

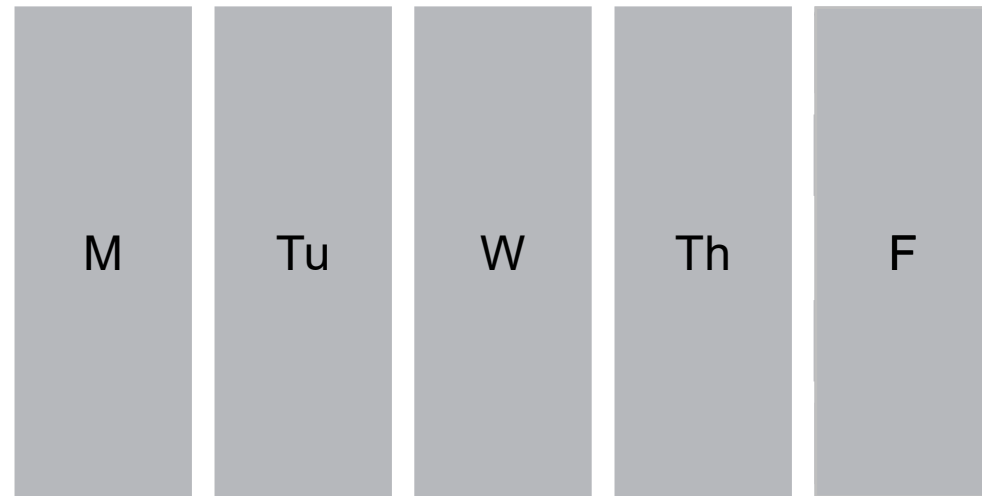
Evidence on Four-Day School Weeks (4DSWs)

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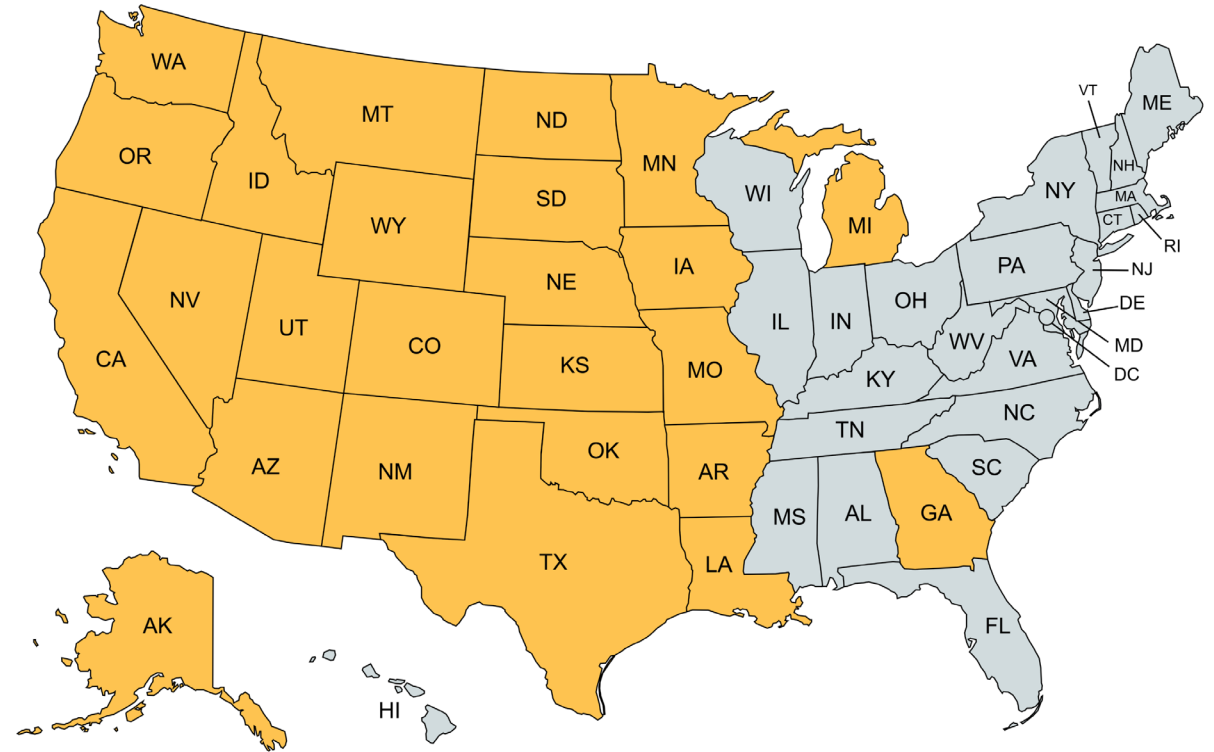
What is a 4DSW?

