

1. **Mark your confusion.**
2. **Show evidence of a close reading.**
3. **Write a 1+ page reflection.**

### **Should the U.S. Switch to Year-Round Schooling?**

Source: Matthew Lynch, [teenkidsnews.com](http://teenkidsnews.com), April 3, 2018

The traditional school year, with roughly three months of vacation time every summer, was first implemented when America was primarily an agricultural society. We have changed as a nation; today, over 2 million U.S. students attend school on year-round schedules every year in around 3,000 schools in 46 states — and the majority of U.S. K-12 students aren't spending summers off tilling fields or harvesting crops. The phenomena known as the "summer slide," where students actually lose knowledge with too much time away from school, coupled with kids who must spend those months in camps or child care due to working parents, are two reasons proponents of year-round schooling cite as reasons for it needing to be implemented nationwide.

As with all change, certain considerations will arise and must be addressed, though. Making the switch would not be easy for students, teachers or their parents — but is it best? Here are three important questions to ask when considering year-round schooling as a nationwide norm.

#### **1. How are the students affected?**

Foremost, we must examine the impact a year-round school schedule has on the people it most affects--the students. A longtime thorn in the side of K12 educators has been the above mentioned "summer slide." The National Summer Learning Association often cites decades of research that support the claim that students really do forget or unlearn things they have learned when too much time off is given between classroom sessions. A study released in 2007 by The Ohio State University, however, found that there are really no differences in learning between students who attend school year-round, and those who are on a traditional schedule.

While the overall student numbers show no significant differences in learning for better or worse, at-risk students tend to do better in year-round setups. Studies have found that disadvantaged students lose about 27 percent more of their learning gains in the summer months than their peers. By being in school the same number of days, but with shorter breaks, these students are able to keep their minds on a learning track that may not otherwise be fostered at home in the off-months.

#### **2. How are the teachers affected?**

Every job comes with its share of headaches and at one point or another, employees in all industries claim that they are "burned out." Teaching is unique when it comes to burn-out, though, because an unmotivated, exhausted teacher has a direct effect on the young people in his or her classroom. Summers off has long been the light at the end of the tunnel for teachers, particularly in urban areas with higher discipline problems and overcrowded classrooms. In a year-round setting, lengthy breaks are gone, replaced with shorter, more frequent ones instead. Though the loss of those summer months may at first seem like a drawback, many teachers end up liking greater frequency in time off.

With shorter, more concentrated spurts of instruction, teachers can exert more energy and face the daily struggles with the hope that there will be relief soon. There is still as much time off, but it is more

evenly distributed.

One important consideration for teachers is the effect of year-round schooling on their pocketbooks. In most scenarios, teachers make the same amount of money in their districts whether they work at a year-round or traditional school, though the pay schedules may differ. Teachers who made extra money teaching summer school still have that option in year-round districts that offer remedial courses during break periods. Where some teachers see the biggest economic cut when they teach year-round is in the three months of summer because some teachers often seek out part-time or seasonal work. Based on the type of work, this could mean a loss of income in the thousands every year. For teachers satisfied with holding down just one job and paycheck, a year-round schedule may not have any economic impact on their families at all.

### **3. How does year-round schooling affect the economy?**

Each individual community will feel a different economic impact when it comes to year-round schooling. A tourist community with summer attractions, for example, may feel more of a squeeze if its low-cost employee pool of high school students is suddenly in class instead. The same could be said for ski communities though that could benefit from multi-track scheduling of high school students during its busiest seasons. The summer months tend to be when most high school students earn the most money, however, because there is a significant duration of time with no school responsibilities.

Without those months of a steady paycheck, students (and parents) stand to lose potential college money. Trying to work and maintain a job alongside classes can have a negative impact on grades according to most research, and most employers cannot accommodate students who are only available two or three week spans at a time.

So the potential economic cost of year-round schooling is twofold: the individual student may suffer financially, and the local businesses may have to pay out more for jobs that are better suited for high school students who do not have the time off to work them.

### **Possible Response Questions:**

- **What are your thoughts on year-round schooling?**
- **What might be some additional advantages and/or disadvantages not considered by the author?**
- **Explain whether you think year-round schooling might impact America's current global education ranking.**