

Researchers create online tool to research the four-day school week

July 10 2024, by Joe Golfen



Credit: RDNE Stock project from Pexels

Growing adoption of a four-day school week in many communities across the United States is raising questions about this trend in education.

A team of researchers at the University of Oregon HEDCO Institute has created an interactive dashboard to help educators, policymakers and journalists sift through more than 100 studies on the topic.

The [interactive dashboard](#) can be filtered by state, grade or other student demographics. More information about the interactive tool is available in a HEDCO blog post. In the coming months, the HEDCO Institute will release a review examining the impact of the four-day school week on student and school outcomes.

To produce the interactive dashboard, the HEDCO team conducted the first comprehensive meta analysis of the available research on four-day school weeks at K-12 schools in the U.S. A [meta analysis](#) involves reviewing the findings of multiple studies and combining the information for a more holistic view of the results.

Although nearly 900 districts in 26 states are on a four-day school week schedule, no one had conducted a comprehensive review, known as a scoping review, of the available research.

The scoping [review](#) included 111 studies, as well as interviews with three superintendents with experience in decision-making around the four-day school week.

"Scoping reviews are a great first step for getting a 'lay of the land' on a research topic," said Elizabeth Day, a research assistant professor at the HEDCO Institute. "Since four-day school weeks are a newer research area, we hope our findings and our data dashboard can provide decision-makers with easy access to the research that does exist and provide researchers with concrete ideas for what we still need to study."

Key points:

- Most studies examined the four-day school week in [rural communities](#) (82 studies) and in the states of Missouri (33 studies), Colorado (26 studies), Oklahoma (18 studies) and Oregon (17 studies).
- Researchers focused on how the four-day school week affected students' educational achievement (50 studies) and attendance (22 studies). Studies assessing differences in outcomes by student and school characteristics mostly examined differences by student age or [grade level](#) (28 studies).
- Researchers often did not report key contextual considerations relevant for decision-makers seeking to apply findings to their own districts. The majority of studies (67) did not report students' race or ethnicity. Over half of studies (60) did not report what schools in their sample actually did on the fifth day.
- Across the 51 studies that did report what schools in their sample did on the fifth day, some of the more commonly reported activities included the [school](#) being closed and offering teacher in-service opportunities.

Provided by University of Oregon

Citation: Researchers create online tool to research the four-day school week (2024, July 10) retrieved 6 August 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2024-07-online-tool-day-school-week.html>

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