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An International Comparison of Lower Elementary School Schedules

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**AN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON
OF LOWER ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL SCHEDULES**

Barbara Helen Wyns

Summer, 1994

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Grand Valley State University

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ABSTRACT

AN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON OF LOWER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SCHEDULES

By

Barbara Helen Wyns

International comparisons indicate that U.S. students test below other industrialized countries. Researchers identify a shorter school day and year as a possible reason. While recognizing the fundamental differences from country to country, this study focuses on the measurable variables; days of instruction per year and total hours of instruction for lower elementary students. Comparisons with Japan, Switzerland, Germany, Canada, and the United States, find that U.S. instructional days are fewer, however, the length of day is longer, and that total annual hours are second only to Japan. The amounts of homework and out of school learning are also discussed. The three month U.S. summer vacation schedule, which results in greater review time, is examined. The Year-Round Education calendar is suggested as an alternative to provide for more continuous learning and to accommodate the needs of the student at risk.

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PROBLEM STATEMENT

Some experts say that American schools must raise their standards in preparing students for international competition (Bradford, 1991). They contend that American schools must be restructured to compete in the international economy. Comparison studies are cited, indicating American students are below average compared to other industrialized countries. Further studies conclude that this below average American performance results from a lack of learning time for the American student, or *the imbalance of the time-in-school deficit* (Barrett, 1990, p. 82). If a restructuring is to occur in America, then a major part of that restructuring will likely involve the re-thinking of the traditional 180 day school year.

IMPORTANCE AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Today's economy is more globally competitive, resulting in a growing national concern about the future of American economic competitiveness. Michael Barrett in *The Case for More School Days* (1990), states that American students are not as prepared as their

European and Asian peers. When comparing educational data, American students spend less time studying and achieve less. Experts point to an imbalance of school days as a reason for the decline in American students' educational performance. Barrett refers to this imbalance as *a time-in-school deficit for school*. He emphasizes that this problem is as serious, for the schools, as the trade deficit and balance-of-payment are for the country.

In May, 1994, a two year study was released by the National Education Commission on Time and Learning. The authors of this study concluded that today's students are being asked to learn more in school, but this must be accomplished in the same amount of time as existed a century ago. Educating and preparing American students to be competitive in a global economy is vital for the future of this country, and the job market of the 1990's demands more skills and a higher level of education than just a few decades ago.

Another drawback to the traditional school calendar is the long summer vacation, usually three months, which requires and consumes several weeks of review at the start of each new school year. In 1978,

a New York State Board of Regents reported, what many teachers have known from experience, that students tend to forget previously learned material over their long summer vacation. The problem of having one of the shortest school years, of any industrialized nation, is compounded by the necessity of review that steals precious learning time from an already shortened schedule.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, school attendance was not mandatory. Students would attend by choice; depending on family responsibilities, affordability, and wishes. In 1852, Massachusetts enacted the nation's first law that required students to attend school, even though it was for only twelve weeks.

Since then, the average length of the school year has gradually increased to the current 180 day school year. Mandatory school attendance increased because of a greater demand for higher educational skills in the work force (Barrett, 1990). School schedules avoided the summer months because of high temperatures and not

because of the agricultural season as some theorists believed.

Bradford (1991) points out that 85% of the population was involved with agriculture in the 1800's and early 1900's.

During World War II, the current school schedule became the accepted calendar for the majority of American school districts. Currently, the work force involved in agriculture has dropped to under 3%; and yet the calendar remains unchanged.

Americans have demonstrated a history of opposition toward lengthening the school year. However, the Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa polls have shown a gradual and steady increase in the support of extending the school year. In 1991, 51% of those polled favored lengthening the school year by 30 additional days resulting in a year of 210 days.

