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PERCEPTIONS ABOUT YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION IN MICHIGAN'S
COPPER COUNTRY**

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A FOCUS GROUP STUDY OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT
YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION IN MICHIGAN'S COPPER COUNTRY

By Mollie Louise Trewartha

THESIS

Submitted to
Northern Michigan University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

A FOCUS GROUP STUDY OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION IN MICHIGAN'S COPPER COUNTRY

By

Mollie Louise Trewartha

Restructuring of schools by means of revising the school calendar from the traditional 9-month calendar to a year-round calendar is one reform idea proposed to meet the diverse abilities and needs of students. Considering the sweeping changes influenced by No Child Left Behind and the trend toward excellence in education, this research focused upon the community perceptions of year-round education (YRE) in Michigan's Copper Country to determine the possibility of change locally. Four variables resulted from literature review on YRE (e.g., defining YRE, summer learning loss and the impact of YRE on student learning, economics of YRE, and implementing YRE). Three focus groups were conducted to examine the perceptions of YRE in a sample of Copper Country school districts' parents, teachers, and community members and whether their perceptions fit the four YRE research variables. Findings revealed participants were positive about the possibility of YRE, but participants raised concerns about the impact the YRE calendar would make on the greater community. A fifth variable was added, community characteristics, after participants voiced apprehension about the YRE calendar working in the Copper Country due to a climate of long winters and short summers, and an economic base consisting of two universities and tourism.

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DEDICATION

To my students, who have inspired me to think critically about the traditional calendar
versus a year-round calendar.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my thesis chair and research advisor, Dr. Judith Puncochar, for her extensive advice and support, Dr. Derek Anderson, for his APA expertise, Dr. Sheila Burns for fresh perspectives, my mother Deb Pederson for her unending encouragement, and my husband Dave for his love and support at home. Without the help of these people, this project could not have been completed. This thesis follows the format prescribed by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* and the Northern Michigan University Department of Education.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NAYRE	National Association for Year-Round Education
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NEA	National Education Association
YRE	Year-round education

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Schools nationwide have adopted year-round calendars for a variety of reasons allowing for continuous education with a shorter summer vacation and breaks that are more frequent during the periods of instruction (Hazleton, 1992). According to the National Association for Year-Round Education (NAYRE), over two million United States students received instruction in schools with continuous year-round calendars in 2006-2007. Many reformers examine the calendars of the United States' competitors in the global market to question the traditional 9-month school calendar (Brekke, 1992). On average, students in the United States attend school fewer days than their peers in other industrialized nations (Hazleton, 1992; Stenvall, 2001).

Restructuring of schools by means of revising the school calendar from the traditional calendar to a year-round calendar is one reform idea proposed to meet the diverse abilities and needs of students (Stenvall, 2001). Considering the sweeping changes influenced by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the trend toward excellence in education (Bracey, 2002; Radcliffe et al., 2002; Stenvall, 2001), this research focused upon the community perceptions of year-round education (YRE) in Michigan's Copper Country to determine the possibility of change.

Michigan's Copper Country was the site of the first copper boom in the United States (www.michigan.gov). Located in the western Upper Peninsula of Michigan, the Copper Country is a rural area that includes all of Keweenaw County, and parts of Houghton, Baraga, and Ontonagon counties. Copper mining was prevalent in the Copper Country from 1845 until the late 1960s. Low copper process and the cost of operating deep underground mines forced the decline and closure of the mining industry. The entire region suffered, and the population decreased by 51% between 1920 and 1970

(www.nps.gov/kewe). After this economic catastrophe, the Copper Country found it had to make use of its other resources to sustain itself. Today, logging and tourism are the major industries in the Copper Country, in addition to jobs related to Michigan Technological University and Finlandia University.

Budgets are tight for school districts across the nation and Michigan schools are no exception (www.michigan.gov). Locally, some districts are looking to adopt alternative school calendars (e.g. 4-day school weeks, longer school days with shorter school years) to save money. The alternative calendars local districts are adopting may contradict what educational research suggests as best practice for maximizing student achievement. Public school administrators are trusted to act as stewards and utilize taxpayers' contributions effectively, and communities are relying on administrators to maximize student potential with the least amount of money possible. Administrators also have considerable pressure to meet the demands of NCLB and the community's expectations for academic excellence. Might YRE be the answer local school administrators are looking for?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the following review is to (a) define and describe year-round education, (b) summarize research on summer learning loss and resulting implications for school calendar reform, student achievement, and the economics of year-round education, and (c) present a research design and discussion on implementing year-round education in Michigan's Copper Country.

The History of Year-Round Education

Year-round education (YRE) is not a new concept. In the United States, interest and enthusiasm for YRE has grown and faded as the demands on schools have changed over the last century. Glines (1997) provided a history of year-round schools in the United States. According to Glines, as early as 1840, a number of urban schools operated year-round, though not all students attended the 240 to 250 instructional days. The concept of YRE using summer vacation schools probably began in 1870, but most researchers give credit to Bluffton, Indiana, for the first YRE program in 1904 (Glines, 1997).

In the early 1900s, YRE existed in a variety of communities, including Newark, New Jersey (1912), Minot, North Dakota (1917), Omaha, Nebraska (1924), Nashville, Tennessee (1925), and Aliquippa (1928) and Ambridge (1931), Pennsylvania for a variety of reasons:

- Newark - help immigrants learn English and enable students to accelerate
- Bluffton - enhance learning and create additional classrooms
- Minot - meet the needs of struggling students
- Aliquippa and Ambridge – for space

- Omaha - offer continuous vocational training programs
- Nashville - improve the quality of education. (Glines, 1997, p. 1)

Today, many of the same reasons are cited for supporting year-round education (www.nayre.com).

Early YRE conversions did not survive the Great Depression and the national uniformity needed during World War II. By 1956, a National Education Association report claimed every school system attempting YRE had abandoned the year-round calendar. “Year-round education had faded from the American scene” (Hazleton, 1992, p. 10). Although plans were made to resume the use of YRE between the years of 1946-1966, the concept was not revisited until 1968 (Glines, 1997).

