ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

THE 4-DAY SCHOOL WEEK: AN EXAMINATION OF LONG-TERM STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AT THE MIDDLE AND SECONDARY LEVELS

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Statement of the Problem

There is a gap in the literature concerning the impact of the 4-day school week. This dissertation compares academic achievement under the 4-day week to the traditional 5-day week throughout a 15-year period at the middle and secondary levels.

Methodology

Test scores from six standardized tests were analyzed from a 15-year period. The data were broken into 3 pieces: the first 5 years under a 5-day school week, the second 5 years on the 4-day school week, and the last 5-year period when the districts returned to a 5-day school week. Students were divided into 16 cohorts. For membership in a particular cohort, the student must begin and end with his or her cohort group, be continually enrolled in school, and be present for testing. Adequate Yearly Progress was defined as being made if the NPR from one year to the next was the same, greater than, or no lower than 3 NPRs on the various standardized tests. Chi Square tests were performed to determine any significant differences between the Pre-5 day week and 4-day week, the

4-day week and the Post-5 day week, and the Pre-5 and Post-5 day weeks. If significant differences were found, effect sizes were also calculated.

Results

Although there were various hindrances to the complete analysis of the data, enough comparisons were available to make valid judgments for 8th, 11th, and 12th grade students across reading, mathematics, and language subject areas.

In 13 comparisons, no relationship was found between scores and school week length (Pre-5 and Post-5 versus 4-day). In 3 comparisons, there was evidence against the 4-day week. In two comparisons, there was evidence for the 4-day week. Additionally, an assessment of the relationship between the lengths of the school year (Pre-5 versus Post-5 school weeks) supports the interpretation that the majority of students are making AYP across the 15-year study interval. Measures of effect size also support these interpretations.

This research is one piece of evidence suggesting that there are no detrimental effects to students' standardized achievement test scores when the 4-day school week is used.