

SLIDELL CALL

SANGER

••••• 4 DAY FEEDBACK •••••



Sanger ISD is going on their 2nd year of a 4 day district calendar.

How does this impact elementary students, especially PK-2?



Our teachers saw this as an opportunity to implement a true intervention time. They didn't feel the need to restructure their whole day because our start and end time only changed by a few minutes on each end. Their students that get pulled for dyslexia, speech, or other related services are now able to attend these and receive more intentional intervention, and have the opportunity to learn what the rest of the class was doing when they were attending their special services.

What happens on the non-instructional day (usually Friday)?



Our teachers attend a PD day once a month. Meaning they attend school one Friday a month to train, plan, meet, grade, data dig, etc with their department/grade level teachers. There are some Fridays where we are able to do a district professional development and then break into campuses to take care of those needs.

Does this increase fatigue or behavior issues for younger students?



We have not seen or felt this.

Are students still receiving intervention and/or other services?



Yes (See first question)

What about childcare for working families? What childcare partnerships worked? Did participation in Friday care increase or decrease over time?



We used a 3rd party company (AlphaBEST) that we have contracted with for the first two years. All of the districts that we spoke to said you will have 20% participation, and then it will slowly fall and eventually you will have 0 participation. We found this to be true. We budgeted and paid for 300 students our first year. We ended up only have 27 students enroll in the program. By the end of the year we had maybe 10 students participating. We choose to keep partnership for year two, and only have one student registered to attend, and they only attend a handful of Fridays.

Did you notice any attendance changes for littles during the school week?



Our attendance for all age levels has increased.

What surprised you?



Honestly the biggest surprise was the data for childcare decreasing being true for our district just like it was for the other districts we spoke to.

Other than that, I would say the feedback from year one to year two was to start the 4 days earlier in the calendar year. Our feedback when creating year two's calendar was to only go for 2 five day weeks in august, and then start 4 days.

What pushback did you get – and from whom?



We really didn't get much push back. We had some families worried about childcare, but we made sure to communicate early enough that this was a calendar change so they had time to make plans. The key is to communicate for families to make arrangements with other families so there is no added childcare expense.

What policies had to change?

We had to look at our code of conduct with placing a student in DAEP. Usually they have 15/30/45 day placements, but when you go to a 4-day week, those lengths become excessive.



We looked at pay for our hourly employees. We want to make sure they weren't negatively impacted, so we sent them an email on how their time would be calculated. It ended up increasing their daily rate of pay.

We had to revisit the required 450 minutes for teacher conferences. With teachers having their 45 minute daily conferences M-Th it was not a big deal, but when they didn't have the Friday, we were out of compliance. To fix that, our lawyers suggested we add it to our DOI.

What do you wish you had communicated earlier?



Honestly since we did what you are doing now, we didn't make many mistakes. We learned from the schools before us and made it fit for our community.

What assumptions turned out to be wrong?



Childcare

If you were starting over, what would you change?



Nothing

What data convinced you it was successful?



Teacher retention and teacher satisfaction/morale

Did it help you compete with neighboring districts?



Yes

Do teachers work every Friday?



No, they work one Friday a month for professional development.

Is this really a benefit, or just shifting work?



This really is a benefit. Teachers feel that they can use their Fridays to get caught up while still having a weekend like those that have normal 9-5 office jobs. Teachers work on the weekends and any other spare time that they have, so this allowed them to feel like they could be above water rather than drowning.

How does this affect teacher burnout?



Teachers are exhausted on Thursdays for sure, but it is a good exhaustion. They know they have Friday to reset, recharge, and refocus. Then they can prep and prepare for the upcoming week, knowing that on the weekend they can be mom, dad, wife, grandmother, etc...

What happens to paraprofessionals, hourly staff, and aides?



They also follow the same district calendar. We communicated how their pay would be adjusted.

Did STAAR scores change?



It is still too early to tell since we are only in our 2nd year, but I shared with Mrs. Stevens the data from other districts that have seen success in scores.

Would 9-week grading periods be better than 6 weeks?



We were a 9-week district prior to the calendar change, so this is hard to answer. But to speak on the 9 weeks in general, our teachers like it. It allows for more time to catch students. I also told Mrs. Stevens I would share our 9-week eligibility calendar with her if you make this change as well.

How do you protect instructional minutes?



You have to be intentional. Conversations with teachers about getting rid of those “fluff” plans. Those units you’ve done because you love them. We also had to gather all of our elementary campuses together to align our instructional minutes. I don’t think this will be a struggle for you, but it was for us. Just be very intentional, and teachers need to be intentional with their planning. We did look at our curriculum and many of them have put out 4-week scope and sequences.