6 Predominant Advantages and Disadvantages of Year Round School

* [Education](http://connectusfund.org/category/education)

Year-round schooling (YRS) has been around since the 1900s in the US. The first cities to implement YRS were Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit and Washington DC. School sessions in these cities were for 48 weeks or more. Two types of schedules were used:

* 12-1 (12 weeks in school with one week break between the 12 weeks; this was also the most popular option)
* 12-4 (4 weeks off in August after which school ran continuously)

A survey in 1981 showed that 84% of surveyed educational authorities predicted that all US schools would be year-round in 15 years. In 1973, the following states provided year-round schooling options:

* Washington
* Nevada
* California
* Utah
* Arizona
* Colorado
* Minnesota
* Illinois
* Michigan
* Georgia
* Pennsylvania
* Virginia
* Florida
* Vermont
* Kentucky
* Missouri

Oregon, Wyoming, Montana, Ohio, South Carolina, North Carolina, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Louisiana, Texas and Tennessee all adopted YRS for at least one school by 1975. Vermont, on the other hand, dropped YRS in the same year.

Although there are YRS systems in place, the subject still generates intense feelings from detractors and supporters. A report released in 1994 by the National Education Commission on Time and Learning called Prisoners of Time argued that not following a traditional school calendar is much better as it can meet the needs of contemporary society and can result in better student achievement.

The academic achievements of students in America have been subject for much debate, particularly when it comes to comparing it to other students from around the world. Basically, it shows that America is behind other countries in terms of academics. Current US President Barack Obama even echoed the following sentiment: “The challenges of the new century demand more time in the classroom.”

Just as there are supporters, there exist detractors. Among the organizations not so into YRS is Summer Matters. They feel that year-round schooling disrupts family life, doesn’t provide much academic benefit and prevents different kinds of learning that students experience during summer breaks.

For something that has been in place for a long time, why is there continued debate over the merits or demerits of such a system? Hasn’t long a time elapsed to provide a clearer picture of whether or not the YRS system truly works?

But in order to get to the heart of the issue, it’s best to know just where each side is coming from. To do that, here’s a look at the reasons given by proponents and opponents of YRS:

List of Advantages of Year Round School

**1. A lessened summer learning loss effect**  
Summer is a time when students can finally have fun. Depending on the rules of the household, they may freely watch shows on television or hang out more with their friends. This is not something they can enjoy during school days as they have to devote time and attention to not just school work but to school projects as well.

However, some have found that students lose a lot of what they learn during the school year when they go into summer vacation. This just means that when school resumes, teachers are more likely to be faced with blank stares rather than a true understanding of a lesson. For instance, a study published in 1996 found that summer learning loss is more pronounced for math facts, spelling and other academic material that is concrete rather than conceptual.

A teacher’s job is making students understand, but that would be next to impossible if they have lost grasp of the concepts they learned the previous year. Then again, further studies aren’t exactly clear on whether YRS provides the definitive solution to eliminating this problem.

**2. Summer programs aren’t needed for remediation**  
Some schools roll our remediation programs during the summer to get students reacquainted with the concepts they learned, and which they hopefully carry over from summer back to the classroom. While some find this a noble effort, not every place can afford to include summer school in their local budgets.

With YRS, the need for summer programs is eliminated and remediation is addressed within the school year.

**3. Frequent breaks allows students and teachers to recharge**  
Students get tired, and so do teachers. They need enough time to recover from academics and teaching and that is something a YRS system can provide. Frequent breaks allows them to focus on other things no matter how short the vacation time given. For some, it’s quite enough to get inspired and come back better than ever.

List of Disadvantages of Year Round School

**1. Frequent breaks can disrupt family life**  
Frequent breaks are almost always welcome, but with them come advantages and disadvantages. But YRS don’t follow the same schedules throughout the year. Meaning, the schedules vary from school to school but the common denominator is that students attend classes for two to three months then have between one to three weeks break before the cycle starts again.

While it may be considered a benefit to have several breaks for rest and relaxation, some find this discouraging. Why is that? As mentioned earlier, not all YRS schools follow the same schedule. Sure, the two to three months of education is followed but it’s the when that’s causing the problem.

So if a family is planning a getaway, the varied schedules cause major problems in the plan. For example, a one-week holiday might turn out to be just for the weekend just so everyone can come and enjoy.

Also, those who are finding it hard to secure child care during the short breaks will find the system difficult to live with.

**2. It affects the family budget**  
With frequent breaks comes frequent holidays. Parents might have to take time off from work every so often to keep their children company during breaks. Also, those who don’t have relatives or friends to watch over their children have to find childcare solutions. Even worse, some kids are left alone at home just so parents can continue to work.

For older students, breaks mean a time to earn income from a full-time summer job. However, with short breaks, that might not be possible as some businesses might not be willing to take on someone who will most definitely leave after just a few days.

**3. It doesn’t help students who have difficulty with attention**  
Some students find extended hours in the classroom difficult. Whether the reason for their inability to concentrate is due to disability or they are just not developmentally ready for studying long periods of time, the main point is that they are likely not learning anything much. The main reason for extending time in the classroom is to learn more, but for those with difficulty focusing, that’s just counterproductive. Also, this may lead to behavioral issues in the classroom which is something that educators want to avoid.