

February 26, 2021

Parents and Patrons of Minidoka County Schools

The Board of Trustees was approached almost 2 years ago about the idea of going to a 4-day school week. The seed was planted, and then in November 2019, the Board attended the Idaho School Boards Association yearly meeting. At that meeting, two of our members attended a workshop given by other districts that have made the switch to a 4-day week. Pro and con information was presented and questions were answered by the districts. Our board members came away from this workshop with a far more favorable attitude than they thought they would. The idea began to grow that perhaps we should at least look into the possibility of a 4-day week.

Then, in March, Covid-19 hit and we were in uncharted territory. Districts scrambled with how to deal with the new reality and how to best educate our students. Some districts actually went to a 4-day school week but others were already there.

With the decision of Cassia County school district to move to a 4-day school week next year, it became evident we were going to have to ramp up our discussions. We decided to reach out to those districts and see the why and how they made it work. One of the things we were told is that districts were losing staff and students to surrounding 4-day districts and this influenced their decision.

Several 4-day districts shared that they found attendance improved, scores increased, discipline improved and morale improved. Needing substitutes for sports activities became less of an issue. These reasons influenced us, as well as our experience before Christmas with a 4 day week. Based on what we learned, we decided to make this move at a board meeting on February 3, 2021. Therefore, we are going to a 4-day school year for the 2021-22 school year.

There are many details to work out and we have confidence that the administrators and departments will come up with “out of the box” ideas to make this transition. We are not trying to reinvent this but rely on those who have gone before as well.

Minidoka School Board