4DSW



4DSWs are growing in the U.S.

- + Grown >600% in past 20 years
- + Instructional time policy
- + Small, rural districts
- + Historically financially motivated, new staffing rationale
- + 5th day mostly closed, but some PD or enrichment/remediation; childcare “myth”
- + Recent and ongoing legislative debates

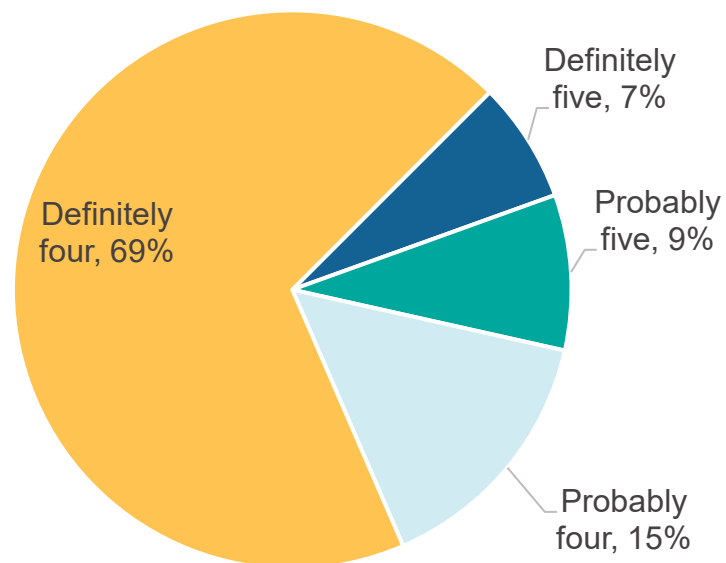


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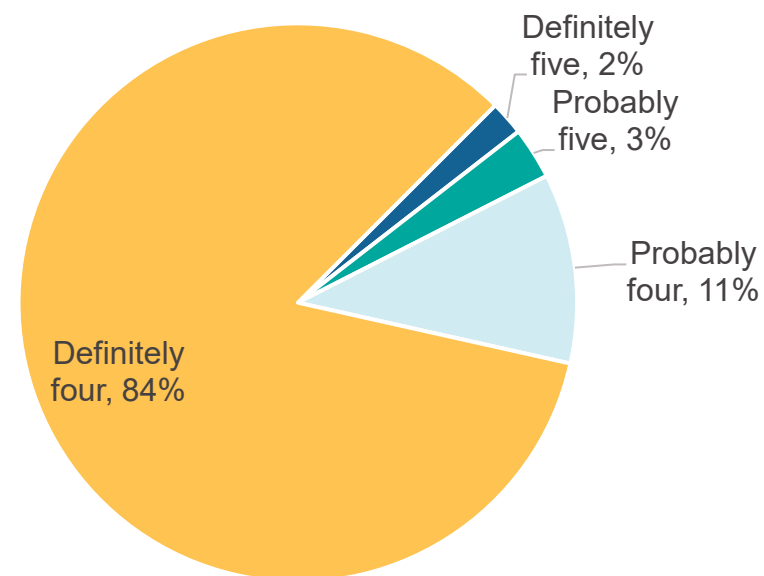
At 4DSW districts, parents and students like the 4DSW

Survey question: “If you were to have the choice between a four-day school week and a five-day school week, which would you choose?”

