**SAGE-Essay Extra Credit Review**

Argument & Expository

Directions: Fill out the house plan by demonstrating the five skills. When you do this, you prove that you can plan a well-organized argument essay.

Argument Prompt:

The State of Utah needs more money for public schools. They could save money by following Idaho’s examples and having a 4-day school week. Eighty minutes would be added to every school day. School would start at 7:30 and end at 3:40. School would only be held Monday-Thursday. Should this change be made? Would the benefits outweigh the costs? Write an essay in which you take a position on whether the school week should be shortened. . Use the information presented in the passages to support your points. Make sure to include information from all the passages in your essay.

**Topic: Audience:**

**Purpose:**

**Introduction:**

**Theme:**

**Evidence:**

**Elaboration:**

**Evidence:**

**Elaboration:**

**Evidence:**

**Elaboration:**

**Skill #1**

**What is your claim?**

**Skill #2**

**Provide evidence to support your claim.**

**Skill #3**

**Elaborate by**

**explaining how your evidence proves your claim.**

**Skill #4**

**Ask the author a question that challenges your claim.**

**Counterclaim:**

**Rebuttal:**

**Skill #5**

**Imagine you are the author and answer the question using evidence from the text.**

Directions: Fill out the house plan by answering the by demonstrating the four skills. When you do this, you prove that you can plan a well-organized expository essay.

Expository Prompt:

The State of Utah needs more money for public schools. The school board has started researching the four-day school week. Write an essay for the school board where you compare and contrast the 5-day and 4-day school weeks. Use evidence from the articles below to talk about the similarities and differences between the two school weeks.

**Introduction:**

**Purpose & Organiztion:**

**Evidence:**

**Elaboration:**

**Evidence:**

**Elaboration:**

**Evidence:**

**Elaboration:**

**Skill #1**

**What is your claim?**

**Skill #2**

**Provide evidence from the article**

**Skill #3**

**Elaborate by**

**explaining evicence.**

**Skill #4**

**Wrap up your essay.**

**Conclusion:**

**PASSAGE #1**

**What Is The Effect a Four-Day School Week Has on Teachers and Students?**

*Brian D. Hadfield, Middle School Teacher, Chippewa Valley Public Schools, Michigan*

In states where winter is marked by frigid temperatures and warm mittens, kids of all ages have traditions and rituals for conjuring up snow days. These kids can be found sleeping with a spoon under their pillow, putting their pajamas on backwards, or tossing ice cubes in the toilet. Students will do just about anything for an extra day off school – and how surprised would they be if this were a permanent feature of their week? What if instead of a five-day week, school districts switched to a four-day week? A concept dating back to the 1930’s, economic hardships now have districts examining and implementing this option more than ever before.

According to the Education Commission of the States, about 100 of the country’s approximately 15,000 school districts, in 17 states, use four-day weeks. An informal poll on edutopia.com indicates that 67% of over 2,700 polled favor this as a solution to school districts financial hardships. Surprisingly little research has been done on this topic, so as financial hardships mount, districts are being forced to weigh the pros and cons of this option on their own.

The biggest concern is what will happen to students that are away from the classroom every Friday or Monday, and are no longer the school’s responsibility. For many families, neither parent is home to watch their kids during the work week, which creates a dilemma of either leaving the child at home, unsupervised, or signing them up for potentially costly weekly camps or latchkey programs. There is also the argument that this extra day off gives students more time to forget valuable curriculum and potentially fall behind – an argument shared by critics of summer vacations for students. Other concerns relate to the extended school days that would be necessary for the four days remaining. Can students stay focused for that extra amount of time? If they are absent, are they going to miss that much more material?

Proponents of the four-day week say not to worry. The lost day, spread out over the four days, results only in about 10 extra minutes per class period. It is also pointed out that students have extra time to complete homework and do projects over the extended weekend. With online education being emphasized by states and districts, the extra weekday would allow for this. Other possible benefits include a rise in morale and decrease in absenteeism, by both staff and students. Additionally, parents finally have time to make appointments for their children that won’t conflict with school, take long-weekend family trips, or attend sporting events – all without sacrificing academic instruction.

Financial benefits, of course, are undeniable. Even in small districts, such as Peach County in Georgia, the cost benefits are clear: substitute costs down 76 percent, transportation costs down 35 percent, and utility costs are down by 8 percent. In addition, perhaps because of a reduction in stress and the regiment of a five-day week, disciplinary issues were down 40 percent. Even teachers, who are critical of less student contact time, see advantages of additional time to plan lessons, check papers, and prep for instruction.

Undeniably a divisive topic, the four-day school week is sure to move to the forefront of many school boards now and into the foreseeable future. Whether it harbors progressive potential or unwelcome challenges, many districts find themselves left with no choice but to give this new paradigm a fair consideration.

