused on student achievement.

### **Student Achievement and the 4-Day School Week**

Student achievement and academic growth must be considered when adopting a four-day school week. Some studies have demonstrated at least that moving to a four-day school week does not result in student learning loss. Stephen Sawchuk (2021), for *Education Week*, reviewed several studies addressing the benefits and consequences of implementing a four-day school week. It was reported that the researchers found no significant difference in student proficiency for districts that implemented 4DSW. The studies they reviewed included one conducted by the RAND Corporation funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Kilburn et al., 2021), which used three methods to study the impact of a four-day school week. They interviewed more than four hundred (400) parents, teachers, administrators, and students in Idaho, New Mexico, and Oklahoma; all states have many districts using the four-day model. Also, they administered thousands of surveys to secondary students and the parents of elementary students in thirty-six (36) districts across those states and three (3) other states, where half were using the four-day model, and the other half were using a traditional five-day schedule. Lastly, they analyzed nearly a decade's worth of the student's academic data (i.e., test scores) across four-day and five-day districts in six (6) different states to look for student performance patterns (Kilburn et al., 2021).

The research conducted by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Kilburn et al., 2021) most stands out for what it revealed about student learning. They linked student growth with test-score data from a Stanford University project that used Federal data to adjust for the district poverty levels and other factors. Moreover, they compared similar districts implementing a four- and five-day week across those same periods. They concluded that there was no significant difference when looking at absolute measures of student proficiency. However, that changed when looking at growth over time. They discovered that student growth in the four-day districts began to decline after three years compared to the five-day districts (Sawchuk, 2021).

In another study, D. Mark Anderson and Mary Beth Walker (2015) used a difference-in-difference regression framework and 4<sup>th</sup>-grade reading and 5<sup>th</sup>-grade mathematics test data from the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) to evaluate and compare changes in test scores for schools that switched to a four-day schedule to schools that remained on a standard five-day schedule. Over one-third of the school districts in Colorado have adopted the four-day schedule. The statistical model used controlled for local economic conditions and school characteristics (i.e., student-teacher ratio and the student body's racial composition). The students in the four-day schedule demonstrated significant increases in math achievement. Moreover, there was an increase in reading achievement, but it was not statistically significant based on the usual benchmarks (Anderson & Walker, 2015).

Overall, the research on student academic achievement for students participating in a 4DSW is mixed. There is no definitive positive or negative impact on student achievement, but it is important to note at least that most studies show no negative impact.

### **Financial Implications and the 4-Day School Week**

As noted, one key reason to consider adopting 4DSW relates to costs and the potential for cost savings. I have found that a number of districts have implemented 4DSW for these reasons. For example, the Coast Mountain school district adopted a 4DSW in the

2003-04 school year after closing five schools and fearing more closures due to budget cuts. Like many school districts, Coast Mountain experienced a decline in their student enrollment, which resulted in less school funding because 81% of the district's funding was based on student enrollment. Combined with rising salaries and inflationary pressures, they had no other recourse but to close schools. Coast Mountain officials believed that a 4DSW would prevent more school closures as a result of the savings incurred by adopting a 4DSW. The 4DSW did result in savings of around 3-5% of the district's budget per year (The Tyee, 2007).

Cost savings can be seen in many ways when there is one less day of operations. School districts do not have to run the utilities at the same level in unoccupied buildings or burn fuel running bus routes on the days the students do not have class. Also, there is a saving in salaries because of the reduced hours of support staff, which includes secretaries, janitors, cafeteria workers, school nurses, and bus drivers. Classified employees saved \$250,000 of a \$14 million budget in a rural district in Oregon (Durr, 2003). A district in Nebraska saved \$1,000,000 per year, and another saved 1.6% of its operating budget (Ferak, 2006; Sagness & Slazman, 1993). A rural district in Idaho saved between \$60,000 and \$80,000 when they decided to switch to a 4DSW (Inman-Freitas, 1991).

### **Teacher Wellness and the 4-Day School Week**

In March 2022, AdoptAClassroom.org surveyed 4,665 PreK-12 teachers in public, private, and charter schools across the country to understand the current state of teaching. 85% of the teachers reported that they worked at a school where over 50% of their students participated in a free or reduced lunch program and would describe their school as high-needs. When asked how teaching had changed during the 2021-2022 school year, teachers responded: 81% said the overall workload had increased, 80% said they spent more time addressing students' mental health, 71% said they were spending more of their own money on classroom materials, 69% said they spent more instructional time getting students back on track due to learning loss, and 55% said they had less planning time due to staff shortages and other factors (Karbowski, 2022).

Teacher well-being and mental health in kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) have been a national concern throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. There has been substantial evidence suggesting teachers have been experiencing elevated stress and that it has been taking a toll. For example, Doan et al. (2023) reported that teachers were twice as likely to report experiencing higher occurrences of job-related stress in 2021 and 2022 than the general population of working adults. The National Education Association also unveiled its members' opinions of key issues teachers faced in public education during the pandemic (table 1 below). They found that many teachers were leaving the profession due to burnout, and 55% indicated they now planned on leaving their teaching careers earlier than they had originally intended (Jatkoff, 2022).

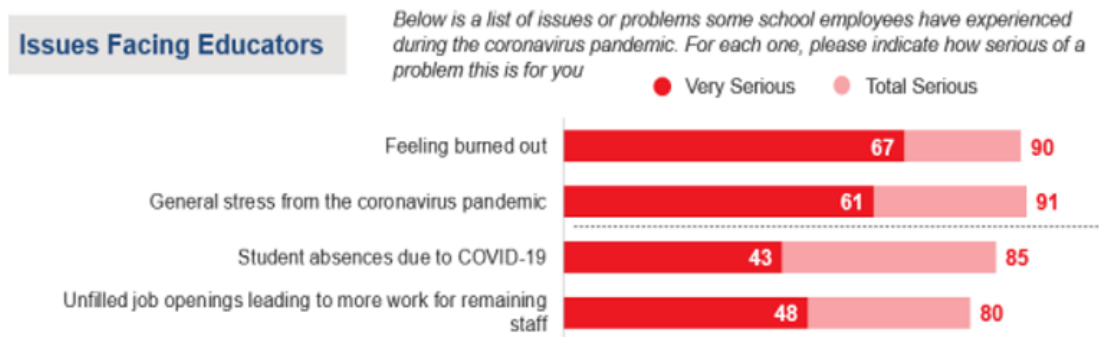


Figure 2: adapted from Jatkoff, 2022 – GBAO

The National Education Association defines teacher burnout as occurring when an educator has exhausted the personal and professional resources necessary to do the job. They say it is about more than just the ability to teach students. Burnout leads to demoralization, which can have long-term physical and emotional outcomes. When teachers feel demoralized, they start to believe that they can no longer perform at an adequate level to meet the needs of their students and that they can no longer meet the teaching profession's high standards (Walker, 2021).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), as of October 2022, 18 percent of public schools had one teaching vacancy, and 27 percent had multiple vacancies. When comparing high-poverty neighborhoods to low-poverty neighborhoods,

57 percent of the high-poverty neighborhoods reported having at least one teaching vacancy compared to 41 percent of public schools in low-poverty neighborhoods. Moreover, school districts with a high-minority student body had a higher percentage of teacher vacancies compared to schools with a low-minority student body (NCES, 2022).

The teacher shortage is compounded because there continues to be a decrease in students graduating with bachelor's degrees in education. These declines have affected the nation's elementary and secondary school teaching workforce (Schaeffer, 2022). Students across the United States are negatively affected by teacher burnout and the lack of qualified teachers. Students need their teachers to be mentally and physically well-rested to function and teach at a high level. "At first, it was a teacher shortage. Then, there was a teacher shortage crisis. Then it was teacher shortage catastrophe, and it just escalates," said Mark Kaisner, the president of the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools (as quoted in Pettypiece, 2023).

In my opinion, restoring teacher wellness should be the number one priority of school leaders and districts. The 4DSW will reduce teacher stress and burnout. Findings from the 2023 State of the American Teacher Survey reported that 23% of teachers said they were likely to leave their job by the end of the 2022-2023 school year because of stress and the number of hours they work per week. Additionally, more than half of teachers reported that access to well-being or mental health support was inadequate (Doan et al., 2023).

In my district, the impact of the nationwide teacher shortage and increasing turnover has created a State of Emergency. My teachers are exhausted. They are working longer hours and being asked to deal with multiple issues they have no control over. The mental health and physical health of the teachers is deteriorating. As a result, they are taking more time off, exacerbating the already high absenteeism in the district. To address this issue and mitigate teacher burnout, we need systemic change that will disrupt this current system that is not working in the best interest of the students and the staff. The summer is always a great time for teachers to relax and recharge, but we know more than



ever it is not enough to truly balance the demands of the school year. A 4DSW would allow school leaders and districts to prioritize the mental and emotional health of teachers by developing a school calendar that creates opportunities to make the work they do in the classroom less taxing physically, mentally, and emotionally (Eidex, 2022).