If there is a re-structuring of the school calendar and schedule, it may come in different forms or a combination of forms. The National Commission on Excellence in Education (*A Nation at Risk: The imperative for educational reform*, 1984) recommended re-structuring schools to increase daily schedules to a seven hour day,

including a 200-220 day school year. Barrett (1990) recommends sponsoring bills at the state level to increase the minimum length of the school year as he has done in Massachusetts.

Other options would include Saturday morning sessions.

Further restructuring options include the *45-15 plan* with four nine-week terms followed by a fifteen day intercession. A *60-20 plan* holds a three sixty-day session with a twenty day intercession. Another plan of *90-30 plan* holds a ninety-day term followed by a thirty day intercession. There are many combinations and equally as many opinions.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to compare the traditional American 180 day school calendar year, the length of the school day, and the amount of homework that a second grader is assigned, with that of other industrialized countries. This study will focus on examples of school days and school hours from other economically competitive countries. Emphasis on Europe and Japan, at the elementary level for

the seven to eight year old, will be stressed. The results will be summarized and charted. This comparison is intended to answer the question, "Is there a time-in-school deficit?," and if so, "How great is this difference?".

This comparison is not intended to represent all school systems of a given country in that there may be variance from one region of a country to another. However, the collected data, based on library research, personal experience, and questionnaires sent to teachers and administrators (see Appendix A, p. 39) will prove useful to local school districts in making informed decisions, when considering altering the length of day and year.

CHAPTER 2

THE NEED FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM

The need for educational reform in the United States is a serious concern in today's global market place. During the industrialized past, industry was able to adequately produce with a semi-skilled and even an unskilled work force. Students with less academic success could enter the work force and become productive citizens. School dropouts could expect to attain productive work in industry or agriculture.

Today's world offers neither the quantity nor quality of productive jobs for the less educated. The less educated find it difficult to attain even the most basic of jobs, usually a service job at minimum wage. A study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) concluded that *earning power is closely linked to educational level*. This conclusion, that more education results in a higher salary for the US worker, is most evident in the United States, than in any of the other twenty industrialized countries included in the study (Brett, 1992).

When educational level is so closely linked with one's personal income, education is also a major determiner of one's position in our global economy (Barrett, 1990). When personal income correlates so closely with one's educational level, it becomes a universal scramble for higher qualifications, that is, advanced educational training, to secure a quality position in the labor market.

With an increase in global industrial competition, e.g., the Pacific Rim and former Iron Curtain countries, an increased production of similar goods on a world scale is a direct result. Participation by emerging nations in world trade, also become our international competitors (Hilowitz, 1987). With this international competition and global marketplace, the world's young people can expect to compete directly for the same jobs. We can expect these limited jobs and positions will be secured by those who are best educated and best trained.

The media often quotes statistics that portray American students as being inadequately prepared when compared to their fellow students from other industrialized countries. Where does the

media get its statistics and how reliable are these statistics? A closer look at the results of international studies, provides information on just how prepared the American student is compared to their foreign peers. However, an international comparison of the educational systems comes with difficulties.

Many factors influence individual performance and affect school systems differently; the cultures and family lives are so different. When considering embracing the virtues and strengths of a foreign educational system one must proceed with caution. Often these strengths do not fit into a foreign social or educational system. When drawing from society's strength for educational reform, society's historical development, cultural elements, and political and economic realities must be recognized as a support system to their educational system. An international comparison must fairly recognize the unique concerns for differences in the languages, culture, and education systems of the countries involved (Beauchamp,1992).

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There may be no one single or universal solution to an educational concern or issue. Lapointe further states, "Variables operate differently from country to country and cannot be interpreted in the same way in all cultures" (p.108). Despite these influences and differences, we can learn a great deal from these comparisons. Comparisons help us to examine ourselves and measure our own educational system's achievements, deficiencies, and perhaps provide solutions.

POOR PERFORMANCE OF AMERICAN STUDENTS

In the early 1980's, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) conducted an assessment in mathematics. American students' results were found to be discouraging. In a comparison of twenty nations, American eighth-graders ranked 10th in arithmetic, 12th in algebra, 16th in geometry, 8th in statistics, and 18th in measurement. Finishing first, in all of these categories, was our major economic competitor--Japan.