YRE was established in Missouri, Illinois, California, and Minnesota during 1968-1970 (Glines, 1997). In 1972, educators from some of the existing year-round schools formed the National Association for Year-Round Education (NAYRE) (www.nayre.com). The majority of districts adopting YRE in the following twenty years, 1970-1990, were primarily interested in generating additional instructional space due to overcrowding, with California leading the way (Hazleton, 1992). The educational and community benefits became understood as year-round calendar variations spread across the United States. Glines (1997) suggested more recently, “the focus turned toward the inherent value of YRE” (p. 2). In a statistical summary of YRE during the 2006-2007 school year, NAYRE reported 3,000 schools used YRE in 46 states and served an estimated 2,099,633 students (www.nayre.com).

Defining YRE

The implementation of YRE means revising the traditional nine-month school calendar to promote continuous education. YRE has a shorter summer vacation and frequent breaks during the periods of instruction. Design of YRE calendars varies according to the length and frequency of vacations, commonly referred to as intersessions.

Intersessions allow time for remediation and enrichment throughout the school year. Stenvall (2001) concluded, “While changing the calendar year in itself can provide many benefits, the importance of intersession instruction cannot be overstated. Those additional instructional days and weeks can spell the difference between success and failure for many students” (p. 21). Intersessions help children to receive assistance throughout the year instead of playing catch up during summer school sessions.

Most YRE calendars provide for 180 accumulated days of instruction per year, equal to the instructional days of traditional calendars. NAYRE uses the pie chart shown in Figure 1 on its website to illustrate a “balanced” or year-round calendar (www.nayre.com).

Additionally, two kinds of YRE organizational frameworks exist: single-track and multi-track (Kneese, 2000b). Single track YRE has students and all school personnel following the same instructional and vacation schedule. Multi-track YRE has been used primarily to alleviate overcrowding in urban schools. Multi-track is a staggered plan, dividing the student population into equal groups, with some students in attendance while others are on vacation. Multi-track systems incorporate the educational values of single-track YRE, including intersessions. Multi-track YRE was designed originally for schools

with a shortage of classroom space to save on capital construction and ongoing operating costs (Brekke, 1997; Glass, 1992).

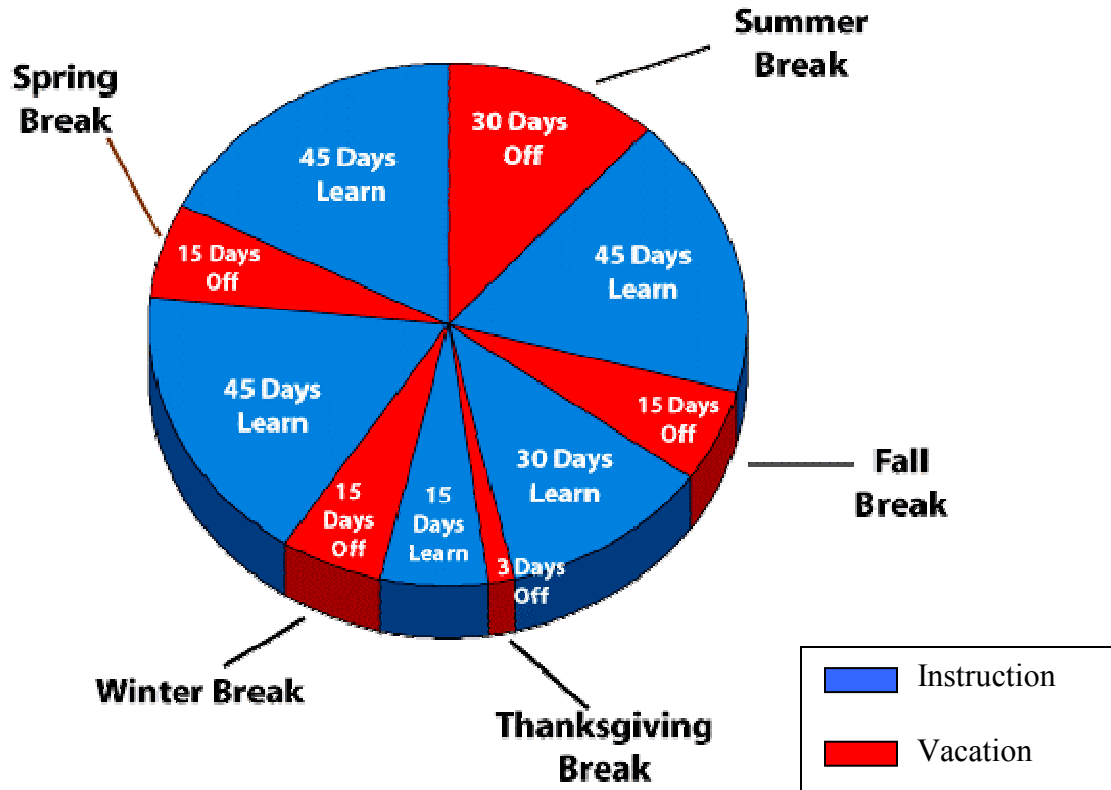


Figure 1

Year-round calendar

Additionally, two kinds of YRE organizational frameworks exist: single-track and multi-track (Kneese, 2000b). Single track YRE has students and all school personnel following the same instructional and vacation schedule. Multi-track YRE has been used primarily to alleviate overcrowding in urban schools. Multi-track is a staggered plan, dividing the student population into equal groups, with some students in attendance while others are on vacation. Multi-track systems incorporate the educational values of single-track YRE, including intersessions. Multi-track YRE was designed originally for schools

with a shortage of classroom space to save on capital construction and ongoing operating costs (Brekke, 1997; Glass, 1992).

Some schools offer both traditional and year-round calendars, a "school-within-a-school" concept, which allows families to choose the calendar that works best for their child (Glines, 1994a). YRE literature has many methods of "rearranging the school calendar" (Hazleton, 1992, p. 11). Some of the most common YRE organization arrangements are summarized in Table 1.

Today, the dialogue regarding YRE, time, and school is driven by new technologies, the global economy, the changing of American lifestyles, the diverse needs of students, and tight budgets (Glines, 1994b). "There is a growing consensus among educators and the public that either more learning time or different arrangements for learning time are needed if schools are to accomplish their educational and social responsibilities" (Dlugosh, 1994, p. 1).

Table 1

Summary of YRE Organizational Alternatives

Calendar Name	Description
45/15 Single-track	One group of students; everyone follows the same 9-week learning blocks and 3-week vacation blocks.
45/15 Multi-track	Four groups (tracks) of students; rotated through 9-week learning blocks and 3-week vacation blocks.

