

1977

# An Analysis of Student and Teacher Opinions Regarding the Shortened School Day

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*Eastern Illinois University*

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## Recommended Citation

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Author

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An Analysis of Student and Teacher Opinions

Regarding the Shortened School Day

(TITLE)

BY

Renshaw Benjamin Garshelis

**THESIS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Specialist in Education

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1977

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING  
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

July 25, 1977  
DATE

July 25, 1977  
DATE

AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENT AND TEACHER OPINIONS  
REGARDING THE SHORTENED SCHOOL DAY

BY

RENSHAW BENJAMIN GARSHELIS

ABSTRACT OF A FIELD STUDY

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Specialist in Education at the Graduate School  
of Eastern Illinois University

CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS  
1977

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this field experience was to examine and compare student and teacher opinions concerning the shortened school day in the Charleston Community Unit School District No. 1.

On January 5, 1977, the Charleston School Board of Education voted to enforce a five-hour school day schedule effective January 24, 1977. In this study the writer wanted to poll student and teacher opinions in regard to the shortened school day. Comparisons were then made in relation to their opinions.

Data was collected from four groups of students and three groups of teachers. The four groups of students were: (1) fifth and sixth graders, (2) seventh and eighth graders, (3) ninth and tenth graders, and (4) eleventh and twelfth graders. The three groups of teachers were from every level in the Charleston School District, (1) the elementary, (2) the junior high, and (3) the high school.

Data collected was analyzed to compare student and teacher opinions taken from an evaluation sheet containing ten specific statements. These ten statements were rated from a scale of one to five, (5) being excellent reasoning, (4) good reasoning, (3) reasonable, (2) poor reasoning, and (1) not reasonable.

Results showed that both students and teachers felt that the short-

ened day was an improvement over the regular school day, and that both students and teachers felt that their school morale had improved.

Students in all four groups rated the ten statements from the evaluation sheet in the following order: (1) got out early, (2) had more time to do homework, (3) students were better behaved in class, (4) because it saved district money, (5) shortened day was to help get next referendum passed, (6) period length was right for my attention span, (7) upset established normal routines, (8) lab classes too short to get work finished, (9) gave me more time to talk with teachers, (10) students did not receive time needed to complete course requirements. Teachers in all three groups rated the ten statements from the evaluation sheet in the following order: (1) had more time to plan effectively, (2) period length more in tune with student attention span, (3) used time for conferences, (4) discipline was easier to maintain, (5) because it saved district money, (6) shortened day was to help get next referendum passed, (7) got out early, (8) upset established normal routines, (9) lab classes were too short to accomplish adequate skills, (10) students did not receive time needed to meet course requirements.

The only statement that both groups rated exactly the same was that students did not receive time needed to meet course requirements. However, both groups rated that last. Ironically, it seemed that the reason the Charleston Board of Education reversed its earlier decision and went back to the regular school day was because the State Board of Education said the district was not meeting the minimum daily student/teacher contact hours.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this field experience was to examine and compare student and teacher opinions concerning the shortened school day in the Charleston Community Unit School District No. 1.

The Charleston District has been working with a critical financial situation for a number of years. The limited revenues have simply not kept pace with increased financial demands.

Charleston school district has attempted unsuccessfully to increase local support. The results of four tax referenda over the past two years are listed below:<sup>1</sup>

Table I

<u>Date</u>	<u>Rate of Increase (Education Fund)</u>	<u>Results</u>	
		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
3-8-75	1.60 to 1.90	1083	2610
11-15-75	1.60 to 2.30	2574	3132
4-3-76	1.60 to 2.15	2221	2617
11-30-76	1.60 to 2.07	2199	2373

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from Dr. Smucker to Dr. Cronin, January 14, 1977.



Alternate methods of financing the educational programs were studied, and the sale of funding bonds were brought to the community voters. On July 19, 1975, a total of \$715,000 was voted down by a 2 to 1 margin.

The success of the October 19, 1976, vote allowed the district to issue bonds for \$765,000 of existing debt position. This still left the district with a deficit at \$1,100,000. The circumstances listed above have, of course, made it necessary to deficit finance in order to maintain a reasonably adequate educational program. Charleston school district has cut costs from its programs over the past three years in a genuine effort to live within existing revenues. In 1975-76 the budget cuts totaled \$325,697, and in 1976-77 the cuts totaled \$328,955. These reductions in costs reduced the district's teaching force by 24, and its administrative staff by one-third over the past two years (1975-77). The Board of Education did allow some extra-curricular activities to be reinstated with funding provided by private donations.

In the fall of 1976 a special Task Force was formed. This Task Force undertook a study to consider cost-saving measures made necessary by the failure to pass the November 30, 1976, tax referendum.