The United States tested below average in three other areas of math. In trying to obtain a fair comparison, the IEA computed the

average achievement score of the top one percent of the twelfth graders in each country. The United States scored lower than any country for which data was available. In further reports of the IEA study, Antonoplos (1985), points out that between 1964 and 1984, Japanese twelfth graders improved in all mathematical areas. However, eighth grade students from the United States declined in mathematics during that time.

The IEA also conducted a science assessment for ten year olds, from 1983 to 1986. The United States ranked 8th of 15 countries. Further studies indicated that these students fell farther behind as they moved up the educational ladder (Jacobson & Willard, 1986).

In yet another study, the IEA computed scores of secondary students who were considered to be advanced science students. In this study of twelve nations, students from the United States placed 11th in chemistry, 9th in physics, and last in biology (Barrett, 1990).

Another international study, commissioned in 1983, by the *Dallas Times Herald*, again reflects the poor performance of American students (Antonoplos, 1985). In this study, students from

Japan placed the highest in mathematics while the United States' students finished last. Canada and Switzerland also placed ahead of the United States. In science, the United States again ranked below Japan and Canada. In geography, the United States ranked below Canada, but surpassed Switzerland and Japan.

Westbury (1993) also researched the difference between the U.S. and Japanese academic achievement on the Second International Mathematics Study. Westbury discovered that 75 percent of the students in the U.S. sample, had not been exposed to the same level of mathematical instruction as the Japanese student. According to Rotberg (1990), the first International Assessment of Educational Achievement (IAEA) comparison study must be studied with a critical eye and not taken at face value since 75% of U.S. students were compared to the *top 9%* of German students, the *top 13%* in the Netherlands, and the *top 45%* in Sweden!

International comparisons are often reduced to simplified charts and graphs, omitting the necessary explanations and criteria upon which the research was based. Such incomplete international

comparisons are partly responsible for the recent push toward educational reform in the U.S.

Societal or economic events or educational comparisons may dictate educational reforms in which the public, concerned about the economy or society, demands that the educational system fix the problem (Barrett, 1990), i.e., Sputnik spurred the creation of the National Science Foundation.

ATTITUDE DIFFERENCES

Another study points out attitude differences regarding test taking. Bracey (1991) notes that other countries' students take a test for the honor of their country. However, the students of the U.S. view this particular test taking as an inconvenience to them, mainly because they know that, neither they, nor their teacher, nor their parents will see the scores they make.

This individualistic attitude of American students was also discussed in the acclaimed PBS series *Challenge to America* (Burton & Cortina, 1993). In Germany and Japan, the group is the most important entity, and therefore one works hard to uphold the

performance expectations that the group has of an individual. In America, the individual places himself first and therefore loses the sense of commonality.

TIME-IN SCHOOL DEFICIT

Reform may also result from a highly publicized and awaited national report, such as *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1984), that called for a number of reforms; including a longer school day and year. This widely published and heralded report brought to light the gap in the number of school days among the U.S. and other industrialized countries.

Barrett (1990), concurrently compiled research on school days for a standard school year in twenty-seven industrialized countries. The results of this comparative data research pointed out that, "American students stand out for how little they work" (p.80).

This data ranked the U.S. 25th of 27 countries in total number of school days in a calendar year. The number of days ranged from 160 (Belgium) to 243 (Japan) with the U.S. at 180. It was this difference, *the number of school days*, that led Barrett to believe this

was the reason that U.S. students scored so poorly on international math achievement tests; they simply did not have the opportunity to learn. Other countries out-performed the U.S. because they got farther along in their course work since they are in school longer.

In a comparison to the global economy, Barrett referred to this as "*a time-in-school deficit*." However, Barrett does not point out that the Belgians, both Flemish and Walloons, outscored the U.S. students in the three subject areas of advanced algebra, functions/calculus, and geometry, even though the Belgian school year is 18 days shorter.

