



Ben Gibson, *Chair*
Ryan Petty, *Vice Chair*
Members
Esther Byrd
Grazie P. Christie
Daniel P. Foganholi, Sr.
Kelly Garcia
MaryLynn Magar

May 9, 2025

Mr. Steve Lanier, Superintendent
Franklin County School District
85 School Road, Suite 1
Eastpoint, Florida 32328

Dear Superintendent Lanier:

It has come to my attention that Franklin County School District is considering implementing a four-day school week.

I have many questions and concerns regarding this consideration and the impact that it would have on the students of Franklin County. In 2020, Florida led the nation in ensuring that students and families were able to send their children to school five days a week because the data show that this is best for our students and their academic outcomes. That decision has played a large role in Florida's educational success, leading to Florida's ranking as the #1 state in the nation for Education by U.S. News & World Report.

As leaders we must put the needs of our students and families first, with no exceptions. Our schools exist for our primary customers, the students and families. Not only am I concerned with the potentially detrimental impacts to student achievement as a result of a four-day school week, but I also have great concerns about how students will receive the services and support that they rely on at school such as meals and the structure of attending class. As educators, we are all acutely aware of the struggles that many of our students face outside of the classroom, and how those struggles greatly impact their academic trajectory.

According to the Apalachicola Times, some of those in attendance at recent town hall meetings were concerned about moving to a four-day school week and even spoke against the idea because of the burden it would place on working class people and the impact on the community overall. These statements leave me extremely concerned for those wondering how this will impact their children and families. This is especially concerning for our families who rely on school as a safe place for their children while they are at work five days a week.

Superintendent Lanier
May 9, 2025
Page Two

Research cited in an Education Next article authored by Matthew A. Kraft and Sarah Novicoff states, “However, in looking at four-day weeks, research shows that they rarely improve academic outcomes and often lead to decreases in performance.”¹

A 2024 post by Jeanette Luna of The Fordham Institute concludes, “In short, the findings provide even more reasons to be skeptical of the four-day school week. Combined with tons of research showing that these shorter schedules negatively impact student achievement, it’s hard for anyone to make a case for the policy. In a time of unprecedented learning loss and widespread chronic absenteeism, it’s indefensible.”²

I strongly encourage you, as the Superintendent and the person responsible for the success of the students of Franklin County, to heed the research that heavily disputes the decision to switch to a four-day school week. Strong leadership matters for our students; I am calling on you to be a strong leader on this issue, because our children depend on it.

If you persist in this effort to implement a four-day school week, I will convene an emergency meeting of the State Board of Education in order for you to explain, in detail, how you plan to implement your experiment on students and just how you will ensure and guarantee the students and parents of your district, and the citizens of this state, that you are acting in the best interests of children and their families.

As Commissioner of Education, I am requesting that you reconsider this proposal that would no doubt negatively impact student achievement levels in Franklin County.

I expect a written response from you within five business days of the date of this letter. Govern yourself accordingly.

Sincerely,



Manny Diaz, Jr.

¹ Education Next, Winter 2025, “Time for School,” by Matthew A. Kraft, Associate Professor, Brown University, and Sarah Novicoff, Doctoral Candidate, Stanford University. <https://www.educationnext.org/time-for-school-assessing-inequality-access-instructional-time-united-states/>

² October 2024, “How are four-day school weeks impacting student attendance and teacher retention?” by Jeanette Luna, Research and Operations Associate, The Fordham Institute. <https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/commentary/how-are-four-day-school-weeks-impacting-student-attendance-and-teacher>