On January 3, 1977, recommendations were given by the Task Force to the Board of Education of Community Unit School District #1 concerning the study made by the Task Force on cost reductions. The study was conducted in two phases. Phase I was to consider necessary

action to be taken the second semester of the 1976-77 school year, and Phase II was action to be considered for the beginning of the 1977-78 school year.<sup>2</sup>

Phase I -- beginning second semester of the 1976-77 school year:

Program

- A. Eliminate hot lunch program (except to provide cold lunches for children who qualify for free or reduced price meals).
- B. Eliminate micro-filming program of school records.
- C. Require students to furnish all school supplies except required textbooks.
- D. Close the school facilities to all non-school functions, such as Lake Land College, Charleston Recreation Department, etc.
- E. Reduce cost of non-certified personnel.
- F. Utility Savings -- This policy would reduce energy consumption as much as possible.
- G. Eliminate weekend security checks at all schools.

Total estimated saving -- \$92,569

Phase II -- the Task Force continue to study various cost-saving measures that must be considered for the 1977-78 school year

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<sup>2</sup>Recommendations from Task Force to the Charleston Board of Education 1976.

in order to have a balanced budget for that school year.

In reaching these recommendations the Task Force met with the Administrative Council, members of the Citizen's Consulting Council, and with representatives from the Illinois Office of Education.

On January 5, 1977, the Board of Education of Community Unit District #1 met for a special school board meeting. Mr. Furry, school board member, presented the recommendations to the Board from the Task Force. He explained that this recommendation was made in two parts. Questions were asked of the Task Force Committee regarding these recommendations. Discussion was also held regarding other alternatives for cost savings.<sup>3</sup> The possibility of going half-days was discussed and the possibility of holding school the minimum required five hours per day was discussed.

After a lengthy discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Furry and seconded by Mr. Reed as follows:

1. To adopt Phase I of the recommendations of the Task Force effective January 24, 1977;
2. To enforce a five-hour school day schedule effective January 24, 1977;
3. Directing the Superintendent to request permission from Dr. Cronin, State Superintendent of Education, to allow Community Unit #1 to adopt a four-hour school day schedule beginning January 24, 1977.

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<sup>3</sup>Charleston School Board minutes of January 5, 1977.

The roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried by a vote of 5 to 1.<sup>4</sup>

On January 14, 1977, Dr. Smucker, Superintendent of Charleston Community Unit District #1, sent a letter to Dr. Cronin, State Superintendent of Education, requesting the State Office of Education approve the limited four-hour schedule for the second semester of the current school year in order to further reduce district operating costs. Along with this request a statement was made regarding the proposed reduction and estimated savings for the 1977-78 school year. The total cost reduction was approximately \$371,000.

Dr. Smucker also stated that the Charleston school district was expecting an on-site visit by the Office of Education on February 23 and 24, 1977. After this visit, Dr. Smucker asked that the State Board of Education make specific recommendations with regards to the present year and the 1977-78 school year.

On January 24, 1977, the Charleston Community Unit District #1 proceeded with the Phase I portion of the Task Force recommendations and began the shortened day schedule.

In a very short period of time, a group of concerned citizens contacted Dr. Cronin, State Superintendent of Education. These citizens requested that Dr. Cronin immediately respond to the decision made by the Charleston Board of Education concerning the shorter school day. This group wanted to see if the shortened day met the minimum standard

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<sup>4</sup>Charleston School Board minutes of January 5, 1977.

of daily attendance set by the State Board of Education.

Dr. Cronin responded immediately and requested that the Charleston Board of Education meet the minimum standards of daily attendance.

On February 23, 1977, the Charleston Board of Education reversed its earlier decision concerning the shortened school day. All schools in the district were instructed to reinstate the regular full day schedule by March 4, 1977. On March 4, 1977, that decision was carried out by each school in the district for the remainder of the 1976-77 school year.

Log of Activities

February 21, 1977

Had first meeting with John Dively, Charleston Junior High School Principal, to set up this field experience and survey.

February 22, 1977

Developed first survey--Took survey to Dr. Smitley and Dr. Matzner.

February 23, 1977

I met separately with Dr. Smitley and Dr. Matzner for revision and approval of study and survey.

February 24, 1977

Changed survey from suggestions from Dr. Smitley and Dr. Matzner. Made final copies of survey--mimeographed copies. Met with Dr. Smucker, Superintendent of Charleston schools, for approval to conduct survey to students and faculty.

February 25, 1977

Ran a practice random survey of 15 faculty and 15 students at Charleston Junior High to see if methods of survey were satisfactory. Contacted each individual building principal and explained that they would receive a packet and instructions concerning the survey. Sent surveys in packets interschool mail.