However, one must look beyond the numbers alone. According to McKinney (1987), Japan's required minimum is 210 days of classroom instruction, including half days on Saturdays, and the local school board has the option to add more time. Additional days are used for field trips, festivals, sports activities, and graduation ceremonies, and are not included in the 210 day minimum.

The U.S. school year of 180 days, must incorporate these extra activities into their calendar, thus displacing academics. These extra

activities; field trips, festivals, sports activities, and graduation ceremonies, reduce academic instructional time to an even lesser amount.

The length of school day is another variable from country to country. Oggenfuss (1988) reported the number of school days in Switzerland may include up to three half day sessions per week depending upon the state or canton. In Germany, the school day is a half day for second graders: five days per week, compared to the U.S. having a full day for second grade.

In *The Report of the National Education Commission on Time and Learning, Prisoners of Time* (Jones et al, 1994), the concern of academic time was addressed. The conclusions and recommendations of this study centered on time and how the schools are "captives of the clock and calendar" (p.7). One of the recommendations was that "schools provide additional academic time by reclaiming the school day for academic instruction" (p.32).

It was the conclusion of the Commission that more academic time is necessary if U.S. students are to meet world-class standards.

The Commission recommended a minimum of 5.5 hours of core academic instructional time. These 5.5 hours are to be devoted exclusively to English and language arts, mathematics, science, civics, geography, history, the arts, and foreign languages. It was recommended that all additional sports activities, clubs, classes for gifted and talented, and language instruction for the non-native English speakers be offered during a longer school day.

Adopting the National Education Commission's recommendation of establishing a minimum of 5.5 hours of core academic instructional time per day, would significantly increase the amount of core academic instructional time to the traditional American school schedule. Barrett's (1990) solution would have laws enacted at the state level to increase the minimum length of the school year.

In the United States, individual state laws determine the number of school days for an academic calendar. As Barrett reports, according to the Education Commission of the States, the majority of the states hold to the annual range of 175-180 school days.

Michigan's Public Act No. 335, (Bryant et al., 1993), may change the number of school days in the state of Michigan. The number of school days will gradually increase to 210 by the 2009-2010 school year, with a minimum of 1,035 hours of pupil instruction, otherwise state aid will be withheld from non-complying school districts. These additional 30 school days are a *significant* increase in school calendar time. However, Barrett cautions that increasing the school year alone may not be sufficient to reclaim quality, but it does provide a larger framework for accommodation.

HOMEWORK

Another variable in international comparison is homework or out of school learning. In the country of Spain, homework is forbidden by law in all schools (MacBeath & Turner, 1994). Switzerland in direct contrast, homework is assigned in all grades; with a particular emphasis on Wednesdays and Fridays because the students have the afternoons off (Carlson, 1991).

In the award winning PBS documentary series, *Challenge to America* with Hedrick Smith, (Burton & Cortina, 1993), Japanese

second grade students were given 10 to 30 minutes of homework each night. Germany was similar to Japan in that second graders were assigned homework everyday. In America, their second grade peers were assigned homework only one night a week; thus allowing for other non-school related activities.

Another study by Lee, and Stigler, and Stevenson (1986) pointed out differences in the amount of homework at the early elementary level between American and Japanese students. The Japanese students averaged 37 minutes a day while Americans averaged only 14 minutes a day. In addition to the increased amount of homework, many Japanese students were enrolled in private tutoring programs after school and on Saturdays. These private tutoring programs, nicknamed "Juku" are readily available and inexpensive (Yoo, Y., 1987). The "Jukus" are Japan's solution for remedial education as well as enrichment programs. This responsibility falls directly on the family (McKinney, 1987).

In contrast, gifted students and special needs students of America are provided their necessary programs within regular school

hours. Scotland also provides for the special needs students during the regular school day so these children remain with their peers. The responsibility is not directed to the family, but to the school, with parent co-operation required (Primary Education in the United Kingdom, Project No. 8, 1988).

