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## Mounds View school day a little longer, year a lot easier

Ten minutes a day doesn't sound like much, but it can really add up over the course of a school year.

That's especially true if you want to get rid of a bunch of half-days that are driving parents and teachers nuts.

Mounds View schools recently decided to add five minutes to the beginning of its school day and another five to the end next year in an effort to do just that. The result is six classroom half-days wiped from the 2010-11 calendar.

Much of this stems from the fact that neither parents nor teachers liked the half-days, which were intended to help teachers finish up their grading at the end of the school year quarters, and semesters, and just before school lets out for the summer. But those good intentions resulted in an inconvenience for parents and students, and too much task-shifting for teachers.

"We have heard pretty consistently that the parent community was not happy with the half-days," said Mounds View Superintendent Dan Hoverman. "There was a sense that,

'How productive are [the students] with just a half-day?' ... There were also issues that it was pretty inconvenient for families."

With the half-days gone, teachers will now have those days to give their undivided attention to various educational tasks. Those days will not necessarily correspond to the current half-days.

"They will be used for purposes related to how to enhance instruction, and looking at student work and performance data," Hoverman said. "All of that will be incorporated to support teachers in what they need to do in the classroom."

In and of themselves, the extra 10 minutes are unlikely to have a significant impact on what happens in the classroom.

"I don't think it will be a significant change in the rhythm of the day," Hoverman said. "I think it will be some fine-tuning in how it operates."

There's an added benefit to wiping the half-days off the school calendar. Hoverman said the district will save \$125,000 yearly in transportation costs because buses will no longer have to run on those days.  
Norman Draper • 612-673-4547

