

Local

Teachers, parents push back against 5-day school week idea

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Teachers and parents in support of the four-day school weeks are pushing back against the proposed five-day school week with a shortened school day.

The group has been working for a few weeks, gathering information to present to the school board.

According to Coby Mastrude, a member of the group and a mother, Andi Jaca told her and other members of the group that Superintendent Mark Witty was working to push the five-day school week through. Recently, a small group of parents had submitted a petition supporting that idea.

"It appeared that the school board and Witty were going to take some action on it," explained Mastrude. "And so then we just felt that there are a lot of us who like it how it is. So we started researching and asking more people and it just kind of grew—the movement grew."

Mastrude explained that she and other members found research done on rural Colorado school districts.

She explained that it tends to be rural schools

in Western states that have this situation, stating that most school districts go to four day weeks for the cost effectiveness.

"There is research out there, if you look on the internet, that says that these four day weeks actually academically benefit kids," explained Mastrude. "Math scores go up significantly, they say language arts maintains—they did say that there is a slight improvement but not statistically significant enough to claim it.

"But there is no reduction in test scores because of being in four days versus five. And it leads to less absenteeism by students by teachers, by other staff members; it tends to correlate with higher morale in students and teachers.

"Teachers have mentioned that their students are engaged more, it really seems to work for families. It certainly works for my family; it certainly works for my friend's family.

"I definitely think the majority of people that I know are in favor of the four-day week and keeping it as it is. I do know a couple people who would prefer a five day week and they have their reasons, but our group finds that this

benefits our kids and our families the most to leave it as it is."

Mastrude explained that teachers agree with their findings. She explained that her group does not understand why they are trying to change the school days.

The group planned to present their findings at the school board meeting March 9th and they encouraged as many families who supported the continuing four day school week to be there. They planned to have a few people speak about why they felt it should stay the same.

"We're just trying to make our numbers heard," Mastrude explained. "We honestly feel like we are in the majority when it comes to this decision. And that's really all we can do is just try and make as big a presence for them to see our numbers."

Mastrude explained that many of her fellow group members were gathering signatures for the presentation. She estimated around 200 signatures at the most for the presentation.

The information they found was conducted by Mary Beth Walker from Georgia State University. She is the one who researched comparisons

between four and five day school weeks. Mastrude explained that Walker's research stated that they did not expect to find that four days worked better for kids but they do.

"The only benefit to a five-day school week that I can come up with is that there are kids that get fed probably a more nutritious meal on Friday at the schools for breakfast and lunch than if they weren't at school," said Mastrude. "There is going to be that pocket population in every school district, that's the case, but I cannot think of any other reason why it would be beneficial to go back to school on Fridays. A half day, which they are proposing, is in the Middle School and the High School level—you're taking classes that are an hour long and cutting them down to 20 minutes. Go back to when you were in high school; what can you get done in 20 minutes in a class? You're not going to learn a lesson. You might be able to use it as a study hour or like a home room, but it's basically a waste of a day."

Mastrude praised the Friday Academy, explaining that the courses offered helped students and 5J should expand it.

Farmers Market needs volunteers

The Baker City Farmers Market Board of Directors is currently seeking volunteers to fill two board positions. If you have an interest in joining the board team in promoting and growing our community Farmers Market, please contact Amy Young for more information, at 541.519.7281.

Fire Marshal urges fire alarm testing during clock changing

Sunday, March 12 marks the beginning of daylight saving time and serves as a good reminder for Oregonians to test their smoke alarms. The Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal is urging residents to test their smoke alarms before automatically changing the batteries.

"Smoke alarm technology has advanced and many now come with 10-year batteries and some are tamper-resistant," said State Fire Marshal Jim Walker. "So, I encourage residents to test their alarms before changing the battery."

Oregon law requires ionization-only smoke alarms that are solely battery powered to come equipped with a hush feature and a 10-year battery. Because of this technology, the national slogan "Change your clock, Change your battery" may not apply to Oregon residents who have these ionization-only smoke alarms.

Other types of alarms are also being sold with either a 10-year battery or a standard-life battery.

"Ensuring you have working smoke alarms in your home is the single most important step you can take to increase your family's safety from a home fire," adds Walker. "Also, be sure to replace any smoke alarm that is 10 years old or older."

To test your alarm properly we recommend you:

- 1) Push the test button to be sure the battery is working.
- 2) When replacing batteries, follow the manufacturer's instructions for the correct battery type to use.
- 3) Always retest alarms after installing new batteries.
- 4) Replace any alarm that fails to operate after installing a new battery.
- 5) Inspect your alarms to determine if they are 10 years old or older, and replace any smoke alarm 10 years old or older. Look for a date on the back of the alarm. If there is no date, your alarm is more than 10 years old and should be replaced.
- 6) Follow the manufacturer's instructions for regularly cleaning your alarms of dust and cobwebs.

Working smoke alarms provide a critical early warning to a fire, allowing you vital minutes to escape, which increase your chances of survival. Additional safety tips:

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, in each bedroom, and outside each sleeping area (hallway).
- Never disconnect or remove batteries from smoke alarms for other uses.
- Use the smoke alarm's hush feature to silence nuisance alarms.
- Make a home fire escape plan and practice it with family members.
- Practice your home fire escape plan at least two times a year at different times of the day/night.
- Children, older adults, and people with disabilities may need assistance to wake up and get out. Ensure that someone will help them.

For more home fire escape planning information visit: <http://www.oregon.gov/osp/SFM/Pages/escapeplan.aspx>

For more smoke alarm and fire safety information, contact your local fire department or visit http://www.oregon.gov/osp/SFM/Pages/CommEd_SA_Program.aspx

Follow the OSFM on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/OregonStateFireMarshal> and Twitter @OSFM.

Funding site up for dog park

Baker City citizens and the Baker City Park & Rec volunteer board, are working towards funding a dog park. The City has approved property to use for this purpose near the Sam-O swim center. Any money raised for the dog park will be used to purchase fencing materials and other equipment needed to operate and maintain the park.

Writes Gail Duman via email, "I wanted to update you and let you know that our GoGetFunding account is up and running. This means that anyone can make a donation to our dog park. This is the link: <https://gogetfunding.com/baker-city-dog-park/> to reach our site. Please share this with all your friends and dog lovers."

Quilt show ahead

July 14th and 15th are the dates set for 2017's quilt show, again to be held at 2020 Church.

The theme is "Quilting on the Oregon Trail" and the show will again feature bed turnings.

With local participation, this is sure to be another great show. There will be no judging of the quilts again this year. Snow days = more quilts!

BLOOD DRAW

Participate in blood panel screenings offered by
Saint Alphonus Medical Center—Baker City

Thursday Friday Saturday

March 16 17 18

Join us!

7:00 a.m.—9:30 a.m.

Saint Alphonus
Medical Center—Baker City
Powder River Conference Room

Use Administration entrance (old care center entrance) located in the back of the hospital near the ER entrance.

Basic Package: Lipid panel—\$0 (no charge)

Comprehensive Package: Lipid panel, CBC, Comprehensive Metabolic Panel—\$20

TSH: \$10

Vitamin D: \$30

No Appointment Needed.

IMPORTANT: Please abstain from all food and drink at least 12 hours before your blood screening. Drinking plain water is encouraged.

Your results
will be mailed to you.

*Insurance will not be billed. You will receive a receipt for your tests.

Individuals are responsible for checking with their insurance carriers for possible reimbursement.

If you have questions, call Laura Huggins at 541-523-8102.

because it's all about *you.*

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