

4-Day Community Forum FAQs

1. Is this teacher-driven or student-driven?
 - a. Some of our teachers suggested a 4-day school week as a way to improve Teacher Retention/Recruitment as well as staff morale. Missouri and other states, mainly rural schools, have used a 4-day school week to help with teacher recruitment, retention, and budget.
2. If a 4-day week is not in students' best interest, can we pay our teachers more?
 - a. The MO Governor recently announced an initiative to increase all teacher base pay to \$38,000. The current base required by MO is \$25,000. Our current base is \$33,600. We are working hard to fund this larger than normal potential increase, but there is only so much money in our annual budget. We have to be able to sustain raises into the future.
3. What were the results of the staff survey?
 - a. Results from a January 2022 survey show that 47% of **Certified Staff** voted YES and 54.5% of **Total Staff** voted NO for a 4-day school week.
 - b. All staff will be resurveyed soon.
4. What are the concerns of the 55% of the staff that voted no to the 4-day school week?
 - a. Belief that it is NOT the best thing for students
 - b. Impact on students/families
 - c. Loss of quality instructional time
 - d. Food Insecurity
 - e. Length of School Day
 - f. Childcare
5. Are they spending the same amount of time teaching on a 4-day school week?
 - i. Minutes would have to be added to the day in order to meet DESE calendar hours requirements. In both the 4-day and 5-day calendars the students received the DESE required amount of hours.
6. How are our test scores versus schools that are already in a 4-day school week?
 - a. This data is subjective. All data prior to 2017 has been removed from the DESE website due to changes in testing standards. Also, keep in mind that during the 19-20 and 20-21 testing was suspended due to COVID.

- b. Trends in test data are variable. Some schools show increases, some show decreases, some stay steady.
- 7. How many people are retiring?
 - a. We estimate that there are 12-14 teaching staff in the next 2-4 years who are eligible to retire.
- 8. How can you accomplish the same amount of curriculum in 3 minutes extra a day per class period?
 - a. This question is in relation to Middle/High School. For reference, adding time to the school day in these buildings would increase each class period by a few minutes.
 - b. A 5-day calendar would have 164 student days, a 4-day calendar could have 154-156 student days.
 - c. Some research suggests that priority standards are identified, the curriculum is restructured, and then taught accordingly.
- 9. Do you proactively reach out to homegrown people?
 - a. Our administrators frequently reach out to Putnam County graduates that they know are in education (or are interested in education) when we have openings to encourage them to apply. We are also planning to implement a Grow Your Own Teacher Education program starting in the 2022-2023 school year.
- 10. Bus Times?
 - a. Currently, on our 5-day schedule, there are 3 bus routes that begin at 6:30 a.m. letting off around 4:50 p.m. With the 4-day sample calendar beginning at 8:00 am, children would potentially be picked up at 6:10 am - delivering at home around 5:10 pm. On the 4-day calendar sample that begins at 8:00 am, we would potentially need at least 3 additional bus routes.
- 11. Is transportation equipment available? Do we have to buy a bus? Do we have drivers?
 - a. Yes. We have the equipment available.
 - b. No. We do not need to buy more equipment.
 - c. Finding bus drivers to employ, pass screenings and tests, and get their CDL with endorsements is potentially a challenge as we already struggle to find drivers. Also, if we are adding 3 bus routes, that means adding about \$25,000 x 3 to the budget. (\$75,000)

12. Is there conclusive research done to show that a 4 day week retains teachers? –
 - a. No. Research is inconclusive. We have yet to find a teacher who doesn't like a 4-day week.
 - b. All research appears to be neutral. Test scores and such are neutral.

13. Special needs childcare?
 - a. We do not have all the answers to where students will go on Mondays of a 4-day week. We will definitely keep our special needs kids in mind when decisions are made regarding any potential Monday enrichment activities.

14. Is the school board considering this in the best interest of students or teachers?
 - a. Looking at it both ways. Happier teachers = happier students

15. What is the goal of this action?
 - a. Teacher Retention/Recruitment

16. If we cannot pass the 4 day school week, then what is the incentive for teachers?
 - a. Our leadership team is working diligently to come up with incentives, changes to calendars, retention strategies, climate and culture improvements, and are dedicated to coming up with solutions for our staff to improve morale and retention. We are also working on the budget to give the best raises possible.

17. Enrichment days...how would we do that?
 - a. Discussions are ongoing to determine if we would be able to offer any additional forms of enrichment/childcare on the days off of school. During our research into other 4-day school districts, we found that some offer enrichment, and some do not. At this point, no decision has been made. There are several things that would go into this decision – can we find workers? What would the pay be? What forms of enrichment would be offered? How many students would attend? Transportation? Food?

18. Would we use any AMI days if we went to a 4-day school week?
 - a. AMI days are a DESE initiative that started with the 2020-2021 school year. AMI days are only to be used to make up school hours that are lost due to an emergency or exceptional situations. At this time we cannot say definitively that we won't use AMI days in the future.

19. How will hourly people be impacted?

- a. The only employees who are paid hourly in the district are our custodians. They would still work 5-days a week regardless of the calendar.
- b. Our paraprofessionals, cooks, bus drivers, etc are all contract employees who are paid equally over 12-months. We do not plan to reduce contract pay for these employees if we go to a 4-day week calendar. Dr. Halley has maintained that in order to keep our good people, our non-certified staff should not have to take a pay cut. This is part of the reason why this is not a cost-savings measure.

20. In elementary school, how does a 4-day school week affect specials?

- a. The Elementary administration is working to reorganize the specials (music, art, guidance, physical education) class schedules.