# PASSAGE #2

# The 4-Day School Week: A Work in Progress

## School districts that switched to shorter weeks are still unsure of benefits beyond the budget.

By [Kelsey Sheehy](http://www.usnews.com/topics/author/kelsey_sheehy) Nov. 20, 20133 Comments SHARE

Colorado's Garfield School District No. Re-2 trimmed its school week to four days last year in the hopes of saving roughly half a million dollars. The move paid off, at least as far as the budget is concerned.

The rural district saw a savings of roughly $480,000, says Theresa Hamilton, the director of districtwide services at Garfield.

"That predominantly comes on the backs of our classified staff – our bus drivers, our nutrition services workers, our secretaries, our paraprofessionals," she says. Unlike salaried teachers, who are still required to work on the fifth day, these employees' hours were cut by the shorter workweek.

Budgets are not the only thing to consider in this equation, though. There are students and teachers, instruction and learning. Where those factors are concerned, the jury is still out.

Garfield's reading and writing scores increased between four and six percentage points at the high school level, but math scores were stagnant, she says. But district officials aren't reading too much into the scores.

"One year of data does not make a trend," Hamilton says. "As a district, that data didn't say anything significant either way. It's not helping or hindering."

District officials are keeping a close eye on student progress. They are also keeping tabs on teacher development. Unlike students, teachers are still on a five-day week, with the free day intended for professional development and mentoring.

Hansen School District in Idaho, which switched to a four-day week in 2010, isn't ready to declare the change a victory yet, either.

"Things vary from year to year, from class to class, especially in a small school. So it's very hard to say whether education is better or not better with a four day week," Dave Bjorneberg, chairman of the Hansen School Board, told a local news station last month.

[Read more about the trend toward four-day weeks.]

At Hansen, teachers are available one Friday each month to offer extra help for students who need it. The remaining Fridays are dedicated to professional development. Garfield, on the other hand, cut back on the number of professional development days.

"Our most involved teachers ended up being in some sort of class every Friday," Hamilton says. This left little time for collaboration, much less prep time, she says.

This year, Garfield teachers spend one Friday each month working with other educators around the district. Some months, a day is also blocked off for teachers to focus on grades and lesson planning.

Giving teachers some time to breathe is important, too, Hamilton says.

"We have at least one Friday a month where teachers don't have anything scheduled, so that they have a little bit of downtime," she says.

While teachers have plenty to keep them busy for the full week, keeping students occupied during their days off can be a challenge.

"One of the things we did was work with community partners to try and come up with fifth day opportunities," she says. "Some of those have worked out really well, and some of them haven't."

[Discover how community partnerships can enhance learning.]

Partnerships with the local library and community hospital have been particularly successful, but full-day programming outside school for students at all grade levels is still lacking, she says.

"That's the one place where I wish we could really beef up those opportunities."

**PASSAGE #3**

# Districts Moving to 4-Day Weeks Double Since 2009

## Facing budget cuts, many districts have tried cutting costs by reducing the school week to four days.

By [Jason Koebler](http://www.usnews.com/topics/author/jason-koebler) Nov. 4, 2011

A small but growing number of school districts have shortened the school week, according to a Washington Post survey released last week.

The number of districts with four-day weeks has grown to 292, more than doubling the 120 districts estimated in 2009. There are about 15,000 public school districts across the country.

Districts make the cuts to save money on transportation and administrative costs, such as janitorial work, lunches, and electricity. The in-classroom time is made up by extending the other days of the week, but logistical problems can affect parents who work full-time jobs and have to find child care for younger students.

A September survey of Florida business owners found that 65 percent of entrepreneurs in the state opposed a theoretical move to a four-day week in the state. Some said that cutting a day off from school would cause logistical nightmares for parents; unsupervised students might cause problems; and the move could hurt education's lowest-paid employees: bus drivers and food service personnel.

U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan has spoken out against the trend. In a Twitter chat in August, he wrote that eliminating after school-programs and moving to four-day weeks are decisions that "hurt children" academically.

Thorough research on student achievement is scarce, but proponents of the four-day week point to higher attendance rates because parents are able to schedule their children's doctor's appointments and other errands on days off from school.

A 2009 report by researchers at the University of Southern Maine found that moving to a four-day week has "either no impact or a positive impact on academic performance." But more research is necessary, according to Kathy Christie, chief of staff of the nonprofit Education Commission of the States, which provides information to policymakers to help them make decisions on education.

Last year, she told CNN that "there really is no strong research on how it affects student achievements."

Some districts with many struggling students have gone the other way. For instance, in July, some schools in Baltimore considered adding Saturday school to make a six-day school week. The superintendent of Memphis City Schools also submitted a proposal earlier this year that would require students in first through fifth grades to attend school six days a week.

**PASSAGE #4**

Link: http://azednews.com/2015/05/21/four-day-school-weeks-who-uses-them-and-why/