February 28, 1977

Re-contacted each building principal to see if he had any questions concerning survey. Each building principal had no problems following the printed instruction.

March 1, 1977

Completed entire student and faculty survey at Charleston Junior High School

March 2, 1977

Received first packets of survey from Jefferson and Ashmore grade schools.

March 4, 1977

Received all but Mark Twain and Lincoln grade school packets.

March 7, 1977

Collected Mark Twain and Lincoln surveys.

March 15, 1977

Separated surveys according to grade levels and teachers.

April 4 to 8, 1977

Analysis of survey.

April 12, 1977

Met with John Dively to explain results of survey.

June 13, 1977

Discussed field study with Dr. Smitley--add history to introduction.

June 15, 1977

Went to Community Unit District #1 central office to collect past school board minutes. Also studied the recommendations of the Task Force to the Charleston Board of Education.

June 16, 1977

Began to make first draft of field study--took study to typist.

## CHAPTER II

### SELECTED ACTIVITY ANALYSES

In this field study two separate but similar evaluations were taken from four groups of students and three groups of teachers. The four groups of students were: (1) fifth and sixth graders, (2) seventh and eighth graders, (3) ninth and tenth graders, and (4) eleventh and twelfth graders. The three groups of teachers were from every level in the Charleston school district, (1) the elementary, (2) junior high, and (3) high school buildings. The purpose of categorizing the students into four different groups was to see if their opinions differed from grade level to grade level in comparison to their teachers' opinions.

Both evaluation sheets were very similar in context. This similarity may be observed by referring to the Appendix. The wording of some questions differed only in relation to whether they were given to teachers or students. For example, Part II, question 2, of the student evaluation asked if the students had more time after school to do homework. In the teacher evaluation, Part II, question 2, asked if the teacher had more time to plan effectively.

Part I of both teacher and student evaluation sheets asked the same question, "Did you feel the shortened school day was an improve-



ment over the longer day?" Evaluators were to check either yes or no.

Part II had ten statements asked of both the students and teachers. They rated each statement from one to five with five (excellent reasoning), four (good reasoning), three (reasonable), two (poor reasoning), and one (not reasonable).

Part III had to do with the attitude of students and the morale of teachers in relation to the shortened school day. Again, the one to five rating system was applied. The rating used here was--five (much increase), four (some increase), three (no improvement), two (decrease), and one (much decrease).

Part IV of the evaluation was simply an area left for any additional comments that either teachers or students may have had concerning the shortened school day.

The student evaluation sheets were conducted by classroom teachers. Approximately twenty-five percent of the students in each grade category completed the evaluation sheets. The number of returned responses differed in each grade category because the total number of students varied in each group. Results from the returned evaluation sheets are as follows:

- 1). ninety-six out of one hundred fifteen returned in the elementary grades,
- 2). one hundred forty-one out of one hundred fifty returned from the junior high,
- 3). one hundred twenty-nine out of one hundred forty returned

from grades nine and ten,

- 4). one hundred eighty out of one hundred eighty-five returned from grades eleven and twelve.

Each building principal received a packet of teacher evaluation sheets. Each principal was instructed to give each full time teacher in their building one evaluation sheet. Instructions were given with each evaluation sheet. Each teacher was asked to complete and return the evaluation sheet to their building principal. Then the building principal was instructed to return the completed sheets in the inter-school mail. The percentage of returned evaluation sheets differed on each level for teachers. Percentages from the returned teacher evaluation sheets are as follows:

- 1). fifty-eight percent (forty-one responded) of the elementary teachers responded,
- 2). seventy-six percent (twenty-five responded) of the junior high teachers,
- 3). fifty-one percent (seventeen responded) of the high school staff.

In the following pages are twelve tables. Each table is concerned with one of the twelve statements on the evaluation sheets. The results of responses are shown in relation to each student and teacher group.

TABLE II

Did you feel the shortened school day was an improvement over the longer day?

	5-6 Grade Students		7-8 Grade Students		9-10 Grade Students		11-12 Grade Students		Elementary Teachers		Jr. High Teachers		High School Teachers	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	55	57	99	70	108	84	151	84	31	76	23	92	11	65
No	41	42	42	30	21	16	29	16	10	24	2	8	6	35

The data indicated here clearly shows that the majority of both students and faculty agreed that the shortened day was an improvement over the longer school day. However, a much smaller percent of fifth and sixth graders had a particular response. The response of these students on Part IV of the evaluation sheet (additional comments), the writer feels explains this deviation. Many elementary students felt they were cheated out of social contact with others in school, and that when they went home there wasn't much for them to do.