21. Has Schuyler seen a boost in attendance?

- a. 2009: 87.6% attendance rate as reported to DESE.
- b. 2010: 87.4%
- c. 2011: 87.6%
- d. 2012: 84.4%
- e. 2013: 86.4%
- f. 2014: 90.8%
- g. 2015: 90.8%
- h. 2016: 88.9%
- i. 2017: 85.6%
- j. 2018: 88.7% (first year of 4-day week)
- k. 2019: 92.2%
- l. 2020: 90.8%
- m. 2021: 87.8%

22. Is it really about time or money or is it internal culture?

- a. We believe that it is all three of these things. We are working to find good solutions to all of these issues. We want our teachers to be happy.

23. How many high school students would be working on that 5th day?

- a. We do not have an accurate way to predict this.

24. What would it take to give our teachers a raise/tax increase ballot measure?
- We are currently doing calculations to determine how much of a tax increase would be required to sustain a substantial pay increase for all staff.
25. Question about our current calendar hours.
- Our current calendar has 1104 hours (snow days are built-in.)
26. How many weeks in a school year?
- 5-day school year is 36 weeks
 - 4-day school year is 38-39 weeks
27. What were the community results?
- The Community Survey was taken in early Fall 2021. Those results are now posted on our website under the 4-Day article.
<https://www.putnamcountyr1.net/vnews/display.v/ART/61edcff711cf8>
28. What percent is our FRL?
- DESE currently reports our District at 43.86%
 - Historically PCR-I has always been at roughly 50% FRL. We believe this year's decrease is due to the fact that the government/Department of Agriculture has funded free meals for all students the last two school years – when this happens all families do not turn in the FRL lunch application, so our percentage suffers.
29. Why did we lose 8 people last year?
- Various reasons. One to three moved closer to home and family. One advanced their career as a principal elsewhere. One chose a 4-day school week. One moved from teaching grades 6-12 here to advanced classes in grades 11-12 (career advancement). Some were unhappy with things in the District or career opportunities were not available here.
30. Have you asked your staff if they want more money or more time or more incentives?
- Everyone would like more time, more money, and more recognition. We are exploring every option from calendars, raises, incentives, climate and culture, changes to professional development, etc and are constantly asking how do we make Putnam County R-I the best for our staff and student, with the constraints of budget and time.

31. Is there a possibility of getting an SUV instead of a bus to pick up students who live in the far corners of our district that have the longest bus ride times?
- Yes, there is a possibility that we could purchase an SUV, but the requirements for the driver would be the same as for our bus drivers. (Keep in mind, this is not a budget-neutral solution...for example, equipment cost, taxes, insurance.)
32. Could we get another survey out to parents and/or teachers?
- Yes. We are working to create the forms to get updated surveys for our teachers as well as our parents/community.
33. Would attendance policy be changed with a 4-day calendar?
- Most likely yes, but we have not looked into the details at this time.
34. How many weeks during our current schedule are we missing one day a week?
<https://www.putnamcountyr1.net/vnews/display.v/ART/61293fe469498>
- None in August once school begins, Labor Day and teacher workday in September and in session for 2 Mondays, 3 Mondays in session in October and 1 PD day, 4 Mondays in session in November and 1 PD day, December 1 Monday in session and one PD, 3 Mondays in session in January with 1 holiday and 1 PD, February 2 in session days with 1 PD and 1 holiday, March 1 PD Monday and 3 in session, 3 in session Mondays in April and 1 holiday, 3 Mondays in session with 1 PD day and 1 holiday.
 - Days not in session on Mondays from August-May:
 $2+1+1+2+2+2+1+1+2=14$ days not in session on Mondays due to holidays or PD.
35. Interested in finding out the data for the year before the school went to 4 days and the first year or two after.
- All testing data prior to 2017 has been removed from the DESE website due to changes in testing standards.
 - Data information from 7 randomly selected districts similar in size to us is included in the presentation. It can be viewed here:
<https://www.putnamcountyr1.net/vnews/display.v/ART/61edcff711cf8>
36. Is there loan forgiveness or other incentives for teachers?
- There are Federal loan forgiveness programs available to teachers in certain content areas (Special Education, Science, etc.) Several of our

staff members apply and take advantage of these forgiveness programs annually.

37. If test scores drop on a 4-day week would we go back to a 5-day week calendar?
- a. Our districts calendar is evaluated by the Board of Education annually
 - b. DESE originally had a rule that if test scores dropped 4-day schools were required to go back to a 5-day week. This **is no longer a DESE rule**.
38. Will students have more homework?
- a. This would depend on the individual teacher, so we cannot accurately answer this question.
39. Do other schools with a 4-day week get more teacher applications?
- a. This is not information that is reported to DESE, so we have no way to get this information without calling every 4-day school (which is unrealistic.)
40. How does Green City pay their teachers more? Explain being held harmless and small schools grant so people know the difference and compare apples to apples.
- a. There are two significant sources of revenue that Green City has access to that Putnam County R-I does not. The Small School Grant, and their Held Harmless status. The Small Schools Grant provides increased funding for small districts. It does so through a flat per-student grant for all students enrolled in districts serving 350 students or fewer. Each year, a \$10 million appropriation is distributed in proportion to the total number of students statewide in qualifying districts. The hold-harmless provision does not allow the amount of state aid to a district to fall below 2005–06 levels.
 - b. 2021-2022 Salary Schedules for PCR-I, Green City, and Kirksville have been uploaded to the website for comparison purposes. That can be found here:
<https://www.putnamcountyr1.net/vnews/display.v/ART/61293fe469498>