



June 10, 2010

Phil Minkkinen  
Superintendent  
Lake Superior School District  
District Office  
1640 Highway 2, Suite 200  
Two Harbors, Minnesota 55616-4017

Dear Superintendent Minkkinen:

Thank you for submitting an application for a Lake Superior School District Four-Day Week, as a proposed Flexible Learning Year Program under Minnesota Statutes section 124D.12.

Your request for Flexible Learning Year status for the 2010-11 school year is denied. Your school district may choose to further consider a four-day week and submit a strengthened application to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) for review. If approved, the four-day week could then be implemented in a future year.

Areas of concern with the denied proposal are:

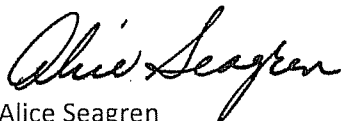
- The application does not include specific estimated dollar savings to Lake Superior School District but instead makes broad statements about approximate percentage savings in all areas.
- The goals and objectives listed are activities related to discerning whether a Four-Day Week is the best route for the Lake Superior School District. These worthy activities need to occur in the year or years prior to an application being submitted to the Department of Education. Once completed, what is learned from these activities becomes the foundation and rationale for the Flexible Learning Year Program application.
- The application states: "The development of our four-day week proposal was created with the input of teachers, administrators and a few parents who have been involved in the school for more than one year." The Lake Superior Flexible Learning Year Application lacks adequate evidence that it arises from a collaborative process that has involved the many people impacted, including the diversity of families represented, employees and their bargaining units, and other community stakeholders.

- The application does not provide any research basis, as required in the Flexible Learning Year Application Review Rubric and related to Minnesota Statute section 124D.12.
- Community meetings on the Four-Day week are stated to have occurred on Feb. 23, March 1 and March 8. The application states, "We estimate the attendance for these meetings exceeded 250 people." MDE is unclear whether these meetings were dedicated to discussion about merits and concerns of a Four-Day Week or were meetings related to an upcoming operating levy, with the Four-Day week topic a contingency plan if the operating levy failed. No photocopies of meeting notices, minutes, transcripts or copies of news coverage of these meetings were included with the application.
- The application states that academic achievement will be measured by the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments, the Northwest Educational Assessment and "anecdotal information from our teaching staff." Specific targets for academic growth are not included.
- The application references school board action and school board meeting minutes but the approval date and minutes or transcript of the specific school board meeting where a Four-Day Week was approved were not included.

If you wish to discuss the application or choose to reapply again for future school years, contact Cindy Jackson, the School Choice Ombudsman in the School Improvement Division, at 651-582-8572 or e-mail [cindy.s.jackson@state.mn.us](mailto:cindy.s.jackson@state.mn.us).

Thank you for the work you do every day on behalf of Minnesota's children.

Sincerely,



Alice Seagren  
Commissioner

Enclosure: Flexible Learning Year Application Review