Grades K-6 parents (N=766)



Grades 7-12 students (N=3,957)

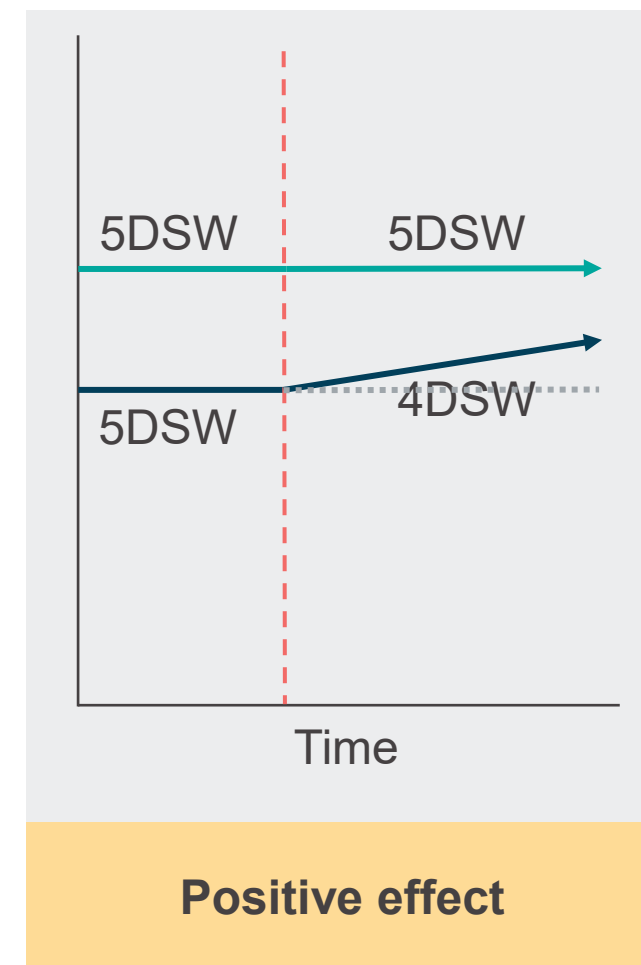
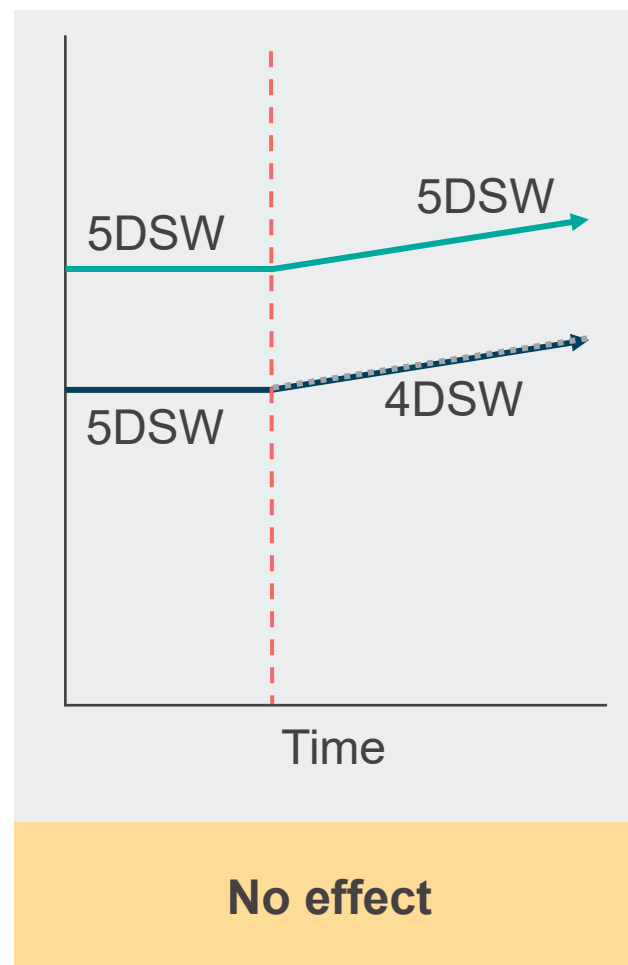
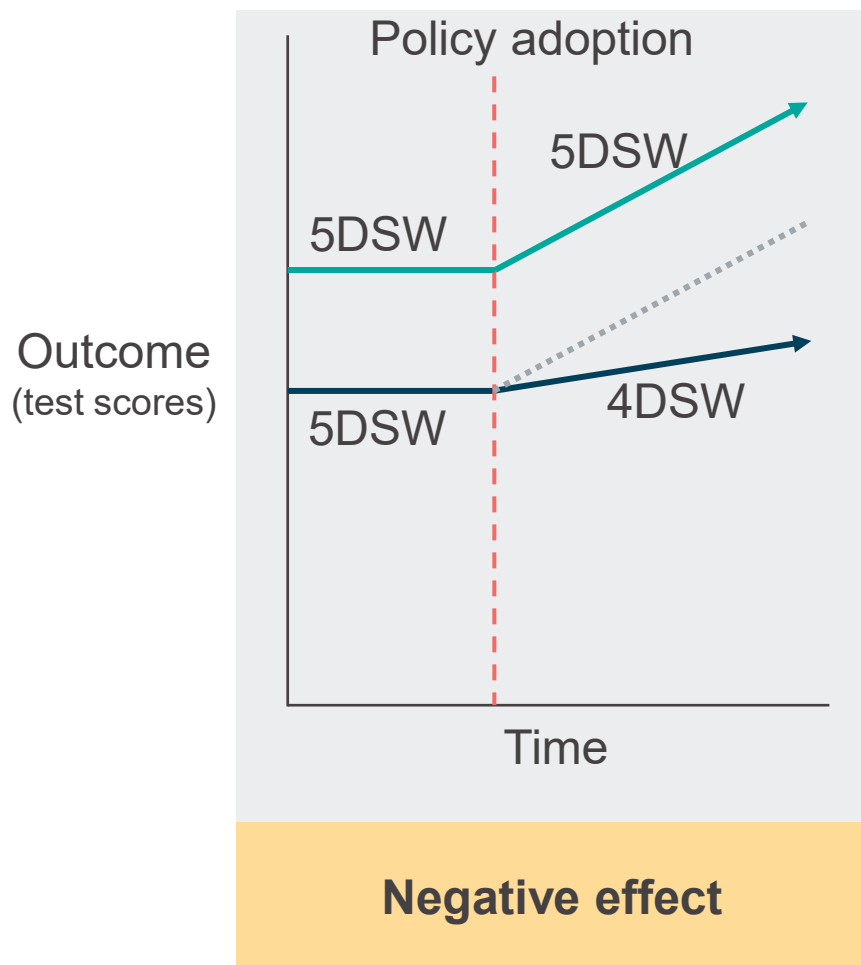