TABLE III

Got out of school early

Reasonings	5-6 Grade Students		7-8 Grade Students		9-10 Grade Students		11-12 Grade Students		Elementary Teachers		Jr. High Teachers		High School Teachers	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
5 - Excellent Reasoning	41	43	66	44	58	45	97	54	2	5	7	28	2	12
4 - Good Reasoning	37	38	43	30	41	32	38	21	7	17	4	16	3	18
3 - Reasonable	16	17	27	19	24	19	43	24	19	46	6	24	7	41
2 - Poor Reasoning	2	2	4	3	3	2	0	0	4	10	4	16	2	12
1 - Not Reasonable	0	0	6	4	3	2	2	1	9	22	4	16	3	18

The data here indicates that students on all four grade levels felt getting out early was an excellent reason for having the shortened school day. On the other hand, teachers did not feel that getting out early was an excellent reason, but did feel that it was a reasonable explanation.

TABLE IV

Had more time to do homework or plan effectively

Reasonings	5-6 Grade Students		7-8 Grade Students		9-10 Grade Students		11-12 Grade Students		Elementary Teachers		Jr. High Teachers		High School Teachers	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
5 - Excellent Reasoning	22	23	55	39	49	38	81	45	29	71	17	68	6	35
4 - Good Reasoning	29	30	40	28	37	29	51	28	10	24	6	24	5	29
3 - Reasonable	33	33	34	24	33	26	47	26	2	5	1	4	5	29
2 - Poor Reasoning	2	2	3	2	4	3	0	0	0	0	-	4	-	6
1 - Not Reasonable	10	11	9	6	6	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

The data here indicates that both students and teachers felt that having more time to do homework, or to plan effectively, was excellent reasoning for having the shortened school day. Many of the additional comments in Part IV of the evaluation sheets stated that teachers finally had adequate time to prepare themselves for all their classes.

TABLE V

Had more time for student/teacher conferences

Reasonings	5-6 Grade Students		7-8 Grade Students		9-10 Grade Students		11-12 Grade Students		Elementary Teachers		Jr. High Teachers		High School Teachers	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
5 - Excellent Reasoning	22	23	25	18	28	22	28	16	13	32	11	44	2	12
4 - Good Reasoning	29	30	26	18	27	21	24	13	18	37	4	16	8	47
3 - Reasonable	33	33	57	40	61	47	114	66	8	20	4	16	6	35
2 - Poor Reasoning	2	2	9	6	2	2	3	2	1	3	2	8	1	6
1 - Not Reasonable	10	10	23	16	11	9	11	6	2	5	0	0	0	0

The data here indicates that all four groups of students felt that having student/teacher conferences was a reasonable statement for having the shortened school day. However, teachers felt strongly and responded to this statement as an excellent reasoning for having the shortened school day.

TABLE VI

Period length more in tune with student attention span

Reasonings	5-6 Grade Students		7-8 Grade Students		9-10 Grade Students		11-12 Grade Students		Elementary Teachers		Jr. High Teachers		High School Teachers	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
5 - Excellent Reasoning	19	20	32	30	21	16	46	26	13	32	20	84	7	41
4 - Good Reasoning	21	21	24	17	30	23	37	21	15	37	3	12	4	24
3 - Reasonable	30	31	81	57	67	52	88	49	7	17	2	8	6	35
2 - Poor Reasoning	10	10	0	0	1	1	2	1	4	10	0	0	0	0
1 - Not Reasonable	16	16	4	3	10	8	7	4	2	5	0	0	0	0

The data here indicates that all four groups of students felt that the class length in relation to their attention span was only a reasonable statement for having the shortened school day. Teachers felt that the period length was more in tune with the students' attention span during the shortened school day, and they responded by selecting the statement as an excellent reason for the shortened school day.

TABLE VII

Because it saved the district money

Reasonings	5-6 Grade Students		7-8 Grade Students		9-10 Grade Students		11-12 Grade Students		Elementary Teachers		Jr. High Teachers		High School Teachers	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
5 - Excellent Reasoning	33	33	41	29	40	31	66	37	12	29	6	24	2	12
4 - Good Reasoning	17	10	21	15	18	13	49	27	7	17	10	40	4	24
3 - Reasonable	29	30	68	48	55	42	54	29	20	49	8	32	8	47
2 - Poor Reasoning	7	7	4	3	8	5	4	2	0	0	1	4	3	18
1 - Not Reasonable	10	10	7	5	8	6	7	4	2	5	0	0	0	0

The data here clearly indicates that both students and teachers agreed to the statement that the district saved money by going to the shortened day. However, both groups did not feel very strong about this statement. The majority of students and teachers marked this as a reasonable statement for going to the shortened school day.



