

## Alternatives to the Current School Year Calendar

Within the 2002-2005 Alberta Learning Business Plan, which was in place when this study was requested, one initiative was to “conduct an impact study of year-round schooling options on student achievement”. The terms of reference for this project were to look at the updated results of year-round education (YRE) on:

- student achievement;
- student attitudes;
- teacher attitudes;
- parent attitudes;
- enrollment trends;
- Alberta's experience and results;
- results in other parts of North America;
- implementation problems and how these are being resolved.

The project resulted in a report that was completed in February 2004, which documents:

1. Alberta's experience,
2. Experience in other parts of North America,
3. Implementation problems and how they have been resolved,
4. Analysis of the impact of YRE on student achievement; student attitudes; teacher attitudes; parent attitudes; and enrollment trends, as well as
5. Conclusions and recommendations

This report also supports Recommendation # 17 of the Alberta's Commission on Learning report. This recommendation states “Encourage schools and school jurisdictions to explore alternatives to the current school year.” Taking into consideration this recommendation, the scope of the study was broadened to consider, in a separate section, the possibilities of other calendar arrangements, especially those that result in a greater number of instructional hours for at least some students (e.g. summer school, extended day, extended week).

The project included:

1. Performing a literature search focusing on studies of the impact of year-round education on student achievement and on attitudes of students, parents and teachers.
2. Interviewing the former principal of one of Alberta's first year-round schools.
3. Documenting the incidence, nature and duration of year-round schools in Alberta.
4. Designing a sample of about 35 year-round schools within the nearly 100 such schools in Alberta, ensuring representation from each sub group and type of school, and then interviewing principals of these schools and distributing questionnaires to teachers, parents and students in the schools.
5. Obtaining results of November 2000 CBE survey of parent and teacher attitudes to YRE.
6. Contacting key stakeholder organizations to determine official organization policy regarding YRE.
7. Performing a comparative analysis of student achievement for students on traditional and modified tracks within a dual-track school.
8. Surveying a sample of parents who moved their children out of YRE schools.

A link to the full report and the actions that have been taken is available here. ([Link to full report](#)).