Calendar Name	Description
45/15 Flexible	9-week learning and 3-week vacation blocks, but with reading and math especially, and other subjects preferably, individualized so students may jump tracks for special reasons.
60/20	Same as 45/15, except there are three 60 day learning blocks and 20-day vacation blocks.
Concept 6	Six 40-44-day learning blocks; students attend four of the six (two in succession) and have two separate 40-44-day vacation periods; this plan provides over-lapping days or longer school days to reach the 180-day requirement.
90/30 (Concept 6 Modified)	Same as 45/15 and 60/20, except students attend school for two, separated, 90-day learning blocks and two 30-day vacation blocks
Concept 8	Eight 6-week terms—students select if voluntary, or are assigned, if mandatory, six of the eight terms.

Summer Learning Loss

One rationale used by proponents of year-round education is summer learning loss. Summer learning loss has not been adequately proven with solid data, however students' learning loss is perceived to be less by teachers and parents using year-round calendars (Cooper et al., 2003). Stenvall (2001) reported, "Most students do not maintain formal learning over a two- to three-month break from school," (p. 20). Bracey (2002)

suggested summer learning loss has important implications for the measurement of Adequate Yearly Progress, required of states accepting federal money through No Child Left Behind. Throughout the years, summer programs have been established to provide remediation, boost achievement, and keep at-risk children off the streets (Cooper, 2001).

Summer school research reveals academic gains vary according to the program. Following a meta-analysis by Cooper, Charlton, Valentine, and Muhlenbruck (2002), the authors stated:

The results of this synthesis can be used to argue for adopting changes in the school calendar. That is, these results legitimize the contention that calendar changes could make educational sense, in addition to better fitting the lifestyle of current American families. Such changes might also address issues related to economic inequities that affect children's life chances. (p. 263)

Their conclusion was children who participate in summer school reap multiple benefits, including academic improvement (Cooper et al., 2002).

Summer learning loss is not a new phenomenon. Thirty-eight years ago, a study on the school year and vacations found a seven-month difference in reading achievement between poor and middle-class students in the second grade had widened to two years and seven months by the end of sixth grade (Hayes & Grether, 1969). A meta-analysis of 39 studies by Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, and Greathouse (1996) indicated achievement-test scores decline significantly over summer vacation. The researchers determined summer loss equals about one month on a grade-level equivalent scale. Cooper et al. (1996) suggested the data had implications for school calendar changes.

Summer school has been used by educators for years “to remediate or prevent learning deficits” (Cooper, 2000, p. 4). Traditionally, summer school also has provided flexible course schedules, enrichment, advanced coursework, and summer employment for educators. “A balanced calendar offers a safety net—extended learning time during the school year—that can help prevent failure” (Stenvall, 2001, p. 20). Although the traditional calendar may allow summer school programs to give students opportunity to “catch up” or “get ahead” a student has to wait all year to receive the remediation or enrichment.

Impact of YRE on Student Learning

Many schools have adopted year-round calendars with the intention of improving the quality of education provided to students. In February 2007, Dr. Eugene White, President of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), spoke at the National Convention of NAYRE and addressed the benefits of YRE. He asserted YRE yields less time spent re-teaching and reorienting students, extended learning time provided during intersessions, reduced discipline, gains in addressing achievement gaps, opportunities for professional development, and time for students to explore careers (White, 2007).

Opponents of YRE claim current evidence does not indicate enough of a significant connection between academic improvement and YRE. Cooper, Valentine, Charlton, and Melson (2003) conducted the most recent meta-analysis of studies examining year-round education. While researching, the authors “could locate only one research synthesis on modified school calendars that had appeared in a peer-reviewed journal during the past two decades” (Cooper et al., 2003, p. 7). In their conclusion,

Cooper et al. (2003) indicated further research about YRE should be conducted to see if the modified calendar positively influences student achievement.

In a meta-analysis comparing achievement in year round versus traditional schools, the results showed a positive, but small effect in favor of YRE (Kneese, 1996). Kneese found evaluations of single-track schools produced larger positive effects than evaluations of multi-track schools. Her findings also showed “males appear to perform better than females in a year-round calendar” (p. 70). Kneese (2000) followed up with another study of six matched traditional and year-round elementary schools. After four years, Kneese concluded the year-round programs demonstrated some advantages over the traditional program controls:

Since the gain scores for all YRE students were positive and statistical significance was found in approximately half of the comparisons, it appears that the single-track YRE calendar may enhance academic achievement, in math in particular, and in reading in some instances. However, the gains from the YRE program appeared to slow after several years. (Kneese, 2000, p. 25)

The clearest conclusion drawn from the researched meta-analyses is a credible study of YRE effects on academic achievement has yet to be conducted (Cooper et al., 2003; Kneese, 1996). “If the results of our synthesis are informative, they suggest a modified calendar effect on achievement that is quite small (approximately .05 standard deviation) relative to other effects associated with educational interventions” (Cooper et al., 2003, p. 43). Larger effects have been found for summer school programs than modified calendars. However, intersessions periods common to YRE are spread throughout a school year, which means students could receive specialized instruction

more immediately with YRE than the traditional calendar. Proponents of YRE also argue the effects of modified school calendars are cumulative. This hypothesis remains yet to be tested.

The Economics of YRE

The cost-effective management of educational programs and facilities continues to be a critical issue in our nation. Parrino (2003) stated multi-track YRE as one alternative when budgeting in hard times. Norm Brekke, former Superintendent of Oxnard School District with 17 years of YRE experience, summarized the school administrator's YRE controversy, "As the feasibility for a year-round education program is being considered, it is important that a careful evaluation be made of the cost, a school's ability to maintain quality educational programs, and the impact that YRE plan may have on the operational/support services of the school district" (1997, p. 2). Doing more and better with less has become the school administrator's test.

Any increase in a school's enrollment may lower the average cost per student. Daneshvary and Claurette (2001) reported, "Similar to the potential cost savings from school district consolidation, the potential cost savings from a move to a year-round schedule stems from size or scale economies" (p. 3). A move to YRE can increase enrollment, especially with a multi-track system, which allows districts to save money. Daneshvary and Claurette's study focused the economics of a change to YRE in Nevada. Their sample included 115 elementary schools, 26 with a year-round schedule. The authors explained, "Total costs are reduced by 7.5 percent (about US\$400 per pupil) after controlling for average daily attendance and test performance" (Daneshvary & Claurette,

2001, p. 7). They found YRE not only produces efficiencies in the cost of capital expenditures but also in other areas such as operations.

