

**January 23rd, 2020**

**Notes from Sun Peaks Elementary Teaching Staff: Emily Fell, Katelyn Kennedy, Amber Gray, Cassie Delaney, Maria Davis, Jillian Schmalz and Jeremy Banks**

As a staff, we are in favour of adding grades eight and nine to our school. Additionally, we are in favour of placing the grade 8/9 class next to the @KOOL building on the resort. We are in favour of changing the name to Sun Peaks School. Lastly, we are in favour of keeping the four day schedule for the following reasons:

**Academic performance/Student performance**

- Students are well rested and ready to learn when they arrive at school.
- Students are capable, resilient and regulated; for instance, FSA tests demonstrate that our students are proficient and exceeding in many academic areas.
- Students have stamina for the longer day of learning.
- Students have in-depth knowledge due to their experiences in the outdoors and the additional enrichment time provided for families
- Teachers see high attendance throughout the four-day week; parents regularly schedule appointments and extracurricular activities on Fridays. We are concerned that attendance will drop if we change to a five-day week and students will lose instructional time.
- Teachers accommodate for the longer day through thoughtful scheduling. Teachers are not limited by shared facility schedules and are able to use the outdoors in the late afternoons, increasing student energy and engagement.

**Self-Regulation / Behaviour**

- The majority of students can self-regulate due to the school life balance created by the four-day week.
- Students who are prone to anxiety have the ability to decompress on Friday.
- The staff has witnessed success from students with complex behaviour needs due to their ability to spend time outdoors and participate in community programs on Friday.
- Teachers deal with minimal behaviour needs in classrooms.

**Parent & Community**

- High level of community engagement. The high level of commitment and volunteerism enriches our students' learning and school experience.
- Parents value the school and the lifestyle the schedule permits their family; therefore, they invest in the school and students.
- Many families have moved to Sun Peaks because of the lifestyle the four-day week permits; they invest time into their children on Friday.
- Currently, our school schedule meets the needs of our community; many of our parents work in the service industry and do not have the option to spend the time on the weekends with their children. The Friday allows for this time.
- Our community members strive to live a holistic lifestyle and the four-day week allows for families to achieve balance and utilize programming that the school and community cannot provide; for example swimming lessons, gymnastics, music, art, dance.

### **Staff Investment**

- Flex days are being adopted into government establishments.
- The four-day schedule benefits mental health and work-life balance.

### **Additional Comments**

- Considering the grade 8/9 portable will be in close proximity to the high school and separate from the K-7 school, why can't we consider having two different schedules? Is there a way to have the K-7 school remain on the four day schedule and grades 8/9 have a separate schedule?

### **Additional Notes from Emily Fell (K/1/2 Teacher)**

I would like to address the opinion that a longer school day due to a 4-day school week negatively impacts our youngest learners.

As one of the teachers of our K/1/2 class at Sun Peaks Elementary I do not believe that this is the case.

Academically speaking our students are very strong. I am able to cover curriculum and students experience success in the four-day week.

As an educator, I tailor our classroom timetable to suit the extended day. In the mornings, we begin right away with our heavier academic subjects being taught when students are most focused. In our class we have a very structured language arts routine. This routine is based on small group instruction based on ability levels. Time is used very efficiently to achieve learning goals.

We have a lot of parent support in our class. During language arts we have one or two parent volunteers running groups each day to provide focused learning. These groups are very prescribed for parents, but ensure students are on task for the majority of learning time. We find that our students progress very quickly with this system.

Mathematics is taught daily between recess and lunch.

During our afternoons we concentrate on social studies, science, fine arts, P.E, and leave time for learning through play.

We utilize the outdoor environment and community to make sure that these subjects are taught in a hands on way.

Examples include:

#### *Science*

-Exploring our forest to create homes for animals to hibernate in.

-Dam building in the spring run off

-Exploring our local medicine trail to learn about local plants and First Nations uses. Study of native vs. Invasive species.

#### *Social Studies*

-Exploring diversity by working with Adaptive Sports. Learning about people with disabilities and

going out on the snow to see how skiing can be an inclusive sport.

-Learning about our community by visiting restaurants, health centre, and meeting with key community members.

-Going into our village armed with clipboards to make lists of stores, restaurants, hotels, businesses etc.

Our families are very involved in their children's learning. Children are consistently supported in their learning at home.

Children come to school ready to learn. They get enough sleep, and are fed nutritious healthy meals. In the classroom, we do not waste time dealing with major behaviours. Our students come with a huge knowledge base, especially when it comes to science and the natural world. It is obvious that families spend a lot of time together, being active in our environment. Students have very strong oral language skills, and are able to think critically and creatively on different topics.

Due to the extended school days and distance from Kamloops, students do not typically participate in extracurricular activities after school. Evening are not programmed as they are with many children in town. This is reserved for Friday and weekends.

### [Osoyoos Times- "Four-day week proposed to address school funding crises"](#)

February 3, 2016

[There is a US study that was released last summer that looked at the impact of the 4 day week on academic performance in Colorado elementary students.](#)

"Our results generally indicate a positive relationship between the four-day week and performance in reading and mathematics", authors D. Mark Anderson and Mary Beth Walker. Study was published by the Association for Education Finance and Policy.

"We thought that especially for the younger, elementary school kids, longer days on a shorter school week would hurt their academic performance because their attention spans are shorter. Also, the longer weekend would give them more opportunity to forget what they had learned", she said, acknowledging that the study found the opposite.