(Kilburn et al., 2021)

Estimating effects of the 4DSW

Improvement over time $\neq$
positive effect of 4DSW

Estimating effects of the 4DSW



Estimating effects of the 4DSW

Outcome

Compare changes in schools that adopt 4DSWs to changes in similar 5DSW schools over the same time period

“Difference-in-differences” method

Negative effect

No effect

Positive effect

Negative average effects on achievement

- + Nearly all studies estimate **negative average effects on ELA and math test scores**, ranging from -0.02 to -0.09 SD (up to ~9 weeks learning)
- + Generally larger negative effects on math
- + But averages don't tell the whole story: **negative effects are much smaller or zero in districts with more instructional time (at least 32 hours/wk)** and in rural districts
- + Some evidence effects may grow more negative over time

(Morton et al., 2024; Thompson & Ward, 2022)

Other research provides little support for 4DSWs

Benefits



- *Small* avg decreases in spending (~2%)
- Decreases in bullying (39%) and fighting (31%) incident rates
- Sleep (+~1.5 hrs/wk)

Neutral



- Little or no impact on attendance
- No difference in school climate ratings
- *Teacher recruitment & retention*

Drawbacks



- Increases in juvenile crime
- Higher rates of food insecurity, marijuana use

Unknown: Employment outcomes? Family income/costs?

Key takeaways

1. 4DSWs have negative average effects on student test scores
2. Maximizing instructional time can help reduce negative effects
3. Other rationales for 4DSWs (cost savings, attendance, staffing) are not generally supported by research

Now for more on effects on staffing...