Implementing YRE

The school calendar influences many facets of people's lives, including work, childcare, vacation time, and hobbies. "The history of school calendars in the United States suggests that only innovations that consider local and national economics and the politics of family time along with the education of children will have a chance to succeed" (Cooper, 2003, p. 44). In order for a school to be successful with YRE, community support must be robust (Bradford, 1993; Cooper, 2003; Glass, 2002; Glines, 1997; Kneese, 2000). Any attempts of change must be considered carefully.

Typically, a community increases support for the school when school buildings are used year-round (Bradford, 1993). "Begin with the word voluntary. Your plan may be in trouble if you announce the program as being mandatory. If you mandate the year-round schooling without prior planning and justification, your teachers and students are going to 'rise up in arms'" (p. 5). Glines (1997) suggested a number of areas to be addressed when considering YRE. "Examine 'everything' related to the students, staff, families, communities, quality of life, and learning. Correctly implemented, YRE is an asset; incorrectly designed, YRE is a major liability" (p. 5). Radcliffe, Jacobs, and Hulick (2002) studied rural schools in Kentucky, Illinois, and Tennessee using year-round education. The results of their study revealed strong community support for a calendar with rescheduled rather than added school days and with a shorter summer vacation.

A common thread emerges from the literature on year-round education: participants of YRE (students, parents, teachers, administrators) are overwhelmingly

pleased with the year-round calendar (Glass, 1992; Kneese, 2000; Shields & Oberg, 2000; White, 2007). Cooper, Valentine, Charlton, and Melson (2003) also uncovered overwhelming positive attitudes from respondents who had participated in a modified calendar. Respondents believed “the modified calendar had a positive effect on student achievement” (p. 42). Why aren’t more school districts using YRE if communities of schools currently operating on a year-round calendar widely support YRE?

The traditional school calendar is common to most schools across the United States, including the schools in Michigan’s Copper Country. Because the traditional calendar has been in place for so long, modifying the school calendar would call for substantial change in a school district and its community. One method of sampling community members’ perceptions about year-round education in Michigan’s Copper Country is through focus groups.

Research Design

To examine whether YRE might be a possibility for Michigan’s Copper Country, the researcher employed a static-group comparison pre-experimental design using a sample of Michigan’s Copper Country school community members. Campbell and Stanley (1963) defined a static-group comparison design as one in which intact groups are assigned randomly to treatments. In this case, the treatment is the focus group interview. Pre-experimental designs follow basic experimental steps without a control group (<http://allpsych.com>).

Focus groups are a commonly used research tool in the social sciences. A focus group interview is one in which a small group of individuals discuss a topic with the direction of a moderator (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1991). The moderator keeps the

discussion on topic and encourages interaction. Focus group research allows for the collection of qualitative data in the form of participants' conversational responses. Evaluation of the focus group data used a set of variables identified in the YRE literature review namely defining YRE, summer learning loss and the impact of YRE on student learning, economics of YRE, and implementing YRE. In addition to the four variables identified from the research, a fifth variable called community characteristics emerged from the data.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Purpose

This focus group purpose was to explore the perceptions of community members regarding year-round education in Michigan's Copper Country and of the possibility of implementing a year-round calendar locally. Copper Country parents, teachers, and community members volunteered for participation in focus groups. The research question was "What are Copper Country community residents' perceptions about year-round education?"

Participants

Participants in this study were selected using public advertising for volunteers. Postings (see Appendix B) were made on bulletin boards in Copper Country grocery stores, coffeehouses, and the public library. A listing was made in the community calendar of the Daily Mining Gazette newspaper, appearing daily for the week prior to the focus group sessions. Additionally, public announcements were made on WOLV and WCCY, Copper Country radio stations May 15 through May 22. All participants who met the following criteria were invited to participate: (a) 18 years or older, (b) Copper Country resident, and (c) interested in discussing year-round education. Participants were invited to attend any of the three focus group interviews.

Procedure

Qualitative focus group interviews were conducted with groups of 4 to 5 participants. Participants were not assigned to any particular group. The focus groups were groups of convenience. Each meeting was 30 to 45 minutes in duration. The three focus groups were conducted in a classroom at Houghton Elementary School in

Houghton, Michigan. The focus group moderator welcomed participants at the classroom door and offered snacks of crackers, cheese, homemade cookies, chocolate candies, and a variety of cold beverages. Participants sat around a large table with the recording device in the center. When the group had gathered, the moderator read participants the consent agreement. Participants signed the consent forms and placed one copy of the consent into a manila envelope.

Once informed consent was secured (see Appendix C), data-collection activities commenced using a Sony IC Digital Voice Recorder, ICD-P520. The participants introduced themselves. Each participant received a brief handout explaining year-round education key-terms (see Appendix E). Then the focus group interview began. The atmosphere of the focus group meetings was informal and the tone conversational. The moderator used a semi-structured interview protocol during focus group interviews. Participants were asked open-ended questions such as, “What is your prior knowledge of year-round education?” and “How do you see year-round education impacting students?” See Appendix D for a complete interview protocol.

Data Analysis

The focus group interview recordings were loaded into Sony Digital Voice Editor Version 3.0 so participants’ verbatim responses to interview questions could be transcribed using Microsoft Word. Transcription of the focus group is an essential first step to allow analytic techniques for focus group data (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1991). Transcription allows a researcher to analyze the data and provides a written record of the focus group interview which can be shared with future researchers or interested parties.

The transcription begins with the first interview question (see Appendix F). Participants were assigned a pseudonym according to their role (e.g. Teacher 1, Parent 2). The researcher transcribed participants' responses verbatim, including incomplete thoughts, half-finished phrases, and other characteristics of the spoken word in a group discussion. The researcher did not edit the text to increase readability in order to preserve the character of the actual focus group conversations.