### **Work-Life Balance and the 4-Day School Week**

Teachers often feel undervalued, which has a direct effect on job satisfaction. They are among the nation's most educated, yet they earn far less on average than other highly educated workers (Newburger & Backhusen, 2022). We must treat teachers like professionals and provide them the time to adequately prepare lessons to meet their students' needs. Moving to a 4-day school week is one possible way to demonstrate that we value teachers and the work that they do. A 4DSW would create a unique opportunity to build a professional community devoted to teacher planning. The efficient use of planning will produce more focused instruction and allow teachers to design more efficient student assessments (Gilman & Yarbrough, 2006).

As Superintendents look for ways to create a positive work environment for their employees, the 4-day school week is growing in popularity, mainly because teachers believe it supports work/life balance. There is also evidence from several studies and reports that teacher absenteeism is lessened, and employee morale is improved when school districts implement a 4-day school week (Blankenship, 1984; Koki, 1992; Grau & Shaughnessy, 1987; Sagness & Salzan, 1993). While many schools have switched to a 4DSW to balance their budget, importantly, many have done so also/instead to improve the recruitment and retention of teachers and increase professional development opportunities to meet the needs of their teachers (Hewitt & Denny, 2018).

Lisa Rivera, who taught in a K-12 private school for 15 years that followed a 4-day school week, stated that she rarely experienced burnout and often felt refreshed: "I highly appreciated this schedule for many reasons, and it was clear that my fellow teachers preferred it as well. Many of us used Fridays at home for planning and grading, as well as

taking our children to the dentist, doctor, and other necessary appointments” (Rivera, 2022, p. 159).

### **Teacher Attendance and the 4-Day School Week**

To create a better quality of life for their teachers, Saskatchewan’s Prairie South School Division switched to a 4-day school week (Sanderson, 2015). The Coast Mountains School District adopted a 4-day school week calendar during the 2003-2004 school year to cut costs. They reported that it produced cost savings and positively impacted a reduction of staff absenteeism (Plourde, 2007). School districts that adopted a 4-day school week have reduced absenteeism.

Anderson and Beesley (2007), in a review of literature on this topic, reported that each study or alternate source they reviewed mentioned that student attendance had gone up and teacher absences had gone down. Improved teacher attendance was attributed to the teacher’s ability to attend necessary appointments (i.e., doctor and dentist) on their day off from school and care for sick family members when needed (Harp, 1995; Rivera, 2022). The decline in teacher absenteeism saves money for the district because fewer substitutes are needed. A suburban district in Idaho saved \$25,000, while a district in Louisiana saved \$10,000 on substitute teachers (Sagness & Salzman, 1993; Johnston, 1997).

### **Teacher Recruitment and Retention and the 4-Day School Week**

School districts with 4DSWs have also reported better success retaining teachers than neighboring districts operating on a traditional 5-day school week calendar (Times, 2016). The 4DSW calendar has helped districts compete with other districts that offer high salaries, which has helped recruit and retain teachers (Dam, 2006; Ferak, 2006; Rouse, 2006). It has proven to be a great recruitment tool. Teachers describe the 4DSW as a peak and a deciding factor when accepting a teaching assignment. Teachers have transferred to neighboring districts and embraced longer commutes to work in 4DSW districts. Superintendents and school leaders have explained that more teachers are applying for

positions in their districts due to moving to the 4DSW. According to one superintendent in Kiburn et al (2021):

There was a time here, where we didn't have a certified high school math teacher, and that was because not one single applicant applied. That's how dire the recruiting effort are for some of those critical positions. And I will say that the 4DSW has, with absolute certainty, improved our ability to attract candidates, and it has also improved the quality of applicants that we're getting (p. 62).

A 4DSW tends to be popular with teachers because it reduces travel time and increases personal time. Moreover, it increases teacher collaboration and planning time by providing a day for teachers to train and use student data to drive their instructional delivery. A survey by Thompson et al. (2021) found that almost two-thirds of the districts that adopted a 4DSW did so because of the current teacher labor market. Nevertheless, we still need to fully understand the impacts of the 4DSW on recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers, making this an area ripe for future research (Thompson et al., 2022).

### **Employee Perceptions and the 4-Day School Week**

An annotated bibliography of compressed work weeks (Hung, 1996) revealed that employees perceived personal benefits and job satisfaction related to adopting the 4-day work week. Managers also associated the 4DWW with increased job satisfaction and reduced absenteeism. The evidence confirmed that a 4DWW made employees and managers happy (Hartman & Weaver, 1977). Research drawing on thirty-one academic articles on the 4DWW demonstrated favorable results when looking at morale, job satisfaction, and reduces turnover and absenteeism. The quantitative results relied on opinion data showing higher perceptions of work-life balance, job satisfaction, and stress reduction (Campbell, 2023).

Specific to education, a study by Turner et al. (2017) on staff perceptions of the 4-day school week (4DSW) revealed that 91% of the staff preferred to work in 4DSW school

districts. Moreover, both classified and unclassified support it, even when there was a change in compensation for those who were paid by the hour. 136 school staff from three school districts responded to the 4DSW perception survey. The 13 items of the 17-item survey instrument had a four-point Likert-type scale to measure the staff's agreement with the statements referring to the impact the change in the school week had on school practices and the community.

## **Chapter Summary**

Overall, then, it appears that there are several potential advantages related to switching to a 4DSW:

- Financial savings
- Boosted teacher morale
- Increased attendance rates for teachers and students
- Improved recruitment and retention of good teachers
- Increased time for planning and professional development opportunities

Evidence related to student learning impacts is more mixed, but in most cases at least appears that it doesn't decrease student achievement. Taking all of this together, I have concluded that the 4-day school week may be the systemic change needed to save the teaching profession. A 4-day school week, I believe, would allow districts to put the best version of the teachers in front of their students. A healthy, well-rested teacher would benefit student engagement and, hopefully, academic achievement. Over my twenty-eight years in education, I have learned that the teacher is the essential variable in the classroom. As the superintendent, I am responsible for creating a healthy work environment, and a four-day school week would allow me to meet the needs of both my students and teachers.

In conducting this review, I have also discovered that there are some gaps in the literature in the area of teacher perception as it relates to teacher attendance, teacher work-life balance, and teacher recruitment and retention regarding a 4-day school week. I intend

to use my research study to add to the existing body of research pertaining to the 4DSW, while at the same time gather relevant information for my context.

The next chapter will explain the study's methodology used to analyze teachers' perceptions of a 4-day school week.

### **Chapter 3**

Chapter Three includes a description of the research methodology and procedures utilized in this study to give rise to the perceptions of teachers working a 4-day school week. Qualified teachers are essential to student success and the future of public education. The 4DSW can truncate teacher vacancies and shortages. The findings from this study will provide additional information for school leaders and Boards of Education considering transitioning to a 4DSW, particularly in teacher recruitment and retention. This chapter details the problem of practice, research questions, data collection methods, instruments, participants, data analysis techniques utilized in the study, and ethical considerations.

#### **Research Approach**

The purpose of this primarily qualitative, mixed method study (using surveys and interviews) was to examine teachers' perceptions of switching from a 5-day school week to a 4-day school week. I was particularly interested in gauging teachers' perceptions regarding employee attendance, teacher recruitment and retention, and teacher wellness/work-life balance. A mixed-method study using surveys and interviews was used to collect data on teachers' perceptions of switching from a 5-day school week to a 4-day school week.

As noted in the previous chapter, I discovered that the research on teacher perception of the 4DSW was limited; most extant research has focused on financial savings and student achievement. School districts battling the pandemic's negative effects are moving to a 4DSW to increase teacher retention and satisfaction. The extra day off allows teachers to catch up on lesson planning, grading, and taking care of personal matters (Ward, 2022). Teacher wellness is a critical issue that must be studied if we want to increase the number of people choosing teaching as a profession and to retain those teachers who are currently in the teaching profession.

I used Phenomenological Theory to identify and understand the lived experience of teachers working in a 4DSW district. *Phenomenology is consistent with* a qualitative approach whereby the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about phenomena as described by study participants. Phenomenology is a philosophical approach, initially articulated by Edmund Husserl. It aims to produce an account of lived experience in its own terms rather than one prescribed by pre-existing theoretical preconceptions. According to Husserl (1998), it tries to explain a phenomena's nature, essence, and veracity. Martin Heidegger, a disciple of Husserl, rejected the idea of suspending personal opinions for the interpretive narration to the description and embraced another school of phenomenology termed hermeneutic phenomenology. Hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on the subjective experiences of individuals and groups to find the genuine objective nature of the things as realized by the individual and belief. Interpretations are all we have, and description itself is an interpretive process (Kafle, 2011).