TABLE VIII

Discipline was easier to maintain

Reasonings	5-6 Grade Students		7-8 Grade Students		9-10 Grade Students		11-12 Grade Students		Elementary Teachers		Jr. High Teachers		High School Teachers	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
5 - Excellent Reasoning	20	21	39	28	43	33	76	42	10	24	10	40	4	24
4 - Good Reasoning	44	44	68	48	38	29	65	36	7	17	8	33	5	29
3 - Reasonable	21	21	26	18	30	21	30	17	11	27	5	24	5	29
2 - Poor Reasoning	6	6	1	1	6	4	3	2	6	15	1	4	3	18
1 - Not Reasonable	5	5	7	5	12	9	6	3	7	17	0	0	0	0

The data collected here concerning "discipline was easier to maintain" during the shortened school day, indicated that both students and teachers felt the statement was either excellent reasoning or a reasonable statement. The writer feels that some of the additional comments written in Part IV of the evaluation sheets stated that the shortened day made the students "get down to business," which gave them little time to "fool around".

TABLE IX

Students did not receive time needed to complete course requirements

Reasonings	5-6 Grade Students		7-8 Grade Students		9-10 Grade Students		11-12 Grade Students		Elementary Teachers		Jr. High Teachers		High School Teachers	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
5 - Excellent Reasoning	4	4	36	26	30	21	28	16	0	0	0	0	2	12
4 - Good Reasoning	11	11	35	25	19	15	27	15	3	7	2	8	3	18
3 - Reasonable	21	21	59	42	71	55	124	69	23	56	9	36	7	41
2 - Poor Reasoning	42	43	2	1	1	1	0	0	7	17	5	2	2	12
1 - Not Reasonable	18	19	9	6	8	6	2	1	8	20	6	24	3	18

The data indicated here shows that both students and teachers felt this was either a reasonable or not reasonable explanation for the shortened school day. This statement was the only statement both groups rated the exact same. Both groups rated this statement the least or poorest reason for having the shortened school day. Ironically, it seemed that the only reason the Charleston Board of Education reversed their earlier decision and went back to the regular school day was because the State Board of Education said the district was not meeting the minimum daily required student/teacher contact hours.

TABLE X.

## Upset established normal routine

Reasonings	5-6 Grade Students		7-8 Grade Students		9-10 Grade Students		11-12 Grade Students		Elementary Teachers		Jr. High Teachers		High School Teachers	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
5 - Excellent Reasoning	11	11	43	30	28	22	37	21	4	10	1	4	2	12
4 - Good Reasoning	37	37	29	21	23	18	32	18	6	15	2	8	2	12
3 - Reasonable	20	21	51	36	51	40	101	56	20	49	6	24	9	53
2 - Poor Reasoning	21	21	4	3	9	7	3	2	7	17	5	2	2	12
1 - Not Reasonable	7	7	14	10	17	13	7	4	4	10	10	40	2	12

The data indicated here shows that students and teachers did not feel that the shortened school day upset their established normal routines. The majority of groups rated this as a reasonable explanation for the shortened school day. However, all five reasonings received ratings from all seven groups.

TABLE XI

Lab classes were too short to accomplish adequate skills

Reasonings	5-6 Grade Students		7-8 Grade Students		9-10 Grade Students		11-12 Grade Students		Elementary Teachers		Jr. High Teachers		High School Teachers	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
5 - Excellent Reasoning	9	10	29	21	27	21	29	16	1	3	1	4	1	6
4 - Good Reasoning	11	11	26	18	25	19	37	21	4	10	1	4	2	12
3 - Reasonable	46	47	61	43	42	33	92	51	18	44	9	36	8	47
2 - Poor Reasoning	18	18	1	1	10	8	11	6	2	5	3	12	3	18
1 - Not Reasonable	12	12	7	5	19	15	11	6	1	3	3	12	3	18

The data indicated here shows that both students and teachers felt this was a reasonable statement for not having the shortened school day. Some elementary teachers did not rate this statement but indicated that this statement did not apply to them. Elementary schools in Charleston do not have lab classes.

TABLE XII

Shortened day was to help get next referendum passed

Reasonings	5-6 Grade Students		7-8 Grade Students		9-10 Grade Students		11-12 Grade Students		Elementary Teachers		Jr. High Teachers		High School Teachers	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
5 - Excellent Reasoning	15	15	41	29	52	40	38	21	7	17	3	12	2	12
4 - Good Reasoning	18	19	29	21	19	15	27	15	2	5	3	12	2	12
3 - Reasonable	37	38	55	39	44	34	67	37	5	12	3	12	2	12
2 - Poor Reasoning	20	21	3	2	3	2	19	11	6	15	8	32	6	35
1 - Not Reasonable	9	10	9	6	11	9	27	15	21	51	8	32	5	29

The data indicated here shows that students and teachers felt this was a reasonable to excellent reasoning for the district to go to the shortened day. Many of the additional comments in Part IV, by both students and teachers, expressed that they felt would have a negative reaction to the tax payers. Students and teachers both felt that this statement would make it even more difficult to pass the next referendum.