The transcripts of participants' responses were coded using a research-based coding scheme. The coding themes were (1) defining YRE, (2) summer learning loss and the impact of YRE on student learning, (3) economics of YRE, and (4) implementing YRE. These four themes were the most commonly discussed topics in current YRE research. One hundred percent of articles defined YRE (n=17), 59% discussed summer learning loss and the impact of YRE on student learning (n=10), 24% mentioned the cost or economics of YRE (n=4), and 53% talked about implementing YRE (n=9). Another theme emerged from the data and was added to the scheme, (5) community characteristics. The researcher reviewed the transcripts line by line and assigned a code to each response. For example, when participants spoke about the cost to install air conditioning in Copper Country schools, their response would be coded as (3) economics of YRE. A complete copy of the coding model with all themes and sub themes is in Appendix G.

A second coder, unfamiliar with YRE, was used to secure inter-reader reliability. The coder was provided with an organized table of the qualitative data (See Appendix H). The table was complete with participants' qualitative responses, group numbers, and ID numbers so the coder only had to determine the theme of each comment and code

appropriately. The researcher also furnished the second coder with a copy of the coding scheme and answered any questions about the definitions of themes and sub themes. The second coder's observations were independently recorded, in a location apart from the researcher. The researcher did not influence the second coder's coding.

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data after coding was completed. SPSS is analytics statistical software. "The level and detail of analysis of focus group data can be increased considerably through use of the computer" (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1991, p. 119). Semantic content analysis was completed and a cross tabulation was created to display the joint distribution of the themes. Cross tabulation tables are located in Appendix J.

Cohen's kappa was determined using SPSS to check inter-reader reliability. Kappa requires coders to use the same category values and have the same number of categories, which is true in this study. The kappa value was $\kappa=0.923$, $p < .000$, which indicates reliable, statistically significant inter-reader reliability. A value of 1 would indicate perfect agreement, whereas a value of 0 would indicate agreement is no better than chance. The few existing errors were uncorrelated between items.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Analysis of data yielded four key themes capturing residents' perceptions regarding the possibility of year-round education in the Copper Country. The theme defining YRE was omitted in the analysis because conversation coded as defining YRE focused on the logistics of the calendar, not residents' feelings about YRE. Overall, participants were open to the concept of YRE, but skeptical of the implementation of a YRE calendar in Michigan's Copper Country schools.

Despite the perceived importance of YRE on summer learning loss and student learning, participants did not focus on the theme of learning. The conversation connected to student learning accounted for a mere 21.9% of meaningful focus group interview content (see Table 2). One focus group only discussed the possible effects of YRE on student learning 7.8% of the time. Among comments about the impact of YRE on student learning were:

COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: It is more of a constant exposure to learning...I think you'd be met with more success.

TEACHER 4: Do you think [students] would transition very well? Coming off the breaks and coming back to school?

PARENT 3: Summer vacation is a long time to regroup. I think the students would be more productive.

The economics, or costs, of YRE in comparison to the traditional calendar also concerned participants. Fitting buildings with air conditioning and the advantages and disadvantages of using a building year-round were contemplated. "I don't know how air conditioning compares to heating in cost up here," one parent commented. A teacher

responded, “When you’re using a building all year round, your utilities have to be considerably higher.”

Implementing YRE was the theme that generated the most discussion.

Participants focused on implementation 40% of the time. One community member shared, “I think any change is usually met with some kind of resistance. And you might find the biggest hurdle you might encounter is just change.” People shifting their mindsets, transitioning to new routines, district scheduling, shared programming, and the impact on family vacations, activities, and childcare were among the topics discussed by focus group participants.

Table 2

Focus Group Interview Content

	Coded Themes			
	2 Impact on Learning	3 Cost/ Economics	4 Implement- ing YRE	5 Community Characteristics
Group 1				
No. of Responses	22	17	34	12
% within Group	25.9%	20.0%	40.0%	14.1%
% within Code	47.8%	38.6%	40.5%	33.3%
% of Total	10.5%	8.1%	16.2%	5.7%

	Coded Themes			
	2 Impact on Learning	3 Cost/ Economics	4 Implement- ing YRE	5 Community Characteristics
Group 2				
No. of Responses	5	17	24	18
% within Group	7.8%	26.6%	37.5%	28.1%
% within Code	10.9%	38.6%	28.6%	50.0%
% of Total	2.4%	8.1%	11.4%	8.6%
Group 3				
No. of Responses	19	10	26	6
% within Group	31.1%	16.4%	42.6%	9.8%
% within Code	41.3%	22.7%	31.0%	16.7%
% of Total	9.0%	4.8%	12.4%	2.9%
Total				
No. of Responses	46	44	84	36
% within Group	21.9%	21.0%	40.0%	17.1%
% within Code	100%	100%	100%	100%
% of Total	21.9%	21.0%	40.0%	17.1%

The last theme, community characteristics, emerged from the data not the research. Participants were doubtful YRE could work in the local community. Reasons for apprehension were the climate of long winters and short summers, the region's reliance on the tourism industry during the summer months, and the academic calendars of local universities. The groups' comments focusing on community characteristics accounted for 17.1% of the total, however one group spent 28.1% of their time on this topic (the same group that spent so little time discussing the impact of YRE on student learning). Examples of statements about Copper Country community characteristics were the following:

COMMUNITY MEMBER 2: Summer, I think, is where we get the bulk of tourists coming in. Local businesses depend on local students for their job force and I think that it may be tough for [the businesses].

COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: It almost goes back to the farmers needing the extra hands in the fields. But here it is working in a restaurant.

TEACHER 6: Without tourism and Tech...they are both very influential. And so you have to take in not just your school community...but also the greater community. How would a business view a balanced calendar?

[The businesses] would lose a lot of cheap labor...

Focus Group Study Limitations

As with any social science study, limitations affected the results of this study. One limiting factor was the use of convenience sampling to select participants for the study. Participants responded to advertisements for focus group volunteers, implying the participants had some interest in the topic of YRE. Convenience sampling makes

generalizations impossible; however, convenience sampling is commonly used for focus group participation selection (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1991).

The small number of total participants (n=13) and the small size of the focus groups are important factors limiting the findings of the study. Stewart and Shamdasani (1991) cautioned that focus groups smaller than eight individuals may be dominated by one or two participants (p.10). The researcher encouraged active participation of all participants and discouraged conversation dominance while moderating the focus groups. Participants #10 and #12 dominated the frequency of participation in Group 3, because they contributed 74% of the group’s conversation combined (see Table 3). However, 26% of their comments were conversational chatter, clarifications, and repetition of ideas. Consequently, these two participants together contributed about half of the focus group ideas, which is the expected frequency in a group of four.

