Why Three-Day Weekends Can Change Us For the Better
By Hunter Winn

Every day students are piled with heaps of homework, including essays, math practice, reading assignments, and worksheets. Don't you think that students may need a break after a long day at school? Now, you may be thinking , "That's why we have a weekend." In spite of this time off, children actually come back to school more tired and less productive than usual after a weekend at home. This is because weekends are actually too short. Studies from Oxford and Cambridge all have the same results: a longer rest is better for one's mental, physical, and emotional health. Implementing a three day weekend is not just beneficial to students, but for teachers and staff as well. A three day weekend will effectively increase productivity and morale for all classrooms.

An experiment involving 5,000 students took place at the Oxford Business School in 2019, in which some students were allowed a three day weekend, and others only had a two day weekend. The first week of school went by and the students came back from their time off. Everything seemed normal until the teachers noticed that students who had a three day weekend were more productive when it came to all subjects. The students who had the two day weekend were actually exhausted, and not as mentally set to start school as the others. One of them actually fell asleep in the study hall. This experiment is one of many to prove that three day weekends are needed in today's society.

If you're thinking that these studies are all done at colleges and in workplaces, that's actually not the case. There was a study done in Georgia by Mary Beth Walker and D. Mark Anderson of Montana University with elementary school students. Walker took the reading scores of fourth graders after a three day weekend, and Anderson took the reading scores of fifth graders after a typical two day weekend. The fourth grade reading scores were significantly higher than the fifth grade reading scores that week. The fourth graders who had a three day weekend were reading at a sixth to seventh grade level, while the fifth graders were still at a fifth grade reading level. A three day weekend not only improves productivity, but also performance, as shown in this experiment.

Besides positive academic and mental health effects of a three day weekend, spending more time with one's family has a great impact on emotional health. Having the time to bond with family is fundamental for a child. Children need to be supported through just about everything, so this extra time could be important for a family. Whether you're a parent, a teacher, or even a student, you can bring this topic up with your local school district. It would be beneficial to implement a three day weekend in the workplace as well, so that children and parents are on the same schedule. That way childcare and schedule logistics don't become an issue for families.

If you're a parent who would love to implement three day weekends, but you work longer hours, you could always enroll your child in an after-school activity or club, or hire a babysitter. Having an older sibling take care of your younger child is also a possibility. Now if none of these options are applicable, the three day weekend might not be for you. But the best outcome for this to work is, offices and schools including three day weekends into the week.

Even after going to bed at the right time in order to prepare for the next day, people can still wake up exhausted. This is a phenomenon that affects thousands of Americans. A study conducted by the CDC asked 440,000 Americans how many hours of sleep they got each night. Thirty-five percent of those that participated said they got less than 7 hours of sleep. Now thirty-five percent might not seem like a lot, but that's 154,000 people. If we were to take that same rate and apply it to the population of America, that would be 127 million Americans

without proper sleep. This study proves that two day weekends aren't enough for hardworking people and the children who attend school.

A study was done at one of the Microsoft sales buildings in 2018. The company decided to give their employees a three day weekend. Once the workers came back, sales went up 80 %. An extensive study done by Business Insider stated that if companies instituted a three day weekend, they would save approximately 1.6 billion dollars in paid vacations. While it may not be the same result for farms and small businesses, think about all that money that would go back into the economy, creating a healthy financial structure and supporting financial growth.

Overall, the three day weekend is needed across the world, especially right now during the pandemic, and people's mental health is being affected. Anxiety, depression, and hopelessness can be caused or made worse by the pandemic, especially if a loved one has been lost. Instead of making one school day virtual, or continuing to plod along through a five day week, we can have an extra day off. A three day weekend will be beneficial and will help people little by little with mental health.