TABLE XIII

## Effects on school morale

Effects	5-6 Grade Students		7-8 Grade Students		9-10 Grade Students		11-12 Grade Students		Elementary Teachers		Jr. High Teachers		High School Teachers	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
5 - Much Increase	38	39	44	31	79	61	103	57	18	44	14	56	6	35
4 - Some Increase	32	33	53	38	11	9	41	23	8	20	8	32	4	24
3 - No Improvement	21	21	38	27	40	31	30	17	8	20	3	12	5	29
2 - Some Decrease	3	3	4	3	0	0	1	1	4	10	0	0	2	12
1 - Much Decrease	2	2	2	1	1	1	4	2	2	5	0	0	0	0

The data indicated here clearly shows that both students' and teachers' morale had either some increase or much increase because of the shortened school day. The writer feels that much of the reason for this sharp increase in teacher morale was due to a negative attitude many teachers in the district had before the shortened day. Some of the negative reasons were salary freezes, cut programs, and loss of staff members. At the present time, any positive approach to the district's financial problems would indeed increase school morale, as shown here.

In Part I of the evaluation sheets, all four grade levels agreed that the shortened day was an improvement over the regular day, however, a much smaller percent of fifth and sixth graders had a particular response. The response of these students on Part IV the writer feels explains this deviation. Many elementary students felt they were cheated out of recess during the shortened day. Others made comments that they lost social contact with others in school, and that when they went home there wasn't much for them to do.

Students in grades seven through twelve felt strongly that the shortened day was an improvement. Students in these three groups responded that the following were the most important reasons for the shortened school day:

1. Got out early
2. Had more time to do homework
3. Students were better behaved in class
4. Saved the district money
5. Shortened day was to help get next referendum passed

In Part III of the evaluation sheet a majority of four groups of students felt that their attitude toward school had either shown much improvement (response #5) or some improvement (response #4) with the shortened day.

In Part I of the evaluation sheets, over three out of four teachers at all three grade levels of teachers agreed that the shortened day was

an improvement over the regular day. The statement concerning "Had more time to plan effectively" was a statement that all the teachers felt was an excellent one. The statement concerning "Period length more in tune with student attention span" was also considered an excellent statement. Elementary teachers however regulate the time for particular lessons daily, so this statement does not effect them as it does in junior and senior high schools. Another statement that teachers felt was an excellent or good result of the shortened day was that it gave teachers the opportunity for more conferences.

In Part III almost all the teachers agreed that their school morale had increased during the shortened school day. The writer feels that much of the reason for this sharp increase was due to a negative attitude in the Charleston school district before the shortened day. The reasons for such negative morale were mainly due to salary freezes, cut programs, and loss of staff members. At the present time, any positive approach to the district's financial problems would indeed increase school morale, as shown here.

The following two lists are the order of preference that both the students and teachers rated the ten statements asked them on the evaluation sheets.



TABLE XIV

<u>Students</u>	<u>Teachers</u>
1. Got out early	1. More time to plan effectively
2. Had more time to do homework	2. Period length more in tune with student attention span
3. Students were better behaved in class	3. Used time for conferences
4. Because it saved district money	4. Discipline was easier to maintain
5. Shortened day was to help get next referendum passed	5. Because it saved district money
6. Period length was right for my attention span	6. Shortened day was to help get next referendum passed
7. Upset established normal routines	7. Got out early
8. Lab classes too short to get work done	8. Upset established normal routines
9. Gave me more time to talk with teachers	9. Lab classes were too short to accomplish adequate skills
10. Students did not receive time needed to complete course requirements	10. Students did not receive time needed to meet course requirements

Responses to the reasons or advantages of a shortened school day were somewhat different for students as compared to those of teachers. Students felt that getting out early and having more time to do homework were the two most important advantages of the shortened day. Getting out early ranked highest among student responses while this ranked number eight among the teachers' responses. Teachers, on the other hand, felt that the shortened day gave them more time to

plan effectively and that the length of each class period was more in tune with the students' attention span. Teachers ranked period length more in tune with students' attention span second while students ranked this sixth. However, both the students and teachers felt that discipline was easier to maintain. They also agreed that the district would save money by going to the shortened day.

The only statement that both groups rated exactly the same was that students did not receive time needed to meet course requirements. However, they both rated this last. Ironically, it seemed that the reason the Charleston Board of Education reversed their earlier decision and went back to the regular school day was because the State Board of Education said the district was not meeting the minimum daily student/teacher contact hours.