An Interpretative Phenomenological Theory provided the opportunity to get a close and detailed understanding of the phenomenon (i.e., 4DSW). Understanding that humans are sense-making organisms', teachers who participated in this study were given an avenue to share how the 4DSW has affected their professional and personal lives (Smith & Osborn, 2015; Smith & Nizza, 2022). Teachers could tell their stories without fear of distortions, resulting in a rich abundance of data. Moreover, it illuminated any ambiguity and tension among the teachers participating in the study (Alase, 2017). An analysis of the data was aimed to discover the essence or common themes surrounding situations and conditions surrounding the teachers' experiences (Padgett, 1998).

This study situates more broadly in an Action Research approach, as my overall goal is to learn more about 4DSW so that we can continue to refine our activities. This study's focus on educator perceptions and experiences relates to my broader interest in understanding and improving the 4DSW in my district. Action research has a rich tradition in education and is especially useful when investigating whether changes in traditional programs, practices, or activities result in desired improvements and/or require

additional adjustments and iterations. Organized in a cycle that identifies a problem through careful observation, reflects on the dimensions of the problem, designs a change to address the problem, implements the change, and assesses its effectiveness through watchful observations. Action Research permits a basis for theorizing and knowledge production. Moreover, it is a practical tool for solving the problems people are experiencing in their professional and personal lives (Hatch, 2023). It assumes social phenomena are best understood when interventions are introduced, and those phenomena are observed to identify the effects of those actions on a unique social problem. Action Research is an excellent method for connecting research and practice to solve problems (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

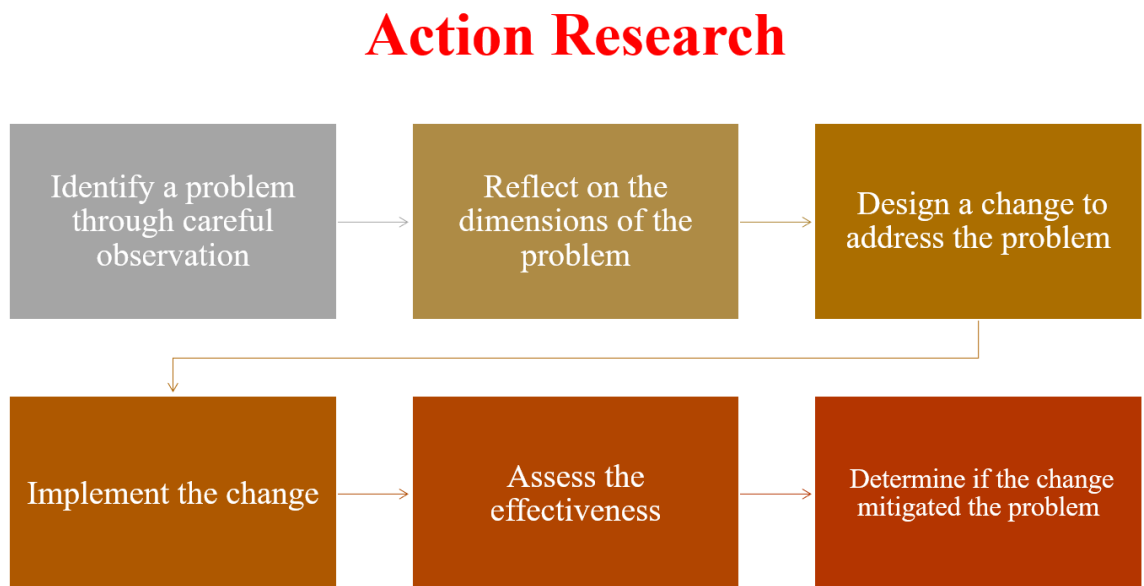


Figure 3

### **Data Collection Instruments**

Structured interviews were used to uncover the meaning derived from the participants as they began to make sense of their lived experiences. Often, meaning is hidden from direct observation; therefore, the interviews offer a tool to bring meaning and understanding to an event or experience (Hatch, 2023). Interview questions were



designed to capture teachers' perceptions of a 4-day school week. There were three structured questions designed and asked aligned to the Problem Statement (See Appendix A). All teachers interviewed reviewed and signed a consent form (See Appendix C). The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Question one collected data on employee attendance, question two collected data on teacher recruitment and retention, and question three collected data on teacher wellness/work-life balance.

Surveys are a method used to collect data and analyze the results in various fields of study. They are an excellent choice when inquiring about the characteristics, preferences, opinions, or beliefs of a group of people (McCombes, 2023). Online pre- and post-surveys asked the same three questions (See Appendix B).

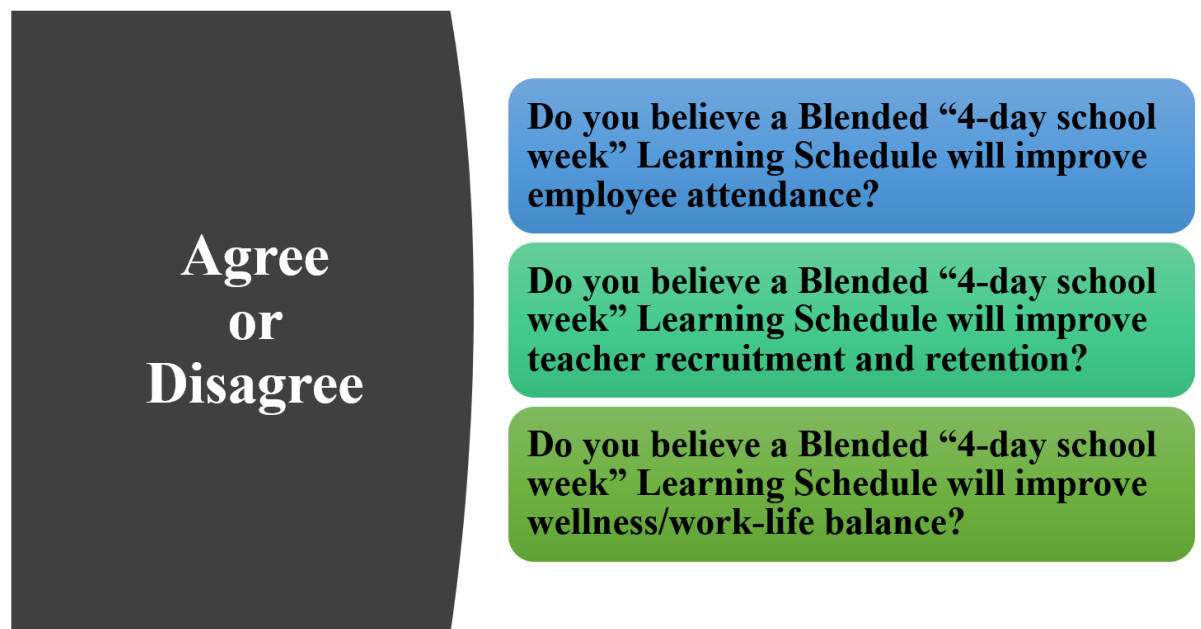


Figure 4

The mixed-method study approach, using a combination of surveys and structured interview questions, allowed me to collect data about the teachers' preferences and thoughts about the 4DSW. The surveys were an excellent instrument to measure

perceptions, which are unobservable. I collected data about a population that I could not observe directly because of the number of teachers in the district in an unobtrusive nature. Moreover, the oral structured interviews created an opportunity to personally connect with the teachers to gather more in-depth information regarding their perceptions of the 4DSW.

### **Participants**

Participants of this study involved teachers who were working in one small urban school district in the Midwest during the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years; these teachers completed both a pre-and post-online survey. All the participants in the study are anonymous. The eight (8) teachers are a representative sample of the school district's population, including elementary, middle, high, and alternative schools. Also, they represent regular education, intervention specialist, and Title I teachers.

Teacher	Experience	Subject Taught	Grade Level	Gender
#1	23 years	Resource	Middle Alternative School	Female
#2	25 years	Mathematics	High School	Female
#3	17 years	Resource	Elementary Alternative School	Female
#4	25 years	All	Elementary	Female
#5	3 years	ELA	Middle School (Inclusion)	Female
#6	28 years	ELA	Middle School	Female
#7	20	ELA/Math	Elementary School (Inclusion)	Male
#8	13 years	Title I Reading	Elementary School	Female

Table 1: Participates

### **Researcher**

The researcher has been in education for twenty-nine years, working five years as a teacher and twenty-four as an administrator. He is currently the superintendent of a small Midwest urban school district, where he has served as the instructional leader for eight years. As the instructional leader, the researcher is committed to leading and managing the school district and is devoted to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the school district's management and operations. He identifies as a transformational leader, a leadership style that emphasizes restructuring the school environment by improving its conditions and cultural climate (Stewart, 2006).

