



Early Impacts of a Metropolitan Four-day School Week

SUMMARY: Growing numbers of school districts have adopted or are considering adopting the four-day school week (4DSW). Recently, some urban and suburban districts have turned to the 4DSW in attempting to improve teacher recruitment and retention in increasingly constrained budgets and teacher labor markets. This marks a major turn in 4DSW use, as the 4DSW was previously confined to rural districts as a cost-cutting measure. Accordingly, it is unclear how the 4DSW's effects would be felt in urban and suburban contexts.

A recent study sought to cast light on the 4DSW's effects in non-rural contexts by examining how one of the first major-metropolitan district's adoption of the 4DSW immediately impacted homeowners, teachers, and students. Important to note: This district adopted the 4DSW as a recruitment and retention incentive after voters rejected six consecutive mill levy override requests (2000-2017) meant to increase teacher pay to be regionally competitive.

The study found the following in the first year of 4DSW adoption:

House prices decreased by 2 to 4 percent relative to neighboring districts, costing the average 4DSW homeowner in 2018-19.

- This relative decrease cost homeowners 50 percent more than the originally proposed mill levy would have cost.

Teacher retention dropped overall by 4.5 percentage points in the 4DSW district relative to comparable districts one year after implementation. Teachers with 5-15 years experience were 5.8 percentage points less likely to return to teach in the 4DSW district.

Student achievement decreased by 0.1 to 0.2 standard deviations within the district in the year after 4DSW adoption.

Implications

These findings have implications for metropolitan districts, especially voters considering teacher salary raises and school leaders considering a move to the 4DSW. Readers are reminded that the impacts found in the study capture only the first year post-4DSW implementation.

First, the voters' rejections of the mill levy—increasing taxes to raise teacher salaries to competitive levels—forced the metropolitan district to turn to the 4DSW. In turn, voting against

competitive teacher pay immediately cost homeowners more in property value than the proposed tax increases would have.

Second, metropolitan K-12 leaders should plan major subsequent recruitment efforts to offset initial spikes in veteran teacher turnover following 4DSW implementation. It should be noted, though, that the immediate turnover increases were not necessarily bad if working towards a new district climate and teacher supports, which could actually lead to subsequent increased retention and quality.

Third, immediate decreases (though potentially short-term) in student achievement post-4DSW implementationⁱ appear to be universal across locales (e.g., urban, rural). These negative test scores have implications for all district stakeholders, especially students.

ⁱ <https://doi.org/10.26300/p96h-8a41>

This brief is based on a study currently under review. An earlier version was published in the *Annenberg EdWorkingPaper Series*.

Nowak, A. D., Perrone, F., & Smith, P. S., (2023). *How do homeowners, teachers, and students respond to a four-day school week?* (EdWorkingPaper: 23-721). Annenberg Institute at Brown University.

AUTHOR BIOS: Adam D. Nowak is an associate professor of economics at West Virginia University.

Frank Perrone is an assistant professor of educational leadership at Indiana University.

Patrick S. Smith is an associate professor and the John Crosland, Sr. Distinguished Scholar in Real Estate and Development at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte.

Contact: ceep@iu.edu