



# The 4 Day School Week

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Colorado Department of Education  
201 East Colfax Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80203-1799

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Office of Educational Services  
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July 2003

**The**

# ***Four-Day***

## **School Week**

**Colorado Department of Education  
201 East Colfax Avenue, Room 206  
Denver, Colorado 80203-1799**

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**Gary Sibigroth - Assistant Commissioner - Office of Educational Services**

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## STATUS OF THE FOUR-DAY WEEK IN COLORADO

Fifty-one school districts, constituting 28% of the 178 school districts in Colorado, serving 1.3% of students, utilize the four-day week as the structure for organizing their school year. In simple terms, those districts schedule 7.5 hours per day for 144 days of school instead of the normal six hours for 180 days. In some cases, only a few of the district schools are on a four-day week. For example, in Moffat County RE-1, only Maybell Elementary is on a four-day week. Mesa County Valley 51, only New Emerson School is on a four-day week.

This paper is intended as an overview of the practice. Actual practices differ from district to district. The reader is encouraged to contact individual districts if there is a desire for specific information.

### DEFINITION

Colorado law requires school districts to schedule 1080 hours per year of instructional time for secondary schools and 990 instructional hours for elementary schools. The 1080 hours equate to six hours per day for 180 days. The 990 hours equate to five and one-half hours per day. Up to 24 hours may be counted for parent-teacher conferences, staff inservice programs, and closing for reasons of health, safety, or welfare of students.

The law also requires any district offering less than 160 days of school to obtain permission from the Commissioner of Education. One of the duties of local school boards is:

*C.R.S 22-32-109 (n) (l) To determine, prior to the end of a school year, the length of time which the schools of the district shall be in session during the next following school year, but in no event shall said schools be scheduled to have less than one thousand eighty hours of planned teacher-pupil instruction and teacher-pupil contact during the school year for secondary school pupils in high school, middle school, or junior high school or less than nine hundred ninety hours of such instruction and contact for elementary school pupils or less than four-hundred-fifty hours of such instruction for a half-day kindergarten program. In no case shall a school be in session for fewer than one hundred sixty days without the specific prior approval of the commissioner of education.*

Districts scheduling a school year of 160 days or more need no state approval. Local boards of education annually establish district calendars, but there is no requirement to report or submit calendars to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). Scheduling a school year of more than 160 days is at the discretion of local districts.

Many districts schedule adjusted or partial weeks for a variety of purposes. Some schedule four-days per week during the winter, but not all year. Others arrange staff inservice days on a quarterly or monthly basis. Some have half-day inservices on a regular basis. There is complete flexibility for districts to schedule 160 or more days of instruction for a total of 1080 hours for the year.

The traditional instructional day has been six hours. Those districts on a strict four-day week normally hold classes for seven and one-half hours for 144 days per year. The total is still 1080 hours. Many districts exceed this total on a voluntary basis. Summer school, for example, is not counted in the annual hours since the requirement is that the schedule must serve all students.

Lunch, recess, passing time, study halls, before and after school programs...can they be counted as instructional time? It depends! The law says that local boards of education must schedule a minimum number of hours of teacher-pupil contact and teacher-pupil instruction for each school year. The specific hour requirements are found in Colorado Revised Statute 22-32-109. State Board Rule 1 CCR 301-12, amended in 1993, states that "Teacher-pupil contact and teacher-pupil instruction shall mean that time when a pupil is actively engaged in the 'educational process' shall be defined by the local school board."

### **CURRENT STATUS**

During the 2003-2004 school year, the Commissioner of Education approved the applications of 51 school districts to conduct less than 160 days of school. The total student enrollment of all 51 districts was approximately 10,000 students.

Colorado is divided into 178 school districts with total enrollment of approximately 750,000 students. The largest district with less than 160 days scheduled has approximately 1230 students. The smallest has 9 students K-12.

Districts utilizing the four-day week tend to be rural and sparsely populated. Many have great distances for students to travel with long bus routes. Many also have major distances to travel to athletic events, as they participate in differing sports, conferences, and leagues.

All four-day districts regularly conduct school on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Twenty-one districts conduct no Monday classes and thirty districts conduct no Friday classes.

These activities are in addition to the basic instructional week.

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

The four-day week presents only one interesting method of utilizing time in ways other than the traditional. For many communities, it meets a need for efficiency. These communities tend to be small and rural in nature. Probably, these communities also have a larger percentage of traditional families with at least one parent not working outside the home. Many communities have a strong agricultural base with a tradition of family farms. There are potential implications beyond the rural setting. In the cities, school usually gets out around 2:30 or 3:00 p.m. If students stayed until 4:30, the latchkey problem could be reduced. The fifth day could then be used for family, recreational or community activities. In other words, the positive characteristics experienced by small districts might hold potential for larger districts as well.