An effective organization requires a leader who can transform the culture through shared assumptions, values, and norms (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders understand the importance of making a compelling case for change and inspiring a shared vision while seeking broad input by encouraging everyone to think of a new and better future. A transformational leader instills a sense of urgency and self-confidence in their followers by establishing clear goals that can be progress monitored. By using these strategies, transformational leaders are able to create a culture of innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement, which is essential for driving organizational success (Hay, 2006).

Transformational Leaders are distinguished by four key components, known as the 4 Is of transformational leadership (Avolio et al., 1991):

1. Idealized Influence: Charismatic vision and behavior that inspires others to follow.
2. Inspirational Motivation: Capacity to motivate others to commit to the vision.
3. Intellectual Stimulation: Encouraging innovation and creativity.
4. Individualized Consideration: Coaching to the specific needs of followers.

The researcher most identifies with inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation due to his ability to motivate his school district to reimagine the school week by presenting a clear and compelling vision of the future. After highlighting the problem of teacher absenteeism, he empowered his staff to innovate and find creative solutions to this persistent issue (Barbuto, 2005).

During the 2022-2023 school year, the researcher started to see how tired or burnt out his teachers were. The teacher absenteeism was high, and he needed help finding substitute teachers. To support the buildings, he, the superintendent, members of the district administrative team, and even Board of Education members covered classes and provided supervision throughout the district. See the percentage of teacher and staff absences below.

2022-23	Aug 21%	Sept 34%	Oct 41%	Nov 37%	Dec 35%
---------	---------	----------	---------	---------	---------

Table 2: Staff Absenteeism

After reading an article titled “Can Four-Day School Weeks Keep Teachers From Leaving?” The article talks about how districts around the country were adopting a 4DSW to recruit and retain teachers because post-pandemic stress has them leaving the teaching profession to focus on their wellness and work-life balance (Tamez-Robledo, 2022). In the 2023-2024 school year, his district was the first in the Midwest to adopt a Blended Learning Calendar (i.e., 4DSW). He has always strived to provide a voice for those who may feel marginalized or under-represented because of race, ethnicity, or economic status. As a transformational leader, he aims to provide support, resources, and opportunities to his students, families, and staff.

### **Data Collection**

Survey administration was conducted by sending an online pre-survey to staff in May 2023 to collect baseline data and a post-survey in September 2023 via school email

to analyze the teacher perceptions after implementing the 4-day school week (See Appendix D). Based on the responses to the post-survey, nine potential teachers who completed both the pre-and post-survey were verbally asked, and eight teachers agreed to participate in interviews. An informed consent form (See Appendix C) was required from each teacher before participating. The teachers were interviewed in person. All interviews were recorded and transcribed electronically using Otter.ai.inc. software in September 2023.

### **Data Analysis**

The survey responses were collected and processed using Google Sheets. Inductive analysis was used to construct meaning from the recorded interviews to understand the teachers' perceptions and analyze their shared experiences. Coding was used with all transcripts to identify patterns and themes presented in the data. Qualitative analysis began with organizing the data into two categories: agree or disagree. Creswell and Creswell (2018) urge researchers to follow seven sequential steps when conducting qualitative data analysis.



Figure 5

### **Ethical Concerns**

As a researcher, the ethics was a priority throughout the study. The risks to human subjects participating in the study were minimal. All participants were over 18 years of age and did not demonstrate any impaired mental capacity. Some thought was given to interviewing subordinates and how the power dynamics between the superintendent and the teacher could affect the sharing of information. This was discussed when the consent form was reviewed with the participants. The researcher assured the participants that there would be no negative or positive repercussions related to their participation, so they could speak openly and honestly. Furthermore, the informed consent form was signed with each teacher prior to the interview.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter three described the research methodology and explained the primary purpose of the qualitative, mixed-method study (i.e., surveys and interviews) used to

examine teacher's perceptions of a 4DSW. The next chapter will analyze data from teachers who transitioned to a 4DSW at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year, focusing on their perceptions about employee attendance, teacher recruitment and retention, and teacher wellness/work-life balance.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Finding**

The purpose of this primarily qualitative, mixed method study was to examine the experiences of teachers who transitioned from working on a traditional 5-day week school calendar to a 4-day school week blended learning calendar. This chapter contains the results of a qualitative mixed-method study. Data was collected through surveys and interviews to investigate whether a 4-day school week would improve the teachers' perceptions regarding employee attendance, teacher recruitment and retention, and teacher wellness/work-life balance.

The study analyzed data from teachers who worked in an urban school district in the Midwest during the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years. The school district was the first in the Midwest to adopt a 4DSW blended learning calendar. During the 2023-2024 school year, students attended school Tuesday through Friday and work remotely online on Mondays. The teachers worked in the building on Mondays to plan lessons, collaborate with peers, and use data to drive instruction. The results of this study will add to the current limited research about teachers' perception of the impact of a 4DSW (Turner et al., 2017).



## Guiding Questions

For both interviews and survey, I focused on three main guiding questions (Figure 4).



- 1- Do you believe a Blended “4-Day” Learning Schedule will improve employee attendance?
- 2- Do you believe a Blended “4 Day” Learning Schedule will improve teacher recruitment and retention?
- 3- Do you believe a Blended “4 Day” Learning Schedule will improve teacher wellness/work-life balance?

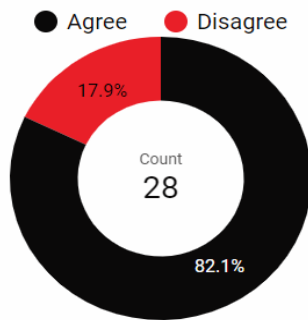
Figure 6: Guiding Questions

## **Survey**

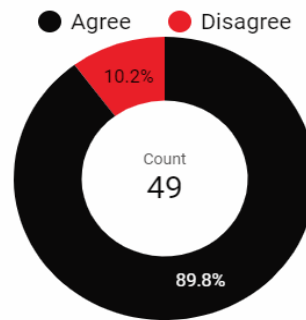
Teachers were invited to participate in an online pre-and post-survey for the study through the district's email listserv. Twenty-eight teachers (approximately 22% of teachers in the district) completed the pre-survey in May 2023, and forty-nine completed the post-survey in September 2023. Teachers were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the three guiding questions.

The teachers' answers changed when the 4-day school week (4DSW) was implemented during the 2023-2024 school year. The data showed that the teachers' perceptions were more favorable when asked if they believed employee attendance, teacher recruitment and retention, and teacher wellness/work-life balance would improve due to the 4DSW. Perhaps most notably, on the third question (regarding wellness / work-life balance), 75% agreed in May 2023 and the percentage increased to 100% in September 2023. In other words, all forty-nine teachers agreed that the 4-day school week improved their wellness and work-life balance.

Question: Do you believe a Blended 4-Day Learning Schedule will improve employee attendance rates?

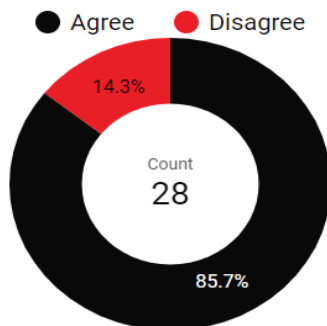


May 2023

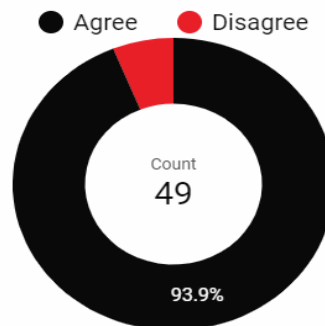


September 2023

Question: Do you believe a Blended 4-Day Learning Schedule will improve teacher recruitment and retenti...

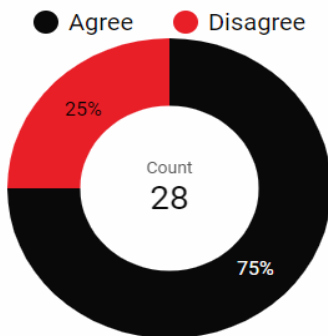


May 2023

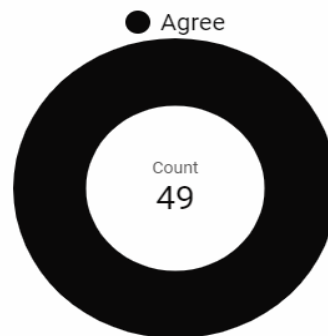


September 2023

Question: Do you believe a Blended 4-Day Learning Schedule will improve teacher wellness/work-life bala...