SUMMER VACATION

Another concern is the American school calendar with its long block of summer vacation time. Bradford (1991) states that the present school calendar gives us time for "forgetting". The New York State Board of Regents study (1978) concluded that students end up forgetting much of what they learned during the school year. These studies also pointed out that during the long summer vacation disadvantaged students lose three to four months of learning growth. Because of this forgetting or loss, teachers and students begin the following school year with review for much of the first four to six weeks. This becomes a detriment to the productiveness of the academic calendar.

Review time is less in countries having a shorter summer vacation. For example, a school in Germany may spend only two to four weeks with review time following their longest holiday vacation of seven weeks according to S. Sellmeir (personal communication, June 20, 1994).

CHAPTER 3

Our Nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world, warns The National Commission on Excellence in Education, (*A Nation at Risk*, p. 5, 1984).

Falling test scores, poor performance in international comparisons, emerging competitiveness from Asia and Europe, have led to a demand that something be done about improving our school system (Barrett, 1990). The National Commission on Excellence in Education (*A Nation at Risk*, 1984) noted that it is not unusual for European students to spend eight hours a day at school and 220 days each year. Barrett and others have called for greatly increased time spent in school. They assume more time will equal more learning.

Some of these ingredients are measurable, e.g., the length of the school day and year, and total contact hours in a school year, while

others are not. A closer examination of these measurable variables is needed.

AVERAGE DAYS OF INSTRUCTION

One of the most common reforms mentioned is the need for increasing the school year from its present 180 day schedule (Barrett, 1990, (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*, 1984), (Burton & Cortina, *Challenge to America*, 1993). For example, German school children attend classes 240 days a year, or 60 days longer than American children (*Challenge to America*, 1993). *That is equivalent to four years more time in school by high school graduation!* This is alarming, but is it accurate?

Comparing educational systems based on the number of total days in a school calendar may be misleading. According to the German newspaper, Suddeutschen Zeitung (June, 1993), the German school year is 225 days. However, this may not apply to elementary students; the author has visited German schools and has had personal

contact with German teachers as well as having a nephew presently attending a German elementary school.

The German elementary students, in Bavaria, attend from 189 days (Brenninger, R. J., personal consultation, June, 1994) to 200 days depending on the particular school district (Sellmeir, S., personal consultation, June, 1994). Because this study is focused on second graders, a 200 day schedule will be used for a comparison, since this information was taken directly from the headmaster's calendar, and not the 240 day year that is often quoted in the media.

A similar situation to Germany is Japan. Japan reports 240 days in their school year, but of those 240 days, Japan may have up to 30 school days designated for festivals, sporting events, field trips, graduation activities, or other non-academic areas. The required minimum is 210 days, including half days on Saturdays. The number of actual instructional days would actually be equivalent to 195 days of full time instruction (McKinney, 1987). However, for comparison purposes the 210 day minimum will be used. (See Figure 1 for a comparison of instructional days)

