NEWSLETTER

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TIME MATTERS MORE THAN THE SCHEDULE

Students need sufficient time, and teachers need support to use it well.

In today's edition, we explore:

- **Daily mathematics time:** DMTI planning recommendations and what research shows
- **The research:** what studies show about four-day school weeks and summer breaks
- **What to examine:** questions for teachers, coaches, and school leaders

Educators!

Schools make important decisions about mathematics instruction when they establish daily schedules, plan intervention, and set calendars. These decisions affect students' opportunities to investigate mathematical ideas, discuss their reasoning, and practice. How teachers use that time matters as much as how much time is available.

Classroom Tips

1. **Plan around the mathematics.** Decide which part of today's lesson needs the most time.
2. **Leave time for discussion.** Students need to compare strategies before the lesson ends.
3. **Bring ideas back.** Plan cumulative review so that important relationships return across days and weeks.

How Much Daily Time? DMTI Planning Recommendations

These are planning recommendations for daily core mathematics, not research thresholds. Research does not establish a specific number of instructional minutes that guarantees achievement.

- **Grades K–2:** 70–90 minutes
- **Grades 3–5:** 60–75 minutes
- **Grades 6–8:** 50–70 minutes

Intervention Adds to Core Instruction

Intervention should supplement, not replace, core mathematics instruction (Gersten et al., 2009). DMTI planning guidelines: Tier 2, 20–30 minutes three to four days a week; Tier 3, 30–45 minutes daily.

What Does the Research Say?

Research on four-day school weeks raises concerns about mathematics achievement, particularly when the change reduces total instructional time. In Oregon, Thompson (2021) found small negative effects of the four-day week on mathematics and reading achievement. Findings vary across studies, so districts should monitor minutes, attendance, and outcomes.

Achievement can also decline over the summer. Cooper et al. (1996) found an average decline of about one month on a grade-level equivalent scale, larger in mathematics computation. Estimates vary across studies and tests. These findings raise important questions about differences in students' opportunities to continue learning mathematics during extended breaks.

What Teachers, Coaches, and Leaders Can Examine

- **Teachers:** Does the way lesson time is divided match the mathematics students are learning?
- **Coaches:** How does student work inform decisions about discussion, practice, and the development of mathematical relationships?
- **Leaders:** Is core mathematics protected, and does intervention add to it rather than replace it?

Time matters because students need repeated opportunities to develop mathematical ideas, connect representations, and become fluent with procedures. Schools need to provide sufficient time, and teachers need the knowledge and support to use that time effectively.

Keep developing mathematical thinkers.

More Information

Read DMT Insight 40, watch the accompanying video, and download the Companion at mathsuccess.io/dmtinsights.

How does your school protect time for mathematics? Share it with us at contact@dmtinstitute.com.

For more information on professional development and curricular resources, visit mathsuccess.io.

