

# Matagorda Independent School District

717 Wightman St. Matagorda, Texas 77457

(979) 863-7693



Dear Stingray Family,

Texas, and the Nation, are experiencing a major teacher shortage, particularly in rural areas. The teacher shortage is expected to be a long-term issue. In addition, small and rural school districts are having a difficult time competing with pay and benefit packages offered by larger urban districts. Matagorda ISD is not immune to this shortage or competitive disadvantage. To help address this issue and achieve our goal of retaining and recruiting the highest quality teachers and staff for our students, Matagorda ISD is adopting a 4-day instructional week for the 2024-2025 school year.

I would like to take this opportunity to discuss the benefits of a 4-day instructional week. First, a 4-day instructional week would serve as a major attraction for retaining and recruiting high quality teachers and staff. Second, it would provide additional time for staff development and planning to enhance instruction that will lead to improved student achievement. Third, it would have a positive impact on staff and student attendance, which is directly tied to student success. Finally, all of these benefits would help foster, support, and maintain a positive school climate.

Below is a Frequently Asked Questions or FAQ explaining questions you may have about a 4-day instructional week. Thank you for your support and entrusting your students with us at Matagorda ISD.

Sincerely,

Kristi Washburn

Matagorda ISD Principal

## 4-Day Instructional Week FAQ

1. What days will we be out?

\*Students will attend school Monday through Thursday and be off on Friday. The month of August will be five days a week to begin the year. Then, months with holidays on a Monday (Labor Day, MLK Day) students will go to school Tuesday through Friday. There is a week or two where students attend all five days, mainly for testing or other time requirements.

\* Teachers and staff will work 1 Friday per month. This time would be structured time devoted to lesson planning, professional development activities, parent conferences and communication, analyzing student performance data, grading assignments, and updating grades, and departmental and grade level meetings.

\* Teachers and staff will have off at least 2 Fridays per month.

2. Would this lower the pay of teachers?

- No, this will not change the pay of teachers.

3. Would this lower the pay of support staff (paraprofessionals, bus drivers, maintenance, custodians, cafeteria, secretaries, aides, etc.)?

- No, this will not lower the pay of support staff.

4. Would our days be longer?

- Yes, we currently have a 460 minute per day instructional calendar. We will add 35 minutes to the school day. These minutes needed to be added for the Amplify reading and Eureka math programs we use in kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grades and for our high school Career and Technology (CTE) programs regardless of which calendar was chosen.

5. What would be the start and end times for school?

- Our day will start at 7:45 am and end at 4:00 pm. Breakfast will be served from 7:20-7:45 am.

6. How many days would students go to school?

- Students will go to school 79 days in the fall semester and 77 days in the spring semester for a total of 156 days. They will receive 77,220 minutes of instruction. This exceeds the required state minutes of 75,600 of instruction.

7. How many days would teachers and paraprofessionals work?

- Teachers and paraprofessionals that are not on extended contracts will work for 168 days. The relationship between student days and teacher days is in alignment with the 4% difference to allow for a shortened school calendar and the traditional 187 teacher days.

180 traditional student days – 156 4-day instructional week = 24-day student difference

187 traditional teacher day – 24 student day difference = 163 teacher days (we have 168 teacher days)

8. Would school start earlier in the year?

- Yes, the teachers will start Aug. 1<sup>st</sup> instead of Aug. 8<sup>th</sup> and students will start Aug. 7<sup>th</sup> instead of Aug. 14<sup>th</sup>.

9. Would this cause us to go to school later in the year?

\*No, our last day of school will be May 22<sup>nd</sup> and teachers' last days will be May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

10. Would a 4-Day instructional week shorten our holiday breaks during the year?

\*No, it will extend a few of them.

\*Our holidays are as follows:

Labor Day, Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup>

Thanksgiving, Nov. 25<sup>th</sup> through 29<sup>th</sup>

Christmas, Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup> through Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup>

Martin Luther King Day, Jan. 20<sup>th</sup>

President's Day, Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>

Spring Break, March 10<sup>th</sup> through 14<sup>th</sup>.

Easter, April 18<sup>th</sup> through 21<sup>st</sup>

Memorial Day, May 26<sup>th</sup>

11. How would this affect extracurricular activities on Fridays?

- Athletic events on Fridays and other competitions will continue as normal.
- A benefit will be for games and events late on Thursday, students will not have to get up early for school on Friday.
- Benefit for teachers, students, and coaches missing school because of Friday events.

12. What about childcare for parents of young children that work 5-day work weeks?
- MISD will not be able to provide childcare on Fridays.
  - We will be willing to explore creative ways to partner with childcare providers/community organizations to help offer childcare.
13. What about low-income students that rely on the school district for two meals a day?
- \*We will be willing to explore ideas to provide families with a meal option for low-income students.
14. What are the reasons for this change?
- One reason to move to a 4-Day instructional week is to help retain and recruit highly qualified teachers and staff. We have found that other schools that instituted this change have been able to increase their ability to retain and hire highly qualified teachers and staff.
  - Another reason is to provide additional time for teachers to plan high quality and effect instruction, attend professional development activities, increase opportunities for parent conferences/communication, and complete other requirements that fall outside of classroom instruction time. This would lead to an even greater quality of instruction which would improve student achievement and success.
  - This change would also help with staff and student attendance by allowing time for staff and families to schedule appointments and other events on Friday.
  - We also believe that this change would boost the climate among students and staff.
  - Finally, the 4-Day instructional week would alleviate some of the current budget constraints. Electricity use would be lower, and wear/tear of buses would be less.

If you have any questions, please call the office at (979) 863-7693. We would be happy to answer your questions and provide additional information.