In Part II of the evaluation sheets, both students and teachers were asked to respond to ten statements. The first six statements were those taking a positive approach to the shortened school day. The remaining four statements took more of a negative approach to the shortened school day. The data collected here indicated two important factors. The first fact showed that the majority of students and faculty felt that the shortened day was an improvement over the regular school day. The data also indicates that the percentages of responses under excellent reasoning (response #5) was high among the positive statements, while the negative statements received much response under the reasonable to not reasonable categories (responses #1 - #3). This indicates

to the writer that both the students and teachers took time to think about their responses to each statement on the evaluation sheets. The writer also feels that the responses to these ten statements shows the validity of the evaluation sheets.

## CHAPTER III

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this field experience was to collect and make comparisons of students' opinions to those of teachers' opinions in regards to the shortened school day.

Data was collected through evaluation sheets given to both students and teachers. This data was then placed on charts with their respective percentages. These statements were also ranked in order of preference by both the students and faculty. Comparisons were then made statement to statement between the students and teachers.

The following statements are those recommendations or comments of elementary students:

- I feel that regular school was alright, but if you can get the same amount of work done in a shortened day then that is better.
- The only reason to me they cut down school hours was to save money.
- I loved the five hour day.
- Us students were not better behaved because we didn't have recess.
- The eating our lunch in the room stunk!

- We need more time for lunch and sports.
- We had more time for homework at home.
- I really like school and when we got out at 1:30, I didn't have time to enjoy friends as I usually do.
- I didn't mind it but I didn't like homework.
- I like school, it's a shame they cut all the fun things out before I get to junior high.
- I hated it, but if they needed fuel that bad it was acceptable.
- What happened to my recess?
- I think the school board's crazy!
- It doesn't matter to me but I want recess!
- We should have shortened days in the cold winter and hot spring. Save money!

The following statements are those recommendations or comments of junior high students:

- I feel that the school board should make up its idiotic mind about how long school should be.
- I think the teachers just wanted more pay and less work.
- Too much homework to take home.
- If it was to pass the next referendum--bad idea.
- Had more time to spend with family.
- Didn't get enough P. E. time to do the things we were doing.
- P. E. too short.
- I think the shorter days were better. It was easier to keep up with the smarter kids.
- You'll never get a referendum voted in this way.

- I just liked shorter days--I wasn't pooped when I got home.
- Lunch periods too short.
- Miss the hot lunches.
- I got bored in regular class days.
- We couldn't waste time on the shortened day.
- It gave me more time to help Dad at home.

The following statements are those recommendations or comments of High School students:

- Too short for driver's education classes.
- The only improvement was saving money.
- Didn't get behind wheel long enough.
- I think the shortened days were good, with less time teachers will stick to school work and not wonder off on other subjects.
- All the shortened days did was make the teachers get down to business quicker.
- No time to play--you have to get down to business--that's good.
- I don't like the 1:00 lunch--it was a big change from 11:00.
- Classes weren't so long as before--and boring.
- I honestly thought we got just as much done in the short day as in the longer day.
- The shortened day kept my attention better.
- I think I learned more because I had to do things for myself.
- Shortened days were fine--but it did cut down on P. E.
- Longer lunch periods!
- For once I enjoyed school.

--I think two or three students should be on the school board--  
we know what's happening.

--I am definitely learning more and I am getting the most out  
of my classes.

--I think it's pretty sick, how they shortened the days to get  
the referendum passed.

--I got a job after school now!

--I couldn't goof off on the shortened schedule.

--I think if the students and faculty work together to get through  
this problem, a solution can surely be arrived at.

--I looked forward to school on the shortened day.

The following statements are those from all levels of teachers  
in the Charleston School District:

--Shorter periods reduce the amount of drag.

--I like students wanting more activity.

--Students worked harder.

--I didn't have much morale left to lose any.

--Had little discipline on shortened day.

--Everything lately has decreased my school morale.

--I sure needed the extra planning time.

--Closing schools early cuts many activities.

--Students' attention was better.

--Had more time to plan for maximum use of school time.

--My morale increased 110% because of the shortened days.

--I feel the shortened schedule was better for both students  
and faculty.

- Classes more interesting--cut out busy work.
- Students made better use of time.
- Enjoyed extra time--used it for class maintenance, i. e., bulletin boards.
- The shortened day made band work much better.
- I couldn't see much effect; other than the students had no time for socializing.
- Use the shortened schedule during very cold months only.
- Shortened days seemed to create tension for students in grade school.

The writer of this field experience has had the opportunity to experience the shortened school day. This study, therefore, was most helpful in collecting data which indicated sound evidence in favor of the shortened day.

The writer feels that both the students and faculty benefitted from a shorter academic day. Many students and teachers made wiser use of the school day.

Student attention span was better, discipline easier to maintain, and planning was done more effectively by teachers.