May 2023



September 2023

Figure 7: Survey Results

Overall, I took these survey results as an indication the 4DSW positively affected the teachers' perceptions. The percentages for all three guided questions increased from May 2023 to September 2023. On October 18, 2023, a local news reporter asked me to be interviewed about how teachers felt about the 4-Day Blended Learning Calendar and what they were saying about not having students on Mondays. I sent an email telling teachers about the interview and asking them to send me their thoughts to share during my interview. The teacher's emails confirmed the success of the 4DSW. See what they wanted me to share below.

"The changes to Mondays are the single most impactful change that has happened in my career. The time to collaborate with my team has been helpful as I acclimate to a new grade level. We are able to share what's working and what we need help with. During our work time I'm able to spend quality time creating meaningful lesson for my students based on their interest and needs. I enjoy coming to work more than I ever had. Thank you." (Kindergarten teacher, fourteen years veteran)

"Monday has given me time to meet with my team sufficiently to discuss data, students, and most especially time to navigate through a new curriculum with my team to make sure we are using it effectively. It has also allowed me to plan for the week with centers and differentiation that help to reach all students, IEP, gifted, and everyone in between. It has also had a huge impact on my time outside of contracted hours. Where I used to spend time after school copying and planning, I now can effectively use my planning time during the week for those things, because we accomplish so much on Mondays. Thank you for acknowledging and giving the gift of time, it is much needed as an educator!" (1st grade teacher, twenty-two-year veteran)

"The Monday data days help me plan effectively and thoroughly as opposed to only having a 45-minute plan periods each day. I am able to collaborate with my team, ask questions, and think through each and every one of my lesson plans. It also allows me to plan ahead rather than just a couple days at a time. It makes me feel more confident

and knowledgeable about the content I am providing my students.” (3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher, first year teacher)

“As a first-year teacher, not really know what to expect I have felt overly prepared when it comes to planning my lessons. I have the ability to plan 2 weeks at a time, but also alter my lesson plans when I see students who are struggling and may need more time on that particular topic or if I need to add in another lesson that will further support the topic. I also an able to differentiate more of my lessons for my students who ae gifted and may need more of a challenge.” (8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, first year teacher)

## Interviews

All teachers who completed the pre-survey in May 2023 and the post-survey in September 2023 (N= [16]) were verbally asked if they would volunteer to be interviewed as a part of the research study. Eight teachers volunteered and agreed to be interviewed.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Notes from the interviews were coded and analyzed to create themes.

### 1. Do you believe a Blended “4-day school week” Learning Schedule will improve employee attendance? Why do you think this is happening?

Teacher	Agree/Disagree	Perception of why this is happening	Themes
Teacher #1	Agree	not as much stress, extra time to plan, don’t have to at home, better able to prepare for the week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less stress</li> <li>• Planning time</li> <li>• Better prepared</li> </ul>

Teacher #2	Disagree	It varies for all the employees, I was out 2 weeks because of surgery that was scheduled in July, peers have had unexpected sicknesses or sick family members to care for, it's not the 4DSW it's just been life	
Teacher #3	Agree	More staff members attending committee meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending meetings</li> </ul>
Teacher #4	Agree	People have a positive attitude & feel energized, not being bogged down with paperwork, teachers are not losing their planning bell to internal substitute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive attitude</li> <li>• Feeling energized</li> <li>• Planning time</li> </ul>
Teacher #5	Agree	Scheduling appointments and/or doctor appointments on Monday, more time to work with my team to talk about meeting the needs of our frequent fliers, we are able to talk about students who are often overlooked	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointments</li> <li>• Collaboration time</li> </ul>
Teacher #6	Agree	Medical appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointments</li> </ul>
Teacher #7	Agree	Time to plan, teachers are not as stressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning time</li> <li>• Less stress</li> </ul>

Teacher #8	Agree	Schedule doctor and dentist appointments, the staff absent list is smaller this year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointments</li> </ul>
------------	-------	--	--

Table 3: Interview Question One

Seven (7) out of the eight (8) teachers interviewed said they believed that a 4DSW would improve employee attendance. Their answers provide insight on why they believe attendance has improved. Teachers shared that they felt less stressed and energized because of extra planning time and being able to better prepare for the week. Teachers talked about being able to use their Mondays to collaborate with peers to talk about student data and having an opportunity to talk about students who are often overlooked. Moreover, the 4DSW made it easier to schedule appointments (i.e., doctor, dentist, or meeting with their children’s teachers), which resulted in not having to take off work. Employee attendance drastically improved during the 2023-2024 school year based on the January 2024 Staff Attendance Report.

22-23	Aug 21%	Sept 34%	Oct 41%	Nov 37%	Dec 35%	Jan 22%
23-24	Aug 8%	Sept 15%	Oct 14%	Nov 9%	Dec 9%	Jan 8%

Table 4: January 2024 Staff Attendance Report

**2. Do you believe a Blended “4-day school week” Learning Schedule will improve teacher recruitment and retention? Why do you think this is happening?**

Teacher	Agree/Disagree	Perception of why this is happening	Themes
---------	----------------	-------------------------------------	--------

Teacher #1	Agree	Only have to work with students 4 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4DSW</li> </ul>
Teacher #2	Agree	Maybe because of the four-day week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4DSW</li> </ul>
Teacher #3	Agree	I have friends who are asking if we are hiring, Teachers are really struggling across the United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4DSW</li> </ul>
Teacher #4	Agree	We were able hire a few student teachers, more planning time with co-workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retaining or hiring student teachers</li> <li>• Collaboration time</li> </ul>
Teacher #5	Agree	getting attention from teachers who never considered coming to the district, teachers are saying they are not leaving the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4DSW</li> </ul>
Teacher #6	Disagree	Culture is having an impact on them, teaching is tough	
Teacher #7	Agree	Positions are being filled a lot quicker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More teachers applying for jobs</li> </ul>
Teacher #8	Agree	There's a huge teacher crisis and shortage right not now, I have friend from other districts who teach at private	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4DSW</li> </ul>



		and public schools asking about the 4DSW and saying you're lucky	
--	--	--	--

Table 5: Interview Question Two

Seven (7) out of the eight (8) teachers interviewed said they believed that a 4DSW would improve teacher recruitment and retention. Many teachers have expressed that they are happy with the 4DSW and are not leaving. Teachers shared that they had friends from other districts who teach at private and public schools asking if our district is hiring and saying how lucky they are to have a 4DSW. Also, the current student teachers are inquiring about teaching opportunities in the district.

**3. Do you believe a Blended “4-day school week” Learning Schedule will improve wellness/work-life balance? Why do you think this is happening?**

Teacher	Agree/Disagree	Perception of why this is happening	Themes
Teacher #1	Agree	Not working over the weekend, not staying after school, more time to spend with family, able to clean my house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not working on the weekend</li> <li>• Not staying after-school</li> <li>• Spending more time with family</li> <li>• Able to clean my house</li> </ul>

Teacher #2	Agree	I don't get stress on Sunday about being preparing for Monday, not staying after-school on Fridays to prepare for the next week, I can work with my co-workers on Mondays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less stress</li> <li>• Not stay after-school</li> <li>• Collaboration time</li> </ul>
Teacher #3	Agree	I am able to use Mondays to better communicate with my parents, I am able to monitor the students' progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate with families</li> <li>• Monitor progress</li> </ul>
Teacher #4	Agree	Getting lesson plans done to meet individual students needs on Mondays, not sitting at the kitchen table with a stack of papers on school nights and weekends, able to spend more time with my husband, more time to do professional reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning time</li> <li>• Spending more time with family</li> <li>• Professional development opportunities</li> </ul>
Teacher #5	Agree	Able to focus more on my child who is struggling in school, which has helped my mental health, more time to spend with my husband on the weekend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family time</li> <li>• Less Stress</li> <li>• Helps my mental health</li> </ul>
Teacher #6	Disagree	I'm constantly stressing out about trying to cram 100% of curriculum into 80%, I love having Mondays to plan with my team	

Teacher #7	Agree	Allows me more time to reflect on my work, I spend less time at home just thinking and stressing about work, spending the weekend more time with family, watching my grandkids on Fridays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time to reflect</li> <li>• Less Stress</li> <li>• Family time</li> </ul>
Teacher #8	Agree	Mentally it makes a difference, more time to plan, not staying after-school or coming in on the weekend, time to collaborate with my team on Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health</li> <li>• Plan time</li> <li>• Not staying after-school or working on the weekend</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> </ul>

Table 6: Interview Question Three

Seven (7) out of the eight (8) teachers interviewed believed that a 4DSW would improve wellness/work-life balance. Teachers excitedly expressed how the 4DSW improved their wellness and work-life balance because they did not have to work on the weekend, did not have to stay after school, and were able to spend more time with their families. One teacher said that the 4DSW allowed them more time to reflect on their work and that they spent less time at home thinking and stressing about work. They explained how they could spend more time with their family and grandkids on the weekends. Another teacher said that the 4DSW makes a mental difference because they can focus on their own child struggling in school. Lastly, a teacher reflected on not having to sit at the kitchen table with a stack of papers on school nights and weekends, allowing them more time to do professional reading.