Figure 1: Average Days of Instruction per Year

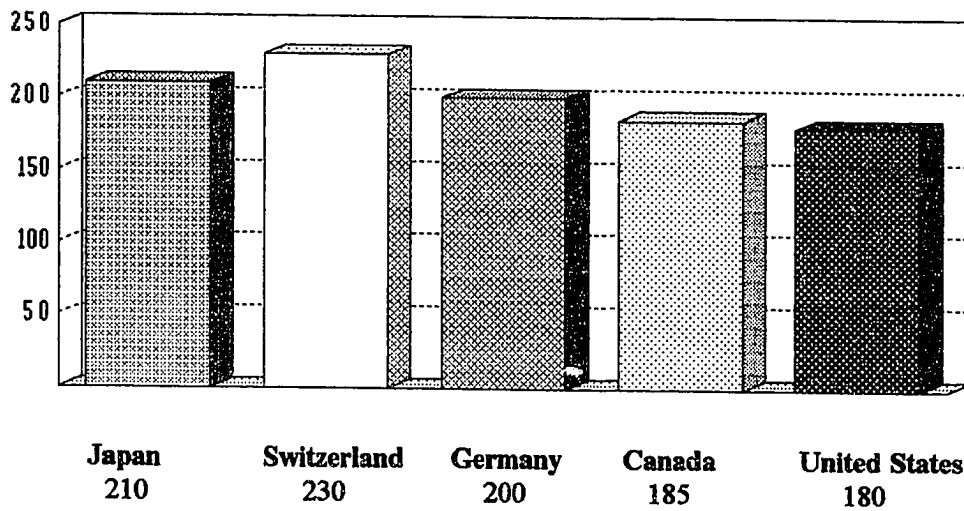
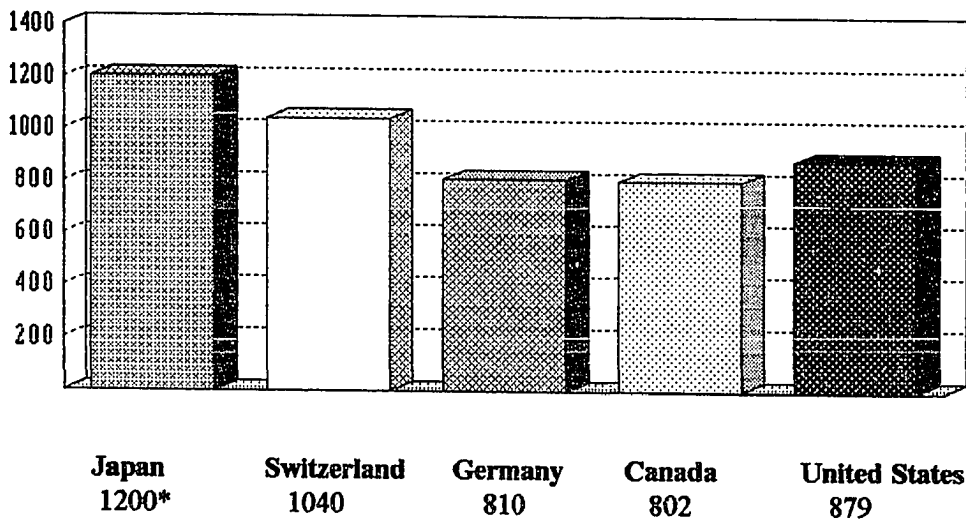


Figure 2: Total Hours of Instruction per Year



* includes lunch

**other countries have lunch time omitted from instructional time

AVERAGE HOURS OF INSTRUCTION

The number of school days is only a part of the total picture of instruction. Is extending the school day a viable option for the American elementary student? In *A Nation at Risk* (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1984), a seven hour day was recommended, but attempts at lengthening the school day may increase fatigue and inhibit student performance (Virginia State Department of Education, 1992). Americans already have the longest school day, second only to Japan (Suddeutschen Zeitung, June 23,1993).

In Germany, a second grader may attend school for 3 1/4 hours every Wednesday, and this counts as a full day (Sellmeir, S., personal consultation, June, 1994), whereas a second grader in Michigan may attend 6 1/2 hours everyday. Japan also counts their instructional half day, on Saturday, as a full day of school (McKinney, 1987). Switzerland may include up to three half day sessions per week, depending on the canton (state), and these also count as full days (Oggenfuss, 1988). This makes for a wide variance in total hours for

the school year. (See Figure 2 for a comparison of annual hours in school)

Yet another factor affecting the amount of daily instruction is the time taken for lunch breaks. While in Switzerland, the author observed that the children left school at noon for a two hour lunch break. They walked home and had their noon day meal with their families; then returned to school, two hours later, to finish the day (Ritschard, B., personal consultation, June, 1983). The Swiss students attend from 8:00 to 4:00 on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, and have a two hour lunch. School on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday is from 8:00 to 12:00 and they eat at home (Meier, F., personal correspondence, July, 20, 1994). This is considerably longer than the typical 30-45 minute lunch break in the American school. In Germany, elementary students are dismissed for the day, between 11:15 to 12:30, and do not eat lunch at school.

