

Educational Value For Moving Away From A Traditional Calendar

Summer learning loss is the loss in academic skills and knowledge over the course of summer vacation. The loss in learning varies across grade level, subject matter, and family income. A common finding across numerous studies is that on average, students score lower on the standardized tests at the end of the summer than they do at the beginning of summer (on same test). Summer loss for all students is estimated to be equal to about 1 month (*Cooper 1996*), but this varies across subject matter:

- * Mathematics—2.6 months of grade level equivalency loss
- * Reading—Varies across SES. Low income students generally lose about 2 months of reading achievement. Middle income students experience slight gains in reading performances.

The traditional 9 month calendar was created in the 1800's in order to meet the needs of communities largely reliant upon agriculture. This model has become outdated and the needs of the modern student require less lengthy gaps in student learning. The Balanced calendar allows students to attend the same number of school days per calendar year but enhances the number of learning experiences and opportunities for remediation while eliminating the knowledge that is lost over the summer months.

CALENDAR REFORM

“We should know that we are all part of the whole, we are all together. And everything that we do affects each other.”

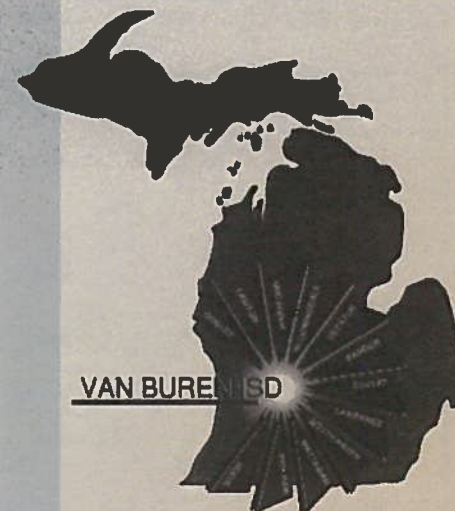
Yoko Ono

Balancing The Calendar

An Effort To Improve Academic Performance

Van Buren ISD

County-Wide Approach





WHAT IS A BALANCED CALENDAR?

A balanced calendar evenly distributes the days that students attend school and the days they are on vacation across a 12 month calendar.

What is the educational value of balancing a calendar?

- Continuous instruction and learning
- Less learning loss
- Quicker intervention
- Increased opportunities for planning and preparation
- Higher attendance rates for students
- Fewer teacher substitute days
- Eliminates summer learning loss

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE EXTENDED BENEFITS OF A BALANCED CALENDAR?

- Instruction—The key to quality instruction is planning and assessment. The periods of instruction between breaks would provide teachers with manageable blocks of time for effective unit planning. The breaks offer the time needed to reflect on student progress and to prepare for the next period of instruction.
- Student Behavior—Research studies indicate that students who attend school on a balanced calendar demonstrate improvement in school attendance and behavior as well as academic achievement.
- Students involved with sports and band activities are already back in early August.
- Students attending Early College programs will need to be back to attend those programs starting in mid/late August.
- Parents can schedule doctor visits/activities during breaks throughout the year.

SUMMER LEARNING LOSS

Statistics show that the traditional school calendar supports summer learning loss.

- Summer Loss: Greater in Math than Reading
- Summer Loss: Greatest in Math computation and Spelling
- Summer vacation increases disparities between advantaged and disadvantaged students reading scores
- The detrimental effect of summer vacation increases as grade level increases

If you have questions regarding the Balanced Calendar, please contact the Superintendent at one of the following school systems:

Bangor Public Schools (269) 427.6800

Bloomington Public Schools (269) 521-3900

Covert Public Schools (269) 764.3701

Decatur Public Schools (269) 423-6800

Gobles Public Schools (269) 628-5618

Hartford Public Schools (269) 621-7000

Lawrence Public Schools (269) 674-8233

Lawton Community Schools (269) 624-7901

Mattawan Consolidated School (269) 668-3361

Paw Paw Public Schools (269) 657-8800

South Haven Public Schools (269) 637-0520

**Van Buren Intermediate School District
(269) 674.8091**