

Nearby district studies 4-day school week

By Grace Paustian

In a recent visit to Durant High School, Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate told a student assembly that some school districts in Iowa might be considering a four-day school week in the future.

“These are some things your school board and state legislators are looking at,” said Mr. Pate. “In fact, they’re very serious about going to the four days.”

As if on cue, Tipton recently announced in a letter to parents that the district is exploring that scheduling change next year.

“During the December 8 work session, the district calendar committee met with the Tipton School Board to discuss the 2024-2025 school year calendar,” the letter stated.

Two separate calendars have been proposed. One schedule has students going to school Monday through Thursday, and the next schedule has them going to school Tuesday through Friday.

Currently Tipton’s school day runs from 8:20 a.m. to 3:20 p.m. Under the proposed schedule, the day would run from 8:00 a.m. to 3:50 p.m., an increase of 50 minutes a day.

Tipton is hoping this schedule change will benefit their staff numbers and the students’ academic success.

“The goal of a four-day student school week is to grow, nurture, and increase the wellbeing of our staff,” the letter said.

In the last four years, Tipton has had around 12 teachers resign each year, and the district has gone from averaging five to six applications for an open position to less than three.

“When talking with other districts who have gone to a four-day week, they continuously state that they have multiple applicants for each position, and are usually fully staffed before June 1,” the letter stated. One district stated it saw an increase in open enrollment by over 100 students since switching to a four-day school week.

With possible adjustments to the Tipton school schedule, the school district is working on ways to open up daycare opportunities to students who will be in need of a place to go during their open school day.

“We have been in communication with our local daycare providers and plan to continue to connect with them to help solve this burden to families,” the letter stated.

The district will also send out a public survey about the proposed change, the letter stated.

“There is a lot of information to consider, and this is not a decision that can be made without significant feedback and sharing of information,” the letter stated.

In regards to the Durant school district, the four-day school week will not be in the near future, according to a *Wildcat Chronicles* interview with Durant Superintendent Joe Burnett in April of 2022.

Mr. Burnett said he feels the longer school days will not have an educational advantage; however, he is not completely against the idea of a four-day school week.

“I am not opposed to the idea of a four-day school week. I’d just like to see some results before we try it,” he said.

He feels it would be hard to sustain a positive learning environment with a four-day week because of how long each school day would be.

“If we could show that our academic gains are positive from it, it would make us more attractive,” he said. “But if our academics took a hit, we’d become less attractive.”