Table 3

Participants’ Frequency of Participation

	No. of Responses	% within Group	% within Total
Group 1			
Participant #1	40	24.5%	11.5%
Participant #2	47	28.8%	13.5%
Participant #3	26	16.0%	7.5%
Participant #4	16	9.8%	4.6%
Participant #5	34	20.9%	9.8%

	No. of Responses	% within Group	% within Total
Group 2			
Participant #6	26	30.6%	7.5%
Participant #7	25	29.4%	7.2%
Participant #8	17	20.0%	4.9%
Participant #9	17	20.0%	4.9%
Group 3			
Participant #10	43	43.0%	12.4%
Participant #11	9	9.0%	2.6%
Participant #12	31	31.0%	8.9%
Participant #13	17	17.0%	4.9%

All three focus groups had four to five participants. The first focus group was a homogeneous group (teachers) while the other two groups were heterogeneous (teachers, parents, community members). Grouping configurations such as gender and status can be limitations of the conversation generated in a focus group. Female participants (n=12) greatly outnumbered the male participants (n=1) in the focus group interviews. A possible status limitation to the design was the inclusion of teachers in each group. Having a separate group of teachers, community members, and parents would have created a stronger research design.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Michigan's economy has greatly suffered in the last few decades due to an over-reliance on manufacturing (Ballard, 2006). This situation has affected the state budget and puts increasing pressure on school administrators to use state funding, the majority of the funding appropriated to Copper Country schools, more effectively. Local school districts have been combing alternative calendar options (e.g. 4-day school weeks, longer school days with shorter school years) for budget savings. Year-round education is a calendar alternative employed by many California districts, but Copper Country school districts have not yet considered YRE. Focus group research was employed to gather perceptions of stakeholders regarding YRE.

The research question was "What are Copper Country community residents' perceptions about year-round education?" Participants of the study, Copper Country parents, teachers, and community members, were open to the concept of YRE, willing to try YRE on a trial basis, but unsure YRE could work in the local community. The Copper Country climate of long winters and short summers, the region's reliance on the tourism industry during the summer months, and the academic calendars of local universities were among reasons participants were apprehensive about YRE.

The majority of the results of this study are in concurrence with other work focusing on community perceptions about YRE. The research shows many communities are skeptical of YRE until they implement the calendar, and then stakeholders are often pleased with YRE (Bradford, 1993; Cooper, 2003; Glass, 2002; Glines, 1997; Kneese, 2000). This study also highlights an important factor neglected by YRE researchers to date. A community's unique characteristics must be carefully studied before

implementing YRE. Factors such as a community's climate, reliance on a tourism industry, or strong connection to a university with a traditional calendar may provide enough skepticism to halt all possibilities of change to YRE. Any attempts of change must be researched, studied, and implemented with careful consideration of the community. After all, the school calendar keeps the pulse of many rural communities.

CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

The majority of participants in the study were not opposed to YRE, but they questioned whether YRE could work and be economical in the Copper Country. One participant commented, “I liked [year-round education] in California but this is a very different climate.” Another participant stated, “Change is good. It is just scary going into it.” The researcher believes YRE may be an option for Copper Country administrators to consider in the future if driven by economics. For example, if Copper Country school districts consolidated for budget reasons and the consolidation plan included combining two school communities into one school building, multi-track YRE might be an option to alleviate overcrowding. If a Copper Country district wanted to explore the option of YRE, the researcher recommends a tighter research design of homogeneous focus groups, including participation from administrators.

Additionally, in the literature review the researcher found gaps in the research on YRE’s impact on student learning. Several questions remain unanswered. Will summer learning loss be proven with data? Would YRE solve the problem of the perceived summer learning loss? Are the academic effects of YRE calendars cumulative? If so, YRE and calendar reform should be considered for schools across the nation, including the schools in Michigan’s Copper Country.

Community characteristics emerged as a significant variable in this YRE study. For the successful implementation of YRE in a variety of locations, more research is needed on the geographic locations and community characteristics of thriving year-round schools. One participant remarked on the costliness of research to match and examine communities with the same standard of living and economic tourism base as the Copper

Country school districts when considering YRE decisions. The truth is, the traditional calendar will continue to reign as the most common arrangement of school time in our nation if YRE research were not current, valid, and readily available to schools and communities. To initiate change without a strong research base would be costly and unwise for a school administrator in Michigan's Copper Country, especially with a tightened budget.

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APPENDIX A: UNIVERSITY PERMISSION



Continuing Education & Sponsored Programs
1401 Presque Isle Avenue
Marquette, MI 49855-5325

May 9, 2007

TO: Mollie L. Trewartha
Education

FROM: Cynthia A. Prosen, Ph.D. 
Dean of Graduate Studies & Research

RE: Human Subjects Proposal # HS07-106
"A Focus Group Study of Community Members Perceptions about Year-Round Schools in Michigan's copper Country"

The Human Subjects Research Review Committee has reviewed your proposal and has given it final approval. To maintain permission from the Federal government to use human subjects in research, certain reporting processes are required. As the principal investigator, you are required to:

- A. Include the statement "Approved by HSRRC: Project # (listed above) on all research materials you distribute, as well as on any correspondence concerning this project.
- B. Provide the Human Subjects Research Committee letters from the agency(ies) where the research will take place within 14 days of the receipt of this letter. Letters from agencies should be submitted if the research is being done in (a) a hospital, in which case you will need a letter from the hospital administrator; (b) a school district, in which case you will need a letter from the superintendent, as well as the principal of the school where the research will be done; or (c) a facility that has its own Institutional Review Board, in which case you will need a letter from the chair of that board.
- C. Report to the Human Subjects Research Review Committee any deviations from the methods and procedures outlined in your original protocol. If you find that modifications of methods or procedures are necessary, please report these to the Human Subjects Research Review Committee before proceeding with data collection.
- D. Submit progress reports on your project every 12 months. You should report how many subjects have participated in the project and verify that you are following the methods and procedures outlined in your approved protocol.
- E. Report to the Human Subjects Research Review Committee that your project has been completed. You are required to provide a short progress report to the Human Subjects Research Review Committee in which you provide information about your subjects, procedures to ensure confidentiality/anonymity of subjects, and the final disposition of records obtained as part of the research (see Section II.C.7.c).
- F. Submit renewal of your project to the Human Subjects Research Review Committee if the project extends beyond three years from the date of approval.