The writer feels that the Diversified Occupation Program at Charleston High School could be broadened so that every student at one time or another would have the opportunity to participate in the program if so desired.

The writer also believes that switching from one schedule to another in the middle of the year is a very poor plan. There are



financial benefits in using the shortened day schedule during the extremely cold winter months to save fuel costs. The weather is too unpredictable to depend on a schedule of almost four thousand students and faculty for a schedule to be made in the beginning of the school year.

The writer feels that costs could be cut if a proper or flexible schedule could be employed. An additional separate study on the cost savings to the district would be of great assistance.

The writer feels that the most important recommendation that can be made is to lower the state requirements for academic contact hours. Both the students and teachers rated this statement last. These people should know and understand what their capabilities are, and how much time is needed in fulfilling them.

In 1976, the National Panel on High School and Adolescent Education compiled major recommendations. This panel stated that the compulsory daily attendance be reduced from all-day sessions to an academic day of 2-4 hours.

On the operational theory of gradualism, the Panel recommended such initial steps as curtailing all-day attendance requirements for seniors; then, as experience warranted other grade levels could be included. Shortening the school day without providing complementary educational activities in the community with other adults is not recommended.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>The Final Report and Recommendations of the National Panel on High School and Adolescent Education, HEW Pub. No. 76-0004.

With a high school academic day of 2-4 hours every adolescent on some days of the week could be deeply involved in one or more "schools" or programs, or work, or service as a coequal part of his or her education.<sup>6</sup>

The writer agrees with the Panel that high school seniors may be an excellent place to experiment with this program. Whether successful or unsuccessful much needed information would be gained with little risk involved.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

## APPENDIX

# APPENDIX A

## STUDENT EVALUATION

Present year in school: 5 or 6    7 or 8    9 or 10    11 or 12   

I. Did you feel the shortened school day was an improvement over the longer day? YES    NO   

II. Rate the following statements below for shortened days by CIRCLING the appropriate number following each: FIVE being excellent reasoning, FOUR being good reasoning, THREE being reasonable, TWO being poor reasoning, and ONE being not reasonable.

1. Got out early . . . . . 5 4 3 2 1  
Comments:

2. Had more time after school to do homework . . . . . 5 4 3 2 1  
Comments:

3. Gave me more time to talk with teachers. . . 5 4 3 2 1  
Comments:

4. Period length was right for my attention span . . . . . 5 4 3 2 1  
Comments:

5. Because it saved the district money . . . . . 5 4 3 2 1  
Comments:

6. Students were better behaved in class . . . . 5 4 3 2 1  
Comments:

7. Students did not receive time needed to complete course requirements . . . . . 5 4 3 2 1  
Comments:

8. Upset established normal routines (i.e., lunch) . . . . . 5 4 3 2 1  
Comments:

9. Lab classes were too short to get work done . 5 4 3 2 1  
Comments:

10. Shortened day was to help get next referendum passed . . . . . 5 4 3 2 1  
Comments:

III. Attitudes toward school: FIVE being much increase, FOUR being some increase, THREE being no improvement, TWO being decrease, and ONE being much decrease.

My attitude in school . . . . . 5 4 3 2 1  
 Comments:

IV. Additional Comments: (list below)

# APPENDIX B

## TEACHER EVALUATION

Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_ Subjects taught \_\_\_\_\_

I. Did you feel that the shortened school day was an improvement over the longer school day? YES   / NO   /

II. Rate the following statements below for shortened days by CIRCLING the appropriate number following each: FIVE being excellent reasoning, FOUR being good reasoning, THREE being reasonable; TWO being poor reasoning, and ONE being not reasonable.

1. Got out early . . . . . 5 4 3 2 1  
Comments:
2. Had more time to plan effectively. . . . . 5 4 3 2 1  
Comments:
3. Used time for teacher/student/parent conferences . . . . . 5 4 3 2 1  
Comments:
4. Period length more in tune with student attention span. . . . . 5 4 3 2 1  
Comments:
5. Because it saved the district money. . . . . 5 4 3 2 1  
Comments:
6. Discipline was easier to maintain. . . . . 5 4 3 2 1  
Comments:
7. Students did not receive time needed to meet course requirements . . . . . 5 4 3 2 1  
Comments:
8. Upset established normal routines (i.e., lunch) . . . . . 5 4 3 2 1  
Comments:
9. Lab classes were too short to accomplish adequate skills . . . . . 5 4 3 2 1
10. Shortened day was to help get next referendum passed . . . . . 5 4 3 2 1

III. Effects on school morale: FIVE being much increase, FOUR being some increase, THREE being no improvement, TWO being decrease, and ONE being much decrease.

Your school morale . . . . . 5 4 3 2 1

IV. Additional Comments: (list below)

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