

# Year-Round School Pros and Cons

By: [Catie Watson](#)     <http://certificationmap.com/year-round-school-pros-and-cons/>

Many school districts are faced with the problem of a growing student population coupled with a shortage of school facilities and limited funds for new facilities. In response, some districts are adopting or looking into year-round education (YRE). In addition to maximizing the use of existing schools for larger numbers of students, some education experts claim that year-round school improves student learning.

With YRE, students attend school for the same number of days each year (180 days, according to the U.S. Department of Education), but school breaks are arranged differently. A popular YRE calendar uses a 60-20 plan, with students attending school for 60 days and then going on break for 20. Other popular plans include 45-15 and 80-40. The common element with YRE calendars is that students attend school throughout the year and, instead of the three-month summer break, have several smaller breaks interspersed.

Most schools that need to maximize facility usage implement a “multitrack” YRE calendar that assigns different breaks to different groups of students and teachers. At any given time, there is always at least one group on break. According to the [California Department of Education](#), using a multitrack year-round calendar can allow a school to enroll up to 50 percent more students. Schools that use a “single track” YRE calendar (with all students taking the same breaks) usually have done so to eliminate the long summer break.

There are advantages and disadvantages to year-round school. Here is a breakdown of the pros and cons of year-round school as presented by education experts.

## **Pros to Year Round Education:**

- For schools with facility shortages, a multitrack year-round calendar increases school capacity.
- Year-round schools support continuous learning. Educators have long noted that student retention suffers during the long summer break and

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many believe that shortening school breaks will improve student achievement.

- Year-round school can replace summer school, which many districts have cancelled due to budget cuts. For students who traditionally attend summer school because they need remediation, year-round school allows remediation to be addressed throughout the year.
- With a traditional calendar, most teachers spend several weeks at the beginning of the school year reviewing the previous year's work. Shorter breaks allow this review time to be reduced.
- Teacher and student stress is reduced by the frequent breaks provided by a year-round calendar.
- Many families appreciate the opportunity to take vacations throughout the year.
- Children from disadvantaged families who may be at risk during long summer breaks with unscheduled time on their hands benefit from shorter breaks.

## **Cons to Year Round Education:**

- Multitrack year-round calendars eliminate the idea of a single class using a single classroom. More storage space is usually required for students and teachers.
- Multitrack year-round calendars place additional demands on school support staff and on cafeteria, custodial and maintenance services.
- Special accommodations must be made for annual school events like graduation and parent conferences.
- Teachers who traditionally continue their own education during the summer break need to find alternative forms of education and training.
- Working parents may find it harder to find childcare for shorter breaks during the year than for the long summer break, when summer camp and other full-time activities are available.
- Families with children in different schools or districts may be faced with conflicting school break schedules.

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- Many adults, both parents and non-parents, believe that children learn valuable life lessons by attending summer camp or working during long summer breaks.

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According to the [National Association for Year-Round Education](#) (NAYRE), more than 2 million students attended a year-round school in the 2006-07 school year (that last year for which figures are available). Despite anecdotal evidence from teacher and parents about the academic benefits of year-round schools, the evidence is inconclusive. Until there is more research on the benefits of YRE, school districts will have to weigh the year-round school pros and cons when deciding if it's time to make the switch.