It is your responsibility to seek renewal if you wish to continue with a three-year permit. At that time, you will complete (D) or (E), depending on the status of your project.

kjm

Tight Budgets
Summer Learning Loss
Alternative School Calendars
Year-Round Education?

Seeking adult volunteers
for focus group research on
year-round education

Tuesday, May 22	3:30 p.m.
Wednesday, May 23	5:00 p.m.
Thursday, May 24	5:00 p.m.

The sessions will take place in Room 141 of Houghton Elementary.
Each session is expected to last about an hour. Snacks provided.

If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information, contact Mollie at mocolema@nmu.edu or 906-370-2759.

Principal Investigator Mollie Trewartha is a graduate student in the School of Education at Northern Michigan University who wishes to investigate the perceptions of community members about the possibility of year-round schooling in Michigan's Copper Country.

Approved by HSRRC: Project # HS07-106.

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM

A Focus Group Study of Community Members' Perceptions about Year-round Schools in Michigan's Copper Country (Approved by HSRRC: Project # HS07-106)

Consent Form: We invite you to participate in focus group research. We ask that you read this consent form and ask any questions that you may have before participating in the focus group project. We will use your opinions for the research **only with your voluntary consent**. We selected you as a possible participant in this research project because of your response to the public advertisement for focus group volunteers.

Investigators: Mollie Trewartha, a graduate student in the School of Education at the Northern Michigan University, is the Principal Investigator conducting the study in collaboration with her research advisor, Judith Puncochar, Ph.D., an Assistant Professor in the School of Education at Northern Michigan University.

Background Information: We wish to investigate the perception of community members about the possibility of year-round schooling in Michigan's Copper Country.

Risks and Benefits of the Study: As a participant in this focus group research, you might experience uncomfortable feelings associated with the focus group questions, digital recorder, and discussion of focus group participants. You might feel uneasy hearing information you might not agree with. Associated risks might be hurt feelings and/or feelings of alienation. You may withdraw from the study at any time. Benefits of this project should be positive because of engaging in a discussion of meaningful community issues. Anticipated benefits are the possibility you might hone your knowledge of educational issues and your skills of reflection and discussion.

Confidentiality: The materials in this study will be private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. We examine only aggregate group data. No individual comments will be identified. Materials will be in a locked file. Only the researchers will have access to the materials. No names will be used in preparing transcripts from the audiotapes. Signed consent sheets or names will not be tied to focus group participants' responses in any way. All audiotapes of focus group sessions will be erased when transcripts are completed.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Your decision whether to contribute to the research will not affect your current or future relations with Northern Michigan University or Houghton Elementary School. If you decide to contribute to the research, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Procedures: The focus group activity could take up to an hour. We ask you to do the following:

1. Examine your two copies of the consent form. One copy is for the researcher and one copy is for your files.
2. Sign both copies of the consent form. Your signature indicates you are a willing participant in this focus group research
3. Keep one consent form.
4. Fold the other consent form in half and return this copy to the manila envelope provided by the researcher.

Contacts and Questions: You may ask any questions you have now.

If you have questions later, you may contact Judith Puncochar at jpuncoch@nmu.edu, 195 Whitman, Northern Michigan University; telephone (906) 227-1366. If you have any further questions regarding your rights as a participant in a research project you may contact Dr. Cindy Prosen of the Human Subjects Research Review Committee of Northern Michigan University by telephone at (906) 227-2300 or by email at cprosen@nmu.edu. Thank you!

Signed consent to participate in the focus research project

I have read the above information. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and obtain answers about this research study.

Signature _____ Date _____

Keep one copy of this form for your records.

APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PLAN

Welcome and statements regarding the purpose of the study, focus group procedures, and consent forms.

Opening comment:

“Please tell us a little bit about yourself.”

Introduction to key terms:

Give participants the key terms handout and briefly review the terms.

Introductory question:

“Schools nationwide have adopted year-round calendars for a variety of reasons, allowing for continuous education with a shorter summer vacation and more frequent breaks during the periods of instruction. What is your prior knowledge of year-round education?”

Transition questions:

“What issues associated with year-round education do you see as negative? Explain.”

“What issues associated with year-round education do you see as positive? Explain.”

Key questions:

“What factors do you believe would make or break year-round education in the Copper Country schools?”

Sub probe: (a) “How do you anticipate year-round education impacting students? Families? Communities? Teachers? Schools?” (b) “Do you have any particular concerns about year-round education?” (c) “Does anything you’ve discussed today make you excited about year-round education?”

Ending question:

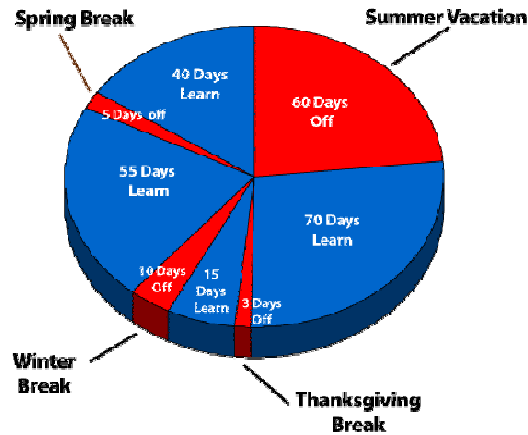
“Is there anything about year-round education we haven’t talked about that you would like to raise before we leave today?”

APPENDIX E: KEY TERMS HANDOUT

Implementing year-round education (YRE) or year-round school means revising the traditional nine-month school calendar to promote continuous education. YRE has a shorter summer vacation and frequent breaks during the periods of instruction.