There are good reasons why districts which originally changed to four days for financial reasons during the energy shortage periods have maintained the practice even though the crisis has passed. These reasons may have implications for restructuring not driven primarily by finance.

Even though a small percentage of students are enrolled in districts with a four-day week, almost a quarter of Colorado's school districts are on the plan. The practice clearly warrants a closer look as all schools are struggling to find new and innovative ways to meet the changing needs of today's students.

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**SCHOOL DISTRICTS APPROVED FOR LESS THEN 160 DAYS  
2003-2004 SCHOOL YEAR**

	<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>SCHOOL DISTRICT NAME</u>	<u>ENROLLMENT</u>
1.	Alamosa.....	Sangre de Cristo RE-22J.....	312
2.	Baca.....	Campo RE-6.....	77
3.	Baca.....	Pritchett RE-3.....	67
4.	Bent.....	Mc Clave RE-2.....	249
5.	Conejos.....	Sanford 6J.....	375
6.	Conejos.....	South Conejos RE-10.....	338
7.	Costilla.....	Centennial R-1.....	300
8.	Costilla.....	Sierra Grande R-30.....	295
9.	Crowley.....	Crowley County RE 1J.....	571
10.	Custer.....	Custer C-1.....	517
11.	Dolores.....	Dolores County RE-2J.....	283
12.	El Paso.....	Calhan RJ-1.....	730
13.	El Paso.....	Edison 54 JT.....	101
14.	El Paso.....	Ellicott 22.....	942
15.	El Paso.....	Hanover 28.....	320
16.	El Paso.....	Miami/Yoder 60 JT.....	415
17.	El Paso.....	Peyton 23 JT.....	660
18.	Elbert.....	Agate 300.....	96
19.	Elbert.....	Big Sandy 100J.....	321
20.	Elbert.....	Elbert 200.....	300
21.	Elbert.....	Kiowa C-2.....	446
22.	Fremont.....	Cotopaxi RE-3.....	358
23.	Gilpin.....	Gilpin County RE-1.....	411
24.	Grand.....	East Grand 2.....	1,230
25.	Hinsdale.....	Hinsdale County RE-1.....	85
26.	Huerfano.....	Huerfano RE-1.....	757
27.	Huerfano.....	La Veta RE-2.....	280
28.	Kiowa.....	Eads RE-1.....	190
29.	Kiowa.....	Plainview RE-2.....	56
30.	Kit Carson.....	Hi Plains R-23.....	110
31.	Las Animas.....	Branson R-82.....	725
32.	Las Animas.....	Hoehne R-3.....	354
33.	Las Animas.....	Kim R-88.....	62
34.	Las Animas.....	Primero RE-2.....	145
35.	Lincoln.....	Karval RE-23.....	70
36.	Logan.....	Frenchman RE-3.....	200
37.	Mesa.....	Mesa County Valley 51/New Emerson Elementary School.....	127
38.	Mineral.....	Creede Consolidated 1.....	163
39.	Moffat.....	Moffat County RE-1/Maybell Elementary School.....	9
40.	Morgan.....	Weldon Valley RE-20J.....	149
41.	Otero.....	Cheraw 31.....	212
42.	Park.....	Park County RE-2.....	652
43.	Rio Grande.....	Del Norte C-7.....	695
44.	Saguache.....	Moffat 2.....	187
45.	Saguache.....	Mountain Valley RE-1.....	157
46.	Sedgwick.....	Platte Valley RE-3.....	110
47.	Teller.....	Cripple Creek RE-1.....	627
48.	Washington.....	Lone Star 101.....	103
49.	Washington.....	Woodlin R104.....	120
50.	Weld.....	Weld County RE 11J.....	106
51.	Yuma.....	Liberty J-4.....	97

## FOUR-DAY WEEK SCHOOL DISTRICTS: 2003-2004

### Alamosa

Sangre de Cristo RE-22J  
P.O. Box 145  
Mosca, CO 81146-0144  
Phone: (719) 378-2321

### Baca County

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Campo, CO 81029-0070  
Phone: (719) 787-2226

### Baca County

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Pritchett RE-3  
P.O. Box 7  
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Phone: (719) 523-4045

### Bent County

Terry Weber  
Mc Clave RE-2  
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Mc Clave, CO 81057  
Phone: (719) 829-4517

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Sanford 6J  
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### Conejos County

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South Conejos RE-10  
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Antonito, CO 81120  
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### Costilla County

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### Costilla County

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### Crowley County

Pat Bentley  
Crowley RE-1-J  
117 West Third  
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