On a recent visit to Germany, in 1993, the author observed that any request by parents to excuse an elementary student from school for a day, will be denied unless it is for an emergency. Students are

not excused for vacations, shopping, scheduled vision, dental, or doctors' appointments, or visits by Grandma from America. These are to be scheduled during non-school hours. School usually dismisses no later than 12:30, and therefore no absences or interruptions are acceptable.

Unlike the United States, the school determines what is important and best for the student, and the parents accept this. In Germany, as well as Japan, the teacher is considered to be the co-parent (Burton & Cortina, *Challenge to America*, 1993).

YEAR-ROUND SCHOOLING

Bradford's (1992) solution to the problems inherent with a long traditional summer vacation is a year-round school calendar.

Bradford reasons that because school districts are so diverse, one cannot take an educational program from one district and place it into another. Therefore, the year-round school program is better implemented on a voluntary basis. Bradford claims that the extended year-round calendar would provide enrichment, remediation, and acceleration for students; especially for at risk students.

The need for a flexible school year is also discussed by White (1993). Some students learn more quickly than others, while students with learning disabilities have a difficult time succeeding in the allotted time scheduled. The extended school year accommodates the special needs students by providing an alternative program allowing for further success.

The year-round education concept is also supported by Ballinger (1993). In the Annual Report to the Association of the Status of Year-Round Education, Ballinger stresses the educational values of a year-round education: more continuous instruction will lead to more continuous learning. Therefore, there will be less learning loss because the summer vacation schedule will be reduced from the typical 10 to 12 weeks, to a 6 to vacation time.

When considering education reform options, extending the school year to include the summer months is a consideration. A good example is Germany.

The German school year typically starts, on or before, September 15 and ends July 31. This allows a six week summer

holiday, and a 200 day school year. Vacation time is divided during the year (Sellmeir, S. personal consultation, June, 1994). However, the German school day ends at 12:30, or earlier, throughout the year, allowing extra time for homework, special activities, teacher planning and preparation time, and also avoids the afternoon heat.

The nine month American school calendar originated to avoid the extreme heat of the summer (Bradford, 1991). Therefore, if American educators are considering modelling our calendar after the European calendar, they are cautioned to look at the daily schedule as well; unless the buildings can be mechanically cooled, otherwise student performance may diminish.

Research consistently demonstrates the benefits of providing more learning time for *students at risk*. These students take more time than other students to learn the same material. If not provided the necessary time, they are basically assured of frustration and failure. Another advantage is a decrease in the amount of time spent on review following summer vacation. Vacation breaks would be more equal in number.

In contrast, high-ability students require less time to learn, but they are locked into the same time frame as the at risk students. The result may be frustration and boredom. It is necessary to provide special needs students more learning time while allowing the student, requiring less learning time, flexibility in their schedules as well.

Perhaps the most important task, before implementing a year-round calendar, would be to clearly determine the district's goals and objectives before implementation.

CONCLUSION

Instructional schedules must reflect the learning needs of the student. These vary greatly from student to student; just as educational systems vary from country to country. However, restructuring the U.S. school year would be of great benefit to *at risk students* and reduce review time for all students. Adopting the 45-15 plan with four nine-week terms followed by a 15 day intercession, or similar combinations (see p. 7) would allow parents to schedule medical appointments, vacations, etc. during the intercession. The school would make it known that attendance is critical for academic

learning during each 45 day period, and not to be interrupted.

Another concern is the academic day. Suggestions have been made to lengthen the U.S. school day. However, Michigan second graders are already in school 1.5 to 2 hours longer than their German peers. American students may be in school longer, but 45 minutes is allowed for lunch and productivity, during the sixth hour of the day, may be diminished.

