

A year round education and staff burnout

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As our population increases, schools are being faced with the problems of overcrowding and under funding. Many school districts are proposing a year rounded education program. I feel that year round education is only a "quick fix" for school districts and will be detrimental to teachers children and families. Over crowding in schools is becoming a problem in almost all communities. Many schools are building trailers and additions to accommodate a higher capacity. Some districts are proposing building new schools. This raises issues of changing boundarie bussing, and higher taxes.

Some districts are proposing a multi- track year round education program. On the surface, year round education seems a logical solution to the overcrowding. Children are separated into four tracks. Each track follows a different schedule going to school for six weeks then having three weeks off. This means that there is a ays one track out of school. This plan increases the school" s capacity by 25%. The year round education plan will only temporarily save taxpayers money. Schools were not made to be year round facilities, many schools are no even air conditioned.

Maintenance and janitorial staff will need to be hired full time year round. They ll have to put in over time to get projects done and larger projects will need to be contracted out. The additional cost for transportation, utilities, support staff, ect, may not be worth the inconvenience. Not to mention the extra wear that a school ill take by having children in it year round. In the long run, maintaining a school for a full year may prove to be more costly. Staff burnout is another concern with year round education. Teachers will no longer be able to supplement their income during the summer with seasonal jobs.

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In some plans teachers will be able to either take the breaks with the children or act as a substitute for the tracks who are in school. If the teachers choose to substitute they will miss out on their breaks, leaving little time for planning and relaxation. Teachers will miss out on programs to further their education, thus stunting their professional growth. Administrators get a worse deal. They are now responsible for four "mini schools" and school is always in session so getting away is sometimes hard. Some plans offer to hire a second principal justified by the increased population.

Another expense incurred by the year round education plan. Year round education may affect the quality of education for some children. Teachers with more education, credentials, and tenure will opt for the preferred track. Children on the less preferred track will get a different quality of education. Good teachers in general may prefer schools who have the traditional school year. The year round education plan also takes a toll on the family time in many ways. In some plans two children from the same family may not be on the same track and therefore do not have the same breaks.

Scheduling time for family outings will be harder. One child will always have to mind a bedtime. Taking family vacations is impossible unless one child is taken out of school. Non-custodial parents will also have a problem spending their time with their children. Now most active non-custodial parents take their children for a large portion of the Summer break. This time spent with the non-custodial parent gives the child a sense of "living" with that parent. This arrangement will no longer be a reality. Extended time with the non-custodial parent will hardly be possible unless again one child is taken out of school.

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I believe this will also cause many divorced parents to return to court to revise their decrees, another cost to taxpayers and parents. Year round education may also put a financial strain on working parents. Many parents rely on older siblings to watch younger siblings during school breaks. If the school calendars don't coincide parents will usually have to pay for alternate care. Some experts think that a year round education will be beneficial to children because they will not have the long break where knowledge is lost.

They are concerned with the information that is lost. I believe that information will be lost anyway if a child is not genuinely interested. School is a place to learn how to learn and to learn the foundations of the world around. College is the place where the information type of learning should take place. Retention is always a concern with any break, but studies show that learning loss begins to occur during the first two to three weeks. By having more breaks during the year we may find more learning is lost. The never ending school year can be very stressful for a child.

With a multi-track system playmates will have different breaks causing children to envy different schedules and be unhappy with their own. Children will miss out on events or have to deal with the anticipation of school the next day. With a three week break children barely get to relax before having to prepare for school starting again. For children who do not particularly enjoy school this can be an extremely stressful because there is not a long enough break to immerse themselves in something that they enjoy. Extra curricular activities will also be affected. Students may have to attend practices and meetings on their off weeks.

They will risk missing out on the team activities, pep rallies, and major events. It is impossible to schedule four separate dances, science fairs, and homecoming games. School will never cease so students will not get the break that they deserve. The programs themselves will get a lower turnout. I believe that less popular clubs and organizations will eventually be gone. Someone posed the question that if year round education was the traditional school calendar, and a "new calendar" was proposed where children were only educated for nine months each year would the American public even consider it?

My answer is, "yes." The idea of year-round schooling goes back to the seventeenth century. It is actually two hundred years older than the traditional school year. The oldest year round school today is only thirty years old. This means that all other schools once opted I think back to my own Summer vacations. The first two weeks were always spent winding down from the long school year. Then we began to venture out and embark on new adventures. I can remember long bike rides and mapping out new spots to explore, each day getting farther in to some sort of quest.

Sleepovers every other day at each other's house with my next door neighbor. When I was a child we stayed with my father in Chicago for six weeks of the Summer. That was an experience I would never relinquish. Over the Summer my family took vacations. We went canoeing in the boundary waters of Canada and drove cross country on a whim without the anticipation of getting ready for school. School plays the role of teaching children how to learn. Summer break is a chance to apply what they have learned and enrich their lives with personal experience.

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Switching to a year round education plan will be detrimental to our children's problem solving skills, creativity, and happiness. Overall, I believe that there are too many downfalls and not enough benefits to switching to year round education. Turning to year round education as a solution to over crowding in schools would only be a temporary solution. A year round education would put too much stress on our children, families, faculty, and community. We should learn from the past and leave the traditional school year in tact.