

4-Day School Week Discussion Statement to the Board

I have had the privilege of attending a school board work session, a public input session and a regular school board meeting for a nearby school district that is exploring the implementation of a 4-day school work. During that time, I came to a very significant realization. One of the invited guests for the work session was a superintendent of a school in Idaho. He made a statement which resonated with me. He said, "I will tell you what the biggest obstacle to transitioning to a 4-day school week was in our district, it was me." He followed up by saying it was ultimately he who had blocked the community and district from exploring a 4-day school week. I fear the Blackfoot School District has the same obstacle. I have been properly quoted as saying, "The Blackfoot School District will never go to a 4-day school week." I have no doubt that stance has shut down any and all discussion about a 4-day school week. It is time I acknowledge the obstinance of my thoughts regarding this issue.

I have lamented many times that education has turned into a competition for students. I believe the Blackfoot School District does a great job in this competitive arena. I am now starting to worry we are not only in competition for students, but employees as well. In the very near future, we will likely be the only school district in Bingham County that is NOT on a 4-day school week schedule. I can no longer be the only reason we are not exploring this option for our district.

I believe the board members know that the Blackfoot School District superintendent works diligently to get a head start on analyzing the impact of any proposed change to our district. I have done some initial legwork to help us get an idea how this might impact our district. I am sharing with the board a preliminary comparison of what a 4-day school week schedule might look like. I am asking the board to allow me to explore this option with our parents, employees, and students. I would plan on conducting a survey with the mentioned stakeholders to gauge the interest in a 4-day school work. If the interest supports further investigation, I would like to plan a board work session to investigate the impact of a 4-day school week according to research-based data. If, after these steps, the concept warrants further exploration, I would be ready to take the necessary steps for the board to make an informed and appropriate decision regarding this matter.