

# A 4-Day School Week? Research Shows Possible Benefits.

Could the traditional 5-day school week actually be a drain on students and teachers? That's a subject explored in a recent study published by [MIT Press Journals](#).

A number of schools in Colorado have made the switch from a 5 to a 4-day school week in recent years, largely in an effort to manage budget constraints. Researchers examined 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in these schools and then compared them to those which had not made the switch. After controlling for variables such as socioeconomic and racial backgrounds, it was discovered that students who had switched to a 4-day school week experienced gains in reading and math, with the gains being significant in the latter subject.

Why would scores improve when students are in school for fewer days? The authors suggest the extra day off creates:

- Fewer teacher and student absences, as both can use the day for appointments, sports, or travel.
- More time for professional development, as teachers use the extra day for lesson preparation or further education.
- Increased teacher productivity.
- Increased financial savings.

Naturally, a 4-day school week could pose problems, particularly in regards to childcare for single-parent and two-income families. But if shortening the school-week actually improves student achievement – while also providing a number of other benefits – might it be a possibility which should be explored further?