

STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL

February 8, 1982

PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM 2-82

TO: All Department/Agency Heads/Personnel Officers

SUBJECT: Interim Report on Alternative Work Schedules of the  
Labor/Management Committee of the MSEA and the  
State of Maine

Attached is a copy of the interim report on alternative work schedules by the Labor/Management Committee of the Maine State Employees Association and the State of Maine.

This report includes an analysis of agency responses to Personnel Memorandum 5-81 which accompanied the Committee's initial report on alternative work schedules. Additionally, the Committee has prepared guidelines for developing alternative work schedule proposals and procedures for implementing such proposals.

Please distribute this memorandum and the accompanying report to all appropriate personnel.

DAVID W. BUSTIN  
COMMISSIONER

Attachments

PLEASE REPRODUCE LOCALLY FOR DISTRIBUTION PURPOSES

PLEASE POST

INTERIM REPORT  
OF THE LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
OF THE MAINE STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION  
AND THE STATE OF MAINE

ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULES

On August 18, 1981, Personnel Memorandum 5-81 was issued to accompany a preliminary report by the Labor-Management Committee relative to alternative work schedules. Agency and department heads were requested to review various alternative work schedule options and to advise the Committee of the feasibility of developing and implementing flexi-time, compressed workweek, and/or job sharing.

As was stated in that report, the Committee had developed the recommended alternative work schedules as provided by the existing collective bargaining agreements between the State and the MSEA. Additionally, it should be noted that the first regular session of the 110th Maine Legislature enacted legislation encouraging "the development of alternative working hours employment" in state government.

As a result of the Committee's initial request, we are in receipt of responses from thirty-two departments and agencies. Although we are still awaiting a response from several major departments, we have been assured that these responses are forthcoming. The Committee appreciates the time, energy, and creativity which has gone into many of the proposals.

The Committee has reviewed all of the responses received to date and we have prepared the following analysis of these responses. While many of the responses were excellent and reflected innovative and comprehensive approaches to alternative work schedules, other responses were rather vague and several were clearly negative in their assessment of alternative working hours. The responses also revealed several common concerns as well as some unique problems. The Committee also found that agencies employed a variety of techniques in developing their responses. Several departments canvassed their staff to determine the employees' interest in alternative working hours and the responses from those departments generally reflect a positive approach to this issue. Other departments developed their responses based upon the comments and recommendations of administrative staff. Still other agencies indicated that they required more information or suggestions prior to making a commitment to alternative work schedules.

Not surprisingly, many responses indicated either a general reluctance to embrace the concept of alternative work schedules or an apprehension to pursue a specific option such as flexitime or job sharing. While several agencies offered an explanation as to why a particular alternative was not feasible, many departments did not present a reasonable argument for excluding a particular opinion. Although the Committee recognizes that valid reasons do exist that may limit alternative working hours, we believe that it is necessary to document these reasons. Therefore, the Committee has, and will continue to, request explanations from agencies which reported that alternative work schedules cannot be adopted.

The proposed workshop would be attended by a representative from each department and an employee representative from each department. The Committee has suggested that employee representatives be determined through the chapter leadership structure. Agency representatives should include management personnel with the responsibility for developing and implementing departmental alternative work schedule plans.

The time and date of this workshop will be announced in the very near future.

After a presentation by the Committee, the session will be devoted to a discussion intended to assist labor and management in exploring alternative work schedules. Hopefully, this session will address both common and unique situations and enable participants to exchange ideas and suggestions.

The Labor/Management Committee would encourage existing departmental Labor/Management Committees to actively participate in the development of alternative work schedule proposals. In those departments which do not have Labor/Management Committees, we encourage the establishment of such committees. These groups will be more adept at addressing the unique characteristics in various agencies and can be of extreme value in developing and reviewing agency proposals. Departmental Labor/Management Committees will also be able to monitor the implementation of alternative work schedules and the modifications which may be required during the evaluation period.

The State Labor/Management Committee will be available to aid departments in creating Labor/Management Committees and to provide assistance to those committees.

It should be recognized that departmental Labor/Management Committees may be employed to address issues other than alternative work schedules and they may be established on an ongoing basis.