## **Chapter Summary**

Data was collected and analyzed from surveys and interviews. The emerging themes support the teacher's perception of the positive impact of the 4DSW as it relates to attendance, recruitment/retention, and wellness/work-life balance. I have witnessed firsthand how the 4DSW has affected teachers professionally and personally, dramatically improving the educational environment in the district.

The next chapter will discuss the implications for educational leaders and Boards of Education considering a 4DSW and recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter 5**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS WITH RESPECT TO THE LITERATURE**

The four-day work week has attracted global attention post-pandemic (i.e., COVID-19). There have been several academic articles that have focused on the 4DWW. Unfortunately, the scholarly research is ambiguous, requiring more contemporary research (Campbell, 2023). Similarly, the 4DSW has been intriguing to superintendents and Boards of Education. More than 2,100 schools in over 900 districts are operating a 4DSW calendar, many hoping it will curtail teacher shortages and burnout by creating a less stressful profession (Hall, 2024). Little is known about the actual impacts of the 4DSW on the teacher labor market (Thompson et al., 2022). Moreover, research on teacher perception of the effectiveness of the 4DSW to improve teacher attendance, recruitment and retention, and wellness/work-life balance is limited.

### **Research Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to examine how the implementation of a 4DSW affected the teacher perceptions of attendance, recruitment and retention, and wellness/work-life balance after transitioning from a traditional 5-day school week to a 4-day school week at the start of the 2023-2024 school year. The literature review revealed gaps in teacher perception. Therefore, this research gathered relevant information to add to the existing body of research. This chapter includes conclusions drawn from the surveys and interviews, implications for practice, recommendations for practice, and recommendations for future research on the 4DSW.

### **Conclusions**

This research showed that transitioning from a 5-day school week to a 4-day school week positively affected teachers' perceptions. The survey showed a 7% increase when asked if a 4DSW would improve employee attendance, an 8% increase in teacher

recruitment and retention, and a 25% increase in teacher wellness/work-life balance. 100% of the teachers who completed the survey said that transitioning to 4DSW week improved their wellness/work-life balance. Moreover, the interviews reinforce the positive take-aways. Teachers believed attendance improved because employees felt less stressed and could use Mondays to plan and collaborate with peers. They felt that recruitment and retention would improve because their peers shared how excited they were about 4DSW and how friends from neighboring districts contacted them inquiring about possible job openings for the 2024-2025 school year. Overwhelmingly, teachers communicated how the 4DSW improved their wellness/work-life balance by allowing them to spend more time with their families and attend to their personal affairs.

As stated in chapter one, I hoped to investigate whether a 4DSW would positively affect teachers' experiences in my suburban Midwest school district and mitigate teacher burnout. The findings of this research are consistent and affirm my belief that a 4DSW would improve teacher attendance and wellness/work-life balance. It is too early to declare if recruitment and retention have improved because we are just entering the hiring season.

### **Implications for Practice**

We transitioned to a 4DSW to support our teachers and students. We realized that the teachers needed more time to plan for our students. We have a district where we have students who come in at all levels, and teachers need the opportunity to plan appropriately to meet the individual needs of those students. So, when we switched to the 4DSW, it had to do with providing teachers time to collaborate and using student data to drive instruction. Our students attend school Tuesday through Friday, and teachers come to work Monday through Friday. The most challenging work comes with planning, and our teachers spend their Mondays reviewing data and working on lesson plans.

Student achievement is essential. When teachers are giving adequate time to prepare for their students, we see it in the area of student growth. Teachers need both instructional

time and planning time. They need time to review the curriculum, evaluate, and assess why students are struggling to adjust their lesson plans (Levitan, 2023). The 4DSW addresses teacher burnout or emotional exhaustion, which can adversely impact student achievement (Miller et al., 2007). Well-rested teachers can invest time in researching best practices and being innovative to positively impact student outcomes (Frenzel et al., 2021).

The 4DSW is about saving the teaching profession by treating teachers as professionals. We would never ask a doctor to do surgery without being able to review their patient's chart or a lawyer to go into a courtroom without being able to study their legal briefs to address their client's needs. However, we ask teachers to go into classrooms daily inadequately prepared when they are responsible for teaching and guiding our future leaders. Pre-pandemic teachers were undervalued; many thought teaching was easy and that anybody could do their job. Through the pandemic, they learned that teaching is tough and that we must respect the profession and teachers' work.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

The decision to transition to a 4DSW school cannot be taken lightly. School leaders must review their teacher and student data to make an informed decision that can be articulated to all stakeholders (i.e., parents, students, local businesses, and community leaders) as to how a 4DSW would positively impact the school district. Although many school districts are implementing 4DSW. What works for one school district may not work for another school district. The decision to transition to 4DSW must be approved by the Board of Education, which makes this a local decision. School leaders should consider staff attendance, salaries, and recruitment and retention. They should also consider student attendance, achievement, and preparedness to matriculate to college or enter the workforce.

## Recommendations for Future Research

This study is limited because the 4DSW research comprised of one school district for one school year. Therefore, the findings are particular to that suburban Midwest school district. I recommend extending this study for three to five more years to study the effects of the 4DSW on student achievement and teacher recruitment and retention while continuing to collect data on employee attendance and their perceptions of wellness/work-life balance as a result of implementing a 4DSW.

## Chapter Summary

This study aimed to analyze the impact of a four-day school week on teacher perceptions. Surveys and interviews showed that the 4DSW positively impacted teachers' perceptions about employee attendance, teacher recruitment and retention, and wellness/work-life balance. The data that most stand out is the 25% increase when teachers were asked if the 4DSW improved their wellness/work-life balance, which jumped from 75% to 100% of respondents responding in the affirmative.

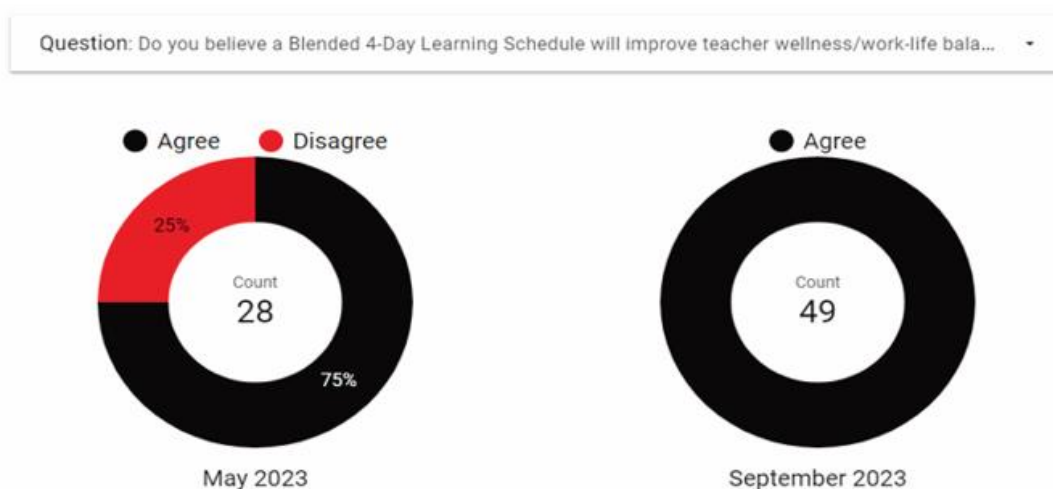


Figure 7



## References

- Alase, A. (2017). The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A guide to a good qualitative research approach. *International journal of education and literacy studies*, 5(2), 9-19.
- Allen, J. (2022, May 13). More Texas school districts move to four-day week amid te. CBS NEWS Texas
- 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.
- Avolio, J. B., Waldman, A. D., & Yammarino, F. J. (1991). The Four I's of Transformational Leadership. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 15(4), 9-16.
- Barbuto, J. E. (2025) Motivation and transactional, charismatic, and transformational Leadership: a test of antecedents. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 11(4), 26-40.
- Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York: The Free Press.
- Bass, B. M., & Avolil, B. J. (1993). Transformational leadership and organizational culture. *Public Administration Quarterly*, 17(1), 112-121.
- Beesley, A. D. & Anderson, C. (2007). Rural Research Brief: The Four-Day School Week: Information and Recommendations. *The rural educator*, 29(1), 48-55.
- Bhattacharjee, A. (2012). *Social science research: Principles, methods, and practices*. University of South Florida.
- Blankenship, T. (1984). These school systems swear by the four-day school week because students work harder and face fewer distractions. *The American School Board Journal*, 171(8), 32-33.
- Bird, R, C. (2010). Four-Day Work Weeks: Old Lessons, New Questions. *Connecticut Law Review*, 42(4), 1059-1080.
- Bond, J.T., Galinsky, E., & Swanberg, J. E. (1998). *The 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce*. New York, NY: Families and work Institute.
- Campbell, T.T. (2023). The four-day work week: A chronological, systematic review of The academic literature. *Management Review Quarterly*, 1-17.

- Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J. D. (2018). Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and Mixed methods approaches. Fifth edition. Los Angeles, SAGE.
- Czachor, E. M. (2023, August 7). More U.S. school districts are shifting to a 4-day week. Here's why. CBS News.
- Dam, A. (2006). The 4 Day School Week. Denver, CO: Colorado Department of Education.
- Doan, S., Steiner, E. D., Pandey, R., & Woo, A. (2023). Teacher Well-Being and Intentions to Leave. *RAND Corporation*.
- Durr, G. (2003). Four-day school week? State Legislatures, 29(5), 21.
- Donis-Keller, C. & Silvernail, D. L., (2009). Review of Evidence on Four-Day School Week.
- Eidex., (2022, August 18). Make Teacher Wellness a Priority Now (and All Year Round!).
- Facer, R. L. & Wadsworth, L. (2010). Four-Day Work Weeks: Current Research and Practice. *Connecticut Law Review*, 42(4), 1031-1046.
- Feaster, R. A. (2002). The Effects of the Four-Day School Week in Custer, South Dakota. (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Dakota; UMI No. 3055138).
- Ferak, J. (2006). Four-day week makes the grade. *Omaha World-Herald B*, 1.
- Frenzel, A. C., Daniels, L. M., & Buric, I. (2021). Teacher emotions in the classroom and their implications for students. *Education Psychologist*.
- Garcia, E., & Weiss, E. (2018). Student absenteeism: who misses school and how missing school matters for performance. *Economic Policy Institute*.
- Gottfried, M. A. (2009). Excused versus unexcused: How student absences in elementary School affect academic achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 31(4), 392- 415.
- Grau, E., & Shaughnessy, M. F. (1987). The Four Day School Week: An Investigation And Analysis.
- Hall, Sarah. (2024, March 1). Embracing the Four-Day School Week. *School Administrator*.
- Harp, L. (1995). Four-day week finds a niche in rural west. *Education Week*, 14(35), 3.
- Hartman, R. I. & Weaver, K. M. (1977). Four factors influencing conversion to a four-

- day work week. *Human Resource Management (pre-1986)*, 16(1), 24.
- Hatch, J. A. (2023). Doing qualitative research in education settings. State university of New York press.
- Hay, I. (2006). Transformational leadership: Characteristics and criticisms. *E-journal of Organizational Learning and Leadership*, 5(2).
- Heyward, G. (2017). A User's Guide to the Four-Day School Week: How to Assess District Readiness and Evaluate the Results. *Center on Reinventing Public Education*.
- Hung, R. (1996). An annotated bibliography of compressed workweek. *International Journal of Manpower*, 17(6/7), 43-53.
- Husserl, E. (1998). *Invitacion a la fenomenologia*. Barcelona: Paidos.
- Inman-Freitas, D. (1991). Efficient financial management in rural schools: Common Problems and solutions from the field. ERIC Clearinghouse.
- Jacobs, J. A. & Gerson, K. (2004). The Time Divide: Work, Family, and Gender Inequality. *Harvard University Press*, 60-69.
- Johnston, R. C. (1997). A matter of time: Schools try four-day weeks. *Education Week*, 17(13), 1.
- Josifidis, K. & Supic, N. (2023). Is There a Trade-Off Between Global Inflation and the Great Resignation in the United States? *Journal of Economic Issues*, 57(2), 499-506.
- Jotkoff, Eric. (2022, February 01). NEA survey: Massive staff shortages in schools leading to educator burnout; alarming numbers of educators indicating they plan to leave the profession. NEAMedia.
- Kafle, N. P. (2011). Hermeneutic phenomenological research method simplified. *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 5(1), 181-197.
- Karbowksi, D. (2022, April 12). State of Teaching Statistics 2022. *AdoptAClassroom.org*.
- Kilburn, M. R., Phillips, A., Gomez, C. J., Mariano, L. T., Doss, C. J., Troxel, W. M., & Estes, K. (2021). Does Four Equal Five? Implementation and Outcomes of the Four-Day School Week. Appendix C. RR-A373-1. *RAND Corporation*.

- Koki, S. (1992). Modified School Schedules: A Look at the Research and the Pacific.
- Leachman, M., Masterson, K., & Figueroa, E. (2017). A punishing decade for school funding. *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, 29, 1-17.
- Levitan, Shayna. (2023, January 12, 2023). Planning time may help mitigate teacher burnout but how much planning time do teachers get? *National Council on Teacher Quality*.
- McCombes, Shona. (2023, June 22). Survey Research Definition, Examples & Methods. *Scribbr*.
- Melhado, William. (2021, November 17). With teacher wellness “hanging by a thread,” one district tries walking and smoothies. *The Hechinger Report*.
- Miller, R.T., Murnane, R. J., & Willett, J. B. (2007). Do Teacher Absences Impact Student Achievement? Longitudinal evidence from one urban school district. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 30(2), 181-200.
- Natanson, Hannah. (2022, August 4). Never seen it this bad: America faces catastrophic teacher shortage. *The Washington Post: Democracy Dies in Darkness*.
- National Center for Education Statistics (2022, December 6). Forty-Five Percent of Public Schools Operating Without a Full Teaching Staff in October, New NCE Data Show.
- National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). (2020, April 1). Four-day school Week overview.
- Newburger, J.C. & Beckhusen, J. (2022). Teachers are among most educated, yet their pay lags. U.S. Census Bureau.
- Nguyen, Tuan D., Chanh B. Lam, and Paul Bruno. (2022) Is there a national teacher shortage? A systematic examination of reports of teacher shortages in the United States. (EdWorkingPaper: 22-631).
- Padgett, D. K. (1998). Qualitative methods in social work research: Challenges and rewards. Sage Publications, Inc. 41-42.
- Pettypiece, Shannon. (2023, August 13). From ‘crisis’ to ‘catastrophe,’ schools scramble once again to find teachers. NBC News.
- Plourd, F. (2007, May 22). And on the fifth day, they rested. B.C. district rebels against four-day school week. *The Tyee*.

- Rivera, L. (2022). A creative solution to the traditional school schedule. *South Carolina Association for Middle Level Education Journal*, 158-160.
- Roeth, J. E. (1985). Implementing the Four-Day School Week into the Elementary and Secondary Public Schools. (Doctoral dissertation, Ball State University: UMI No. 8608635).
- Rouse, K. (2006). 4-day school week gaining. *The Denver Post*, pp. B-02.
- Sagness, R. L. & Salzman, S. A. (1993). Evaluation of the Four-Day School Week in Idaho Suburban Schools.
- Sanderson, B. (2015, September 21). Are 4-day school weeks good for students? Boards turn to compressed school weeks to help cut cost, save schools. CBS News.
- Sawchuk, S. (2021, October 7). 4-Day School Weeks: New Research Examines the Benefits and Drawbacks. *Education Week*.
- Schaeffer, K., (2022, September 27). A dwindling number of new U.S. college graduates have a degree in education.
- Smith, J. A. & Osborn, M. (2015). Interpretative phenomenological analysis as a useful methodology for research on the lived experience of pain. *British Journal of Pain*, 9(1), 41–42.
- Smith, J. A. & Nizza, I. E. (2022). Essentials of interpretative phenomenological analysis. *American Psychological Association*. 3-4.
- Statista Research Department. (2023). U.S. number of teachers and education staff quitting the profession.
- Steiner, E. D., Woo, A., & Doan, S. (2023). All Work and No Pay—Teachers’ Perceptions of Their Pay and Hours Worked.
- Stewart, J. (2006). Transformational Leadership: An evolving concept examined through the works of Burns, Bass, Avolio, and Leithwood. *Canadian journal of education administration and policy*, (54).
- Tamez-Robledo, N. (2022, June 22). Can Four-Day School Weeks Keep Teachers From Leaving? EdSurge.
- The Tyee. (2007, May 5). And On the Fifth Day, They Rested.
- Times, O. (2016, February 4). Four-day week proposed to address school funding crisis. *Times Chronicle*.