By having a longer school year and having a shorter day, the German and Swiss student has more time for homework, remedial work, talented and gifted programs, extra-curricular activities, and appointments that do not interrupt the academic core. Teachers have more time to plan and prepare, attend inservices, and review student work.

Is there a *time-in-school deficit* in the United States?

Increasing time alone does not raise test scores. It is a variable in learning, and does not compensate for the quality of instruction.

Perhaps there is a *quality-of-time-in-school deficit*. Research suggests (Jones et al, *Prisoners of Time*, 1994) it is not the number of

school days, but rather core academic instruction, academic time, expectations for out of school learning, high standards of teaching, parental involvement, cultural and family values that accounts for these discrepancies in international differences.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the following questionnaire as it would apply to the seven and eight year old, or second grader, in your local school system.

What is the *required minimum* number of school days in a school year for the students? _____

How many of the above number of days are partial days of school? _____

What time do second grade students begin their school day? _____

What time do second grade students end their school day? _____

How many days is your longest school holiday? _____

When returning to school following the longest holiday, how much time is spent reviewing material that was taught before the holidays?

_____ none _____ one week _____ two weeks _____ three weeks _____ four weeks
 _____ five weeks _____ more than five weeks

How many minutes of schoolwork is expected to be done at home on a daily basis?

_____ none _____ 10-20 _____ 20-30 _____ 30-40 _____ 40-50 _____ over 50

What is the average number of students in a classroom?

_____ 10 -15 _____ 16-20 _____ 21-25 _____ 26-30 _____ 31-35 _____ 36-40

Are there other adults assisting the teacher in the classroom on a regular basis?

yes _____ no _____

What is the educational expenditure per student per school year? _____

Does the school offer before-and after-school programs such as breakfasts, day care, tutoring and enrichment, and recreation? yes _____ no _____

If yes, please list.

Do the students eat lunch at school? yes _____ no _____

How much time is allowed for lunch break? _____

Are students with special needs, i.e., learning disabilities, physical handicaps, emotional disabilities, provided special programs within the school system during the regular school hours? yes _____ no _____ If yes, please explain.

How many working days are required yearly for the classroom teacher? _____

What are the required daily working hours for the classroom teacher?

_____ to _____

How many days are provided for professional development for the enhancement of teaching skills for the teacher? _____ (example: attending work seminars or conferences)

Please add any comments or questions you may have regarding this questionnaire.

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

ED 695 DATA FORM

NAME: Barbara Helen Wyns

MAJOR: (choose only 1)

<input type="checkbox"/> Ed Tech	<input type="checkbox"/> Ed Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Sec/Adult
<input type="checkbox"/> Elem Ed	<input type="checkbox"/> G / T Ed	<input type="checkbox"/> Early Child
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elem LD	<input type="checkbox"/> Sec LD	<input type="checkbox"/> SpEd Admin
<input type="checkbox"/> Read/Lang Arts		<input type="checkbox"/> SpEd PPI

TITLE OF PAPER: AN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON OF LOWER
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SCHEDULES

PAPER TYPE: (Choose only 1) SEM / YR COMPLETED: SUMMER 1994

Project
 Thesis

SUPERVISOR: Brenda B. Lazarus, Ph.D.

Using the ERIC thesaurus, choose as many descriptors (3-5 minimum) as needed to describe the contents of your master's paper.

1. international comparison
2. school schedules
3. year-round education
- 4.
- 5.

ABSTRACT: 2 - 3 sentences that describe the contents of your paper.

The purpose of this study was to compare international calendar practices and to identify the quantity of allocated instructional time in the elementary schools. The U.S., Japan, Canada, Switzerland and Germany are specifically compared. Other variables, including homework and summer vacation schedules, are discussed.

*Note: This page must be included as the last page in your master's paper.

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