THE LABOR/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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Of the thirty-two responses submitted, only six agencies reported that no form of alternative working hours could be considered. Of the remaining twenty-six responses, seventeen agencies indicated that flexitime was a viable alternative, twelve agencies reported an interest in the compressed workweek, and seven agencies identified job sharing as an attractive option. Thirteen agencies proposed a combination of two or more of the alternative working hour variations suggested by the Committee.

The agency responses also revealed several common misconceptions relative to alternative work schedules. There were several instances where "staggered" work hours proposal was identified as a form of flex-time. Whereas, flex-time offers the employee varying flexibility in determining a work schedule within "core time" requirements, staggered work hours merely enable the employee to choose a variation of the regular established daily schedules. Rather than working the traditional 8:00 to 5:00, an employee may opt for a schedule of 7:30 to 4:30. Staggered hours is a long-standing practice and it does not constitute flex-time.

Another concern which was expressed by several agencies was the issue of maintaining productivity under a compressed workweek schedule. The Committee has reviewed experiences of the compressed workweek and the studies which we examined did not document any evidence that a compressed workweek results in a measurable decline in employee productivity. One state agency has recently completed a six-month experiment of a compressed workweek for its data processing staff. A review of this project revealed that the experimental schedule was beneficial to both labor and management and that operational requirements were actually enhanced.

Several agencies also posed the question of providing adequate supervision of employees under either a flex-time or a compressed workweek schedule. Since similar situations have frequently been addressed successfully to accommodate staggered hours, vacations, illness, and other variables, the Committee found no evidence that this concern represents a significant problem.

The Committee also found that several agencies submitted responses which appeared to arbitrarily distinguish which alternative schedules would be adaptable to particular employee groups. Characteristics such as class, pay range, and occupational category were used to determine what, if any, alternative work schedules would be appropriate for certain employees. Although there certainly are conditions under which one alternative schedule may be more attractive than another, the Committee would contend that a group of employees at Pay Range 21 or above or a group in a broad occupational category such as clericals should not be granted or denied alternative work schedules based exclusively on those characteristics.

The comments which most frequently accompanied agency responses were those requesting assistance, guidelines, or suggestions. In order to address these requests, the Committee has enclosed a series of guidelines, both general and specific to assist agencies in developing and reviewing alternative work schedule proposals. The Committee has also enclosed the procedures for agencies to follow for implementation of alternative work schedules. Additionally, the Committee is proposing a one-day session to discuss alternative work schedules.

Based on the Labor/Management Committee's review of agency responses and inquiries, the Committee has developed the following recommended guidelines for establishing alternative work schedules:

#### GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Supervisory personnel are encouraged to discuss alternative work schedules with employees and to develop plans within working units.
- Adopting alternative work schedules should not result in the increase of workloads for employees who choose either to participate or not to participate.
- Although alternative work schedules should not be implemented if they cause an adverse impact to an employee, alternative work schedules should not be abandoned simply because not all employees can participate.
- Supervisors and employees should consider using more than one form of alternative work schedule. Combinations of flex-time, compressed workweek, and job sharing can successfully be implemented.
- Although alternative work schedules may extend employees' work hours beyond 5:00 p.m., agencies should not alter their current policy of providing service to the public from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Alternative work schedules should not be rejected solely on the basis that direct supervision cannot be maintained beyond the normal schedule of 8:00 to 5:00.
- Alternative work schedules should not be approved or denied by an agency when based primarily on such characteristics as class, pay range, or occupational group.

#### FLEX-TIME

- "Core hours" should be established with consideration of any agency or work unit's internal and external needs.

#### COMPRESSED WORKWEEK

- Proposals for the compressed workweek should not be rejected on the speculation that employee productivity will decline. Operational requirements should be evaluated to determine the feasibility of the compressed workweek.
- Accrual for sick and annual leave will remain the same, however, use of leave will be contingent upon the employee's schedule. If an employee is working a ten-hour day and the employee is absent due to illness, the employee will be charged with ten hours sick leave.

COMPRESSED WORKWEEK (continued)

- Compensation for holiday pay on the compressed workweek may be addressed in several ways. The Committee, however, recommends that in the event of a holiday the employee revert to the normal schedule in that particular week. For example, when a holiday falls in a given week an employee would work four eight-hour days. This insures equitable treatment for all employees and allows for adequate staffing during an abbreviated workweek.

