



Metro Regional Bargaining Council Update

As we've said before, we are working together – across the Denver Metro area – to ensure that all our members are on the same page as we face not only a difficult legislative session, but challenging bargaining as well. No local association is an island – all of us are stronger than any of us alone.

You've heard and read about school districts' ideas for budget cuts. The Legislature has already begun voting on new cuts to districts for the current budget 2009-10 year: the anticipated \$110M rescission and no funding for increased student enrollment. After this, they will consider huge cuts to the 2010-11 budget.

In our emails so far, we've addressed furlough days and salary schedule changes as districts' likely solutions to budget problems. Today our topic is cutting time from the school year:

Colorado has some small, rural districts that have been on four-day weeks for a long time. Now, under the guise of saving money, other districts are considering four-day weeks.

- Education support professionals often bear the brunt of these changes if their salaries are reduced as a result or if jobs are lost because there is not enough work for the current number of bus drivers, paraeducators, custodians, and food service workers. (Consider support professionals as allies in your fight against reducing the work week.)
- Parents often fight the four-day week because they have to find and pay for additional day care for their children (consider parents your allies too).
- While Colorado law defines a minimum number of hours of student contact time, districts could seek waivers from the current law by appealing to the State Board of Education (who knows if they'd be successful?).

As local associations develop strategies to protect and advocate for our members' salaries, hours, and working conditions, you will want to fully explore:

- the effects of a four-day week on teachers' work load and planning time, including time to collaborate with your peers;
- remaining available instructional time and how any reduction in instructional time will impact student achievement;
- the effect a work-week reduction may have on planned professional development and whether there will be a push to move professional development into teachers' off-hours including Saturdays;
- whether a reduction in the work week would be accompanied by an attempt by the district to contract out bargaining unit work;

whether staff meetings and other non-essential meetings will be cut entirely;

- whether the administration will want to reduce staff's ability to participate in decision making because there's one fewer day in the work week;
- the effect of four longer work days on employees' health and safety.

This is fourth in a series of informational emails for members of the 14 local associations in the CEA Metro Regional Bargaining Council.