- Travis, M. A. (2009). What a difference a Day Makes, or Does It? Work/Family Balance and the Four-Day Work Week. *Connecticut Law Review*, 42(6), 1223-1266.
- Turner, J. S., Finch, K. K., & Uribe-Zarain, X. (2017). Staff perspectives of the four-day school week: A new analysis of compressed school schedules. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*. 6(1), 52-62.
- Thompson, P. N., Gunter, K., Schuna, Jr, J. M., & Tomayko, E. J. (2021). Are all four-day school weeks created equal? A national assessment of four-day school week policy adoption and implementation. *Education Finance and Policy*, 16(4), 558-583.
- Thompson, P. N. & Ward, J. (2022). Only a matter of time? The role of time in school on four-day school week achievement impacts. *Economics of Education Review*, 86, 102198.
- U.S. Department of Education. 2017. Teacher Shortage Areas Nationwide Listing. 1900-1991 through 2017-2018. June 2017.
- Walker, Tim. (2021, November 12). Getting Serious About Teacher Burnout. NEA News.
- Ward, Micah. (2022, July 13). How the 4-day school week model can increase teacher retention and satisfaction. *District Administrator*.
- Weaver, K. M., and R.I. Hartman. (1977). Four Factors Influencing Conversion to a Four-Day Work Week. *Human Resource Management*, 16(1).
- Yarbrough, R. & Gilman, D. A. (2006). From five days to four. *Educational Leadership*, 64(2), 80-85.

## **Appendix A**

### **Interviews Questions**

Have you seen an improvement in employee attendance rates due to implementing the Blended "4-Day" Learning Schedule? Why do you think this is happening?

Have you seen an improvement in teacher recruitment and retention due to implementing the Blended "4-Day" Learning Schedule? Why do you think this is happening?

Has the Blended "4-Day" Learning Schedule improved your wellness/work-life balance? Can you give me a few examples of how it has helped professionally and personally?

## Appendix B

### Online Survey: 4-day Blended Learning Calendar 2023-2024

-----  
-----

You are invited to participate in a research project by Eugene Blalock, Jr from Miami University. The purpose of this research is to *examine if a 4-day school week will have a positive effect on*

1. *Employee attendance rates*
2. *Teacher recruitment and retention*
3. *Teacher wellness/work-life balance*

#### NCH Teaching Staff (Agree or Disagree)

*Do you believe a Blended "4-Day" Learning Schedule will improve employee attendance rates?*

*Do you believe a Blended "4-Day" Learning Schedule will improve teacher recruitment and retention?*

*Do you believe a Blended "4-Day" Learning Schedule will improve teacher wellness/work-life balance?*

Completing the survey should take about 3 minutes. Your participation is voluntary; you may skip

questions you do not want to answer and stop at any time. The benefit of this study is to Develop a Blended Learning Schedule for grades K-12.

The survey does not request information that would explicitly identify you. If you inadvertently include identifying information, such information will be removed from stored data. Only the researchers will have access to individual responses. The results of the survey will only be presented publicly as aggregate summaries. The research data will be retained until July 1, 2033.

**The Miami University Research Ethics & Integrity Program reviewed and approved this study, Protocol ID# 04472e.** If you have any questions about this research or need more information to determine whether you would like to volunteer, you can contact me at [blalocce@miamioh.edu](mailto:blalocce@miamioh.edu). If you have questions or concerns about the rights of research subjects, you may contact our reviewing body: Research Ethics and Integrity Office at Miami University at (513) 529-3600 or [humansubjects@miamioh.edu](mailto:humansubjects@miamioh.edu)

---- Thank you for your participation, Eugene Blalock, Jr.



[Click here to proceed to survey](#)

---

Thank you for participating in this research about the possible benefits of a **Blended Learning Schedule for grades K-12**. Your help is greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions about this research or feel you need more information, contact me at [blalocee@miamioh.edu](mailto:blalocee@miamioh.edu). If you have questions or concerns about the rights of research subjects, you may contact our reviewing body: Research Ethics and Integrity Office at Miami University at (513) 529-3600 or [humansubjects@miamioh.edu](mailto:humansubjects@miamioh.edu).

## Appendix C

### Participant Consent - Interviews North College Hill City School District's Teaching Staff

---

---

#### Research Consent Information:

#### Blended Learning Calendar@ NCH

You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by Eugene Blalock, Jr from Miami University. The purpose of this research is to examine if a 4-day school week will have a positive effect on

##### 1. Employee attendance rates

*Have you seen an improvement in employee attendance rates due to implementing the Blended "4-Day" Learning Schedule? Why do you think this is happening?*

##### 2. Teacher recruitment and retention

*Have you seen an improvement in teacher recruitment and retention due to implementing the Blended "4-Day" Learning Schedule? Why do you think this is happening?*

##### 3. Teacher Wellness/work-life balance

*Has the Blended "4-Day" Learning Schedule improved your wellness/work-life balance? Can you give me a few examples of how it has helped professionally and personally?*

Participation in this research is restricted to persons 18 years of age or older.

***Each interview will be approximately 60 minutes. Your participation is voluntary, you may decline to participate in any part of the discussion or withdraw from the project at any time with no penalty or loss of benefits.*** Foreseeable risks and/or discomforts associated with this study are None. The benefit of this study is to Develop a Blended Learning Schedule for grades K-12.

Notes accompanying this discussion will not include information about your identity. Consent forms and interview notes will be stored separately in locked cabinets accessible only to the research team. Only the research team will have access to individual responses. Consent forms and interview notes will be retained until July 1, 2033.

With your permission, I will digitally record this discussion to ensure accuracy. Later, I will take notes based on the recording and delete the recording. If you inadvertently include identifying information, such information will be removed from any stored data.

Funding agencies or journal policies may require that individual participant data be made available to other researchers. Sharing data advances the field by allowing the data to be used beyond this study. No personally identifying information (names or identifying demographics), will be included in the shared data. Care will always be taken to ensure data shared outside the Miami research team would not include identification unless the subject has explicitly agreed to this.

The results of the research will be presented publicly only as aggregate summaries.

**The Miami University Research Ethics & Integrity Program reviewed and approved this study, Protocol ID# 04472e.** If you have any questions about this research or need more information to determine whether you would like to volunteer, you can contact me at [blalocee@miamioh.edu](mailto:blalocee@miamioh.edu). If you have questions or concerns about the rights of research subjects, you may contact our reviewing body: Research Ethics and Integrity Office at Miami University at (513) 529-3600 or [humansubjects@miamioh.edu](mailto:humansubjects@miamioh.edu).

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

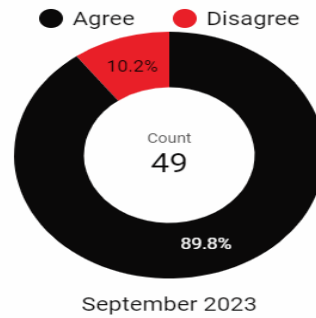
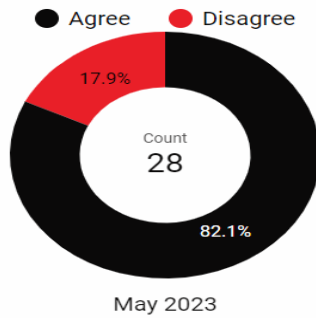
Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information (email) if you would like a summary of the results.

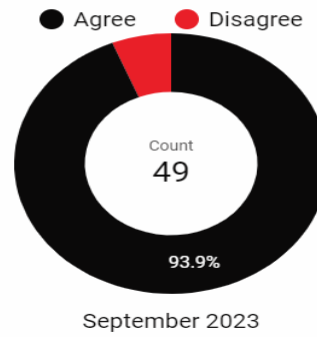
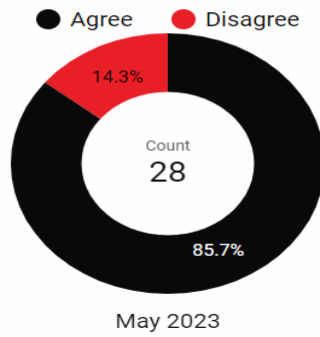
## Appendix D

### Survey Results

Question: Do you believe a Blended 4-Day Learning Schedule will improve employee attendance rates? ▾



Question: Do you believe a Blended 4-Day Learning Schedule will improve teacher recruitment and retenti... ▾



Question: Do you believe a Blended 4-Day Learning Schedule will improve teacher wellness/work-life bala... ▾