JOB SHARING

- Since job sharing is defined as two or more employees sharing the responsibilities of one position, agencies must maintain comparable assignments within the position for each employee. The sharing of one position must be limited to sharing the tasks of one class. If a position as Clerk Typist II is being shared by two individuals, the duties assigned to those employees must be representative of the class of Clerk Typist II and those duties must be shared in an equitable fashion.
- Since benefits may vary from position to position, any individual interested in part-time or job-shared positions should be advised of the nature and extent of their benefit coverage.
- Work schedules may be shared on a daily, weekly, biweekly, annual or any other mutually agreed upon basis.
- Once a job sharing position has been established, authorized hours will also be established for each of the employees sharing the position. If two employees share a position with each employee working twenty hours per week, the number of hours authorized for each employee will be twenty. Agencies should maintain employee schedules in accordance with the authorized hours.
- In rare instances where either employee is requested to work in excess of the normally scheduled (authorized) hours, the employee shall be compensated at the appropriate overtime rate.
- We would recommend that job shared positions not be established in fractional hours. Whenever possible, we would recommend that authorized hours be established at increments easily divisible by 40.

## PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTING

### ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULES

For those agencies which have not already done so, we request that proposals be submitted to the Labor/Management Committee for review and recommendation. Proposals should include the following information:

- Work units or locations where alternative work schedules are proposed to be established.
- The classifications and number of positions affected.
- The number of employees by class.
- The specific schedules which are to be offered to employees or groups of employees.

We have attached a sample of the format which we would recommend for submitting your proposal.

The Labor/Management Committee will review the agency's proposal and issue its recommendations for approval or conditional approval pending adjustment, if necessary. The proposal will then be forwarded to the Department of Personnel and the Maine State Employees Association (MSEA) with the Labor/Management Committee's recommendations. Upon review and approval by the Department of Personnel and the MSEA, the proposal will be returned to the agency and the alternative schedules may be offered to employees for implementation.

The Committee recommends a six-month evaluation period for all alternative work schedules. A six-month period should allow ample time for managers and participating employees to adjust to the new schedules. Supervisors and employees should make a mutual commitment to adhere to the alternative work schedules during the six-month period. That commitment, however, does not preclude the necessity for making adjustments during the project period.

After the six-month evaluation period, the Committee requests that agencies submit a brief report indicating the benefits derived from alternative work schedules, any difficulties that were encountered and the means to resolve these difficulties and any comments or information which might be useful for the Committee in assisting other agencies and in evaluating the various alternative work schedule programs.

Upon completion of the six-month project period, agencies may, in accordance with the provisions of existing labor agreements, contact the Department of Personnel and the MSEA to negotiate the implementation of alternative work schedules on a permanent basis.

SAMPLE

DEPARTMENT OF ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULES

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

Position/ Class	Standard 5 Day Wk. 8 Hr. Day	Flex-Time Core Hours 8:30 to 2:00	Flex-Time Core Hours 10:00 to 3:00	Compressed Work-Wk. 10 Hr. Day Mon.-Thurs.	Compressed Work-Wk. 10 Hr. Day Tues.-Fri.	Job Sharing
<u>Gen. Admin.</u>						
Director	7:30-4:00					
Asst. Director	8:00-5:00					
Clk. Steno III	7:30-4:15					
<u>Accounting</u>						
Chief Acct.			X			
Accountant II		X		7:00-5:30		
Accountant II						
(2) Accountant I			X			
(2) Accountant I					7:15-5:45	
Acct. Clk I	7:30-4:15					
Acct. Clk I					7:00-5:30	
Acct. Clk I	8:00-5:00					
Clerk III		X				
Clk. Typist II						*
<u>Personnel</u>						
Pers. Officer	7:30-4:30					
Clk. Typist III			X			
Clk. Typist II				7:15-5:45		
<u>Computer Svcs.</u>						
Anal. Prog. III		X				
Anal. Prog. II				7:00-6:00		
Comp. Prog.		X				
Comp. Prog.			X			
(2) Data Entry Spec.					7:00-5:30	

\* Two (2) employees share one (1) Clerk Typist II position. One employee is scheduled to work 24 hours per week; one employee is scheduled to work 16 hours per week. The two employees arrange their own schedules on a rotating basis.