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## **Year-Round Schools Rate Higher in Academic Achievement, Duke Expert Says**

DURHAM, N.C., Aug. 24 (AScribe Newswire) -- Students who attend year-round schools may give up a few days at the pool, but they gain a small advantage over their counterparts who take a 10- to 12-week break for the summer, according to the director of Duke University's program in education.

Harris Cooper, a national expert on year-round schooling, reviewed three dozen studies on student achievement and found that students in year-round programs rate slightly higher in retaining learned material. The difference is even larger for students who are struggling in school or come from low-wealth families, he said.

Cooper is the author of the monograph, "Making the Most of Summer School," and the book, "The Battle Over Homework: Common Ground for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents."

In an earlier study, he found that students on average lose one month of learning over a long summer break. Students in year-round schools tend to lose only about half that much, lending support to those who say evenly spaced vacations are better for students, he said.

"Kids do forget some of what they've learned over the summer," Cooper said.

But he does caution that proponents of year-round schooling should not be too extravagant in their claims: The schedule does help achievement, but the studies supporting year-round schooling contain flaws and the impact of schedules is not large.

And it's important that parents have available high-quality remedial or enrichment programs for children during the intercession breaks, he said.

The debates over year-round schools are likely to continue as districts and families search for schedules that work for today's families.

"There's a very strong societal press for changes in the school calendar because most children don't have a parent at home over the summer," he said. "In many ways, year-round schools fit better with American lifestyles."

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