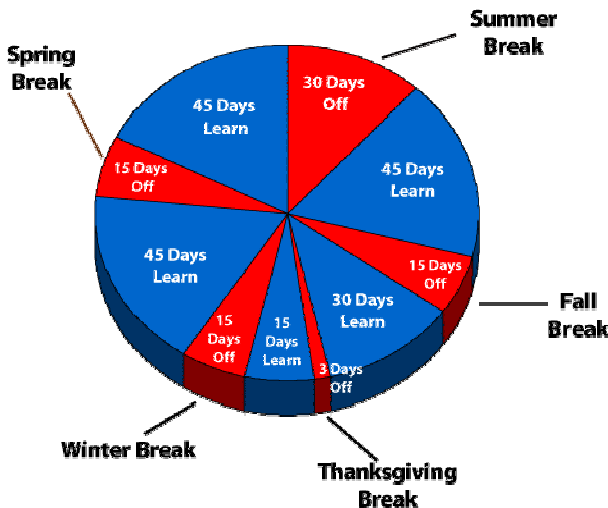
Traditional calendars feature a long summer vacation of 12 weeks followed by a long instruction period of approximately 70 days. The traditional calendar usually allows schools their first break at Thanksgiving. The winter holidays are followed by 55 school days before a one-week spring break. Spring break is followed by 40 workdays before the end of the school year.

Traditional Calendar



The balanced calendar or year-round calendar reduces the long summer break and distributes those days throughout the school year, producing frequent breaks. Balanced calendars limit long periods of in-session days, as well as longer vacations. The balanced calendar chart below features 180 days of instruction, equal to the instructional days of the traditional calendar. The winter holiday and Thanksgiving break can be the same on both calendars.

Balanced Calendar



APPENDIX F: RAW DATA

May 22 Focus Group
Room 141, Houghton Elementary
3:30 p.m.

Participants:

- MODERATOR
 - TEACHER 1: Grown children attended school outside of the Copper Country.
 - TEACHER 2: Grown children attended school in the Copper Country
 - TEACHER 3: Grown children attended school in the Copper Country
 - TEACHER 4: Two children currently attending school in the Copper Country
 - TEACHER 5: Grown children attended school in the Copper Country
-

MODERATOR: Schools nationwide have adopted year-round calendars for a variety of reasons allowing continuous education with a shorter summer break. What do you know about year-round education?

TEACHER 1: Well, when we lived in CA, my son, I worked in a different school district than where my son went to school, but he went to school at a year-round school. And it worked very nicely there. Particularly, you know, one of the things that made a big difference was that it was Monterrey, California, so the temperature was pretty much the same all year. And so there wasn't a big time when you wanted to be off or not. But it was very nice because 6 weeks is actually a pretty long break for kids in the summer. I mean, I love my whole 3 months off, don't get me wrong, but it was a pretty long break really. I mean, it wasn't like they had not a nice summer vacation. And then they went to school for like 45 days. And then you had a 2 week break, a 2 week vacation.

TEACHER 2: The example here says 15 days.

TEACHER 1: Oh, yeah. And it looks as though they're talking about instructional days. And when they're talking about the breaks are they talking about instructional days, MODERATOR?

MODERATOR: Yes, they are. However, there are many variations of the example I gave to you. There are different year-round calendars.

TEACHER 1: Well, I don't remember exactly what it was. But I know it seemed like he was getting out of school all the time.

TEACHER 2: Three weeks at Christmas would be just wonderful.

TEACHER 1: Yeah. So, the nice thing about it is, you know how you get so burned out, and you get like, so exhausted, it gives you a nice opportunity to just stop and really look at your class and see how and what they're doing, and so I thought that was a nice thing. I

never really felt like I missed the summer that much because I knew that I would be getting another break coming up pretty soon.

TEACHER 3: But the weather there is always summer. The temperature is like what, 75?

TEACHER 1: Yeah. There were problems with it. I mean, people who work have to make arrangements for childcare. So that was...

TEACHER 5: What about teachers, as far as being able to go back to school. How did they work that out? Like a lot of times, I know I took three 6-weeks to go to school in the summer.

TEACHER 1: Yeah. You know, I don't know. Well, the summer break was 6 weeks there but I don't know actually. I don't.

TEACHER 2: Well, the local universities would have to do some calendar adjustments for teachers, for their teaching classes.

TEACHER 1: Yeah, they'd have to offer them during that 30-day break. But you know, a lot of people are taking classes online now and then it doesn't even have to be done at certain times.

TEACHER 4: Or at night. I know I took a lot of my classes at night.

TEACHER 1: Yeah, the ones I took, I took at night. And if they went off the traditional calendar it might be easier to take those night classes because you'd have breaks to work on projects and class stuff.

TEACHER 5: I think that most countries other than our own, actually do have shorter summer break. India has the month of June off.

TEACHER 2: England has the month of August.

TEACHER 5: And then they come back because they have a lot of holidays.

TEACHER 2: They have a lot of holidays in England as well. A lot of times when there's a Friday/Monday weekend.

TEACHER 5: They're just holidays in India. But they have a lot of breaks. They only have the one month off. And they feel it is important because there's more continuity.

TEACHER 2: Yep.

TEACHER 3: After that month, then do they switch grades?

TEACHER 5: In the summer. They switch in the summer then. They start in about the second week of July. Their finals are the end of May. And then they get off.

TEACHER 1: That's what they did in California, too. They went through to summer break and then that was the end of your school year. Then after the summer break of 6 weeks off they'd start back in the next grade.

TEACHER 2: Now here I think we should go through June and have July and part of August as our summer break.

TEACHER 1: Well, and you know I liked it in California but this is a very different climate. And I don't know, I don't know if it would be. It was very, very appreciated there.

TEACHER 2: I wonder where the fall break would be if we were to do this.

TEACHER 1: Good question.

TEACHER 2: Do you have a calendar we can look at? Well, if we were to have July and the first two weeks of August off, then we would have to come back in mid-August. The state says we can't come to school in August.

TEACHER 4: Yes, it is the state law now that we begin after Labor Day.

TEACHER 2: So if we start after Labor Day the fall break would be the first three weeks of October.

TEACHER 5: Hmm.

TEACHER 4: Which isn't too bad.

TEACHER 2: That doesn't give 30 instructional days until Thanksgiving. They'd have to change that law.

TEACHER 5: 6 weeks of school would be 30 days.

MODERATOR: I believe that the example provided works when the school year begins in August.

TEACHER 5: Yeah, because it is probably from a district in a warmer climate.

TEACHER 2: They probably have the last two weeks of June and the month of July off, or something like that, yeah.

TEACHER 3: I know in New Mexico they start in the middle of August.

TEACHER 5: Texas, Oklahoma...they all start the second week of August.

TEACHER 4: Why?

TEACHER 5: I don't know why, because it is hot there. I don't really get it but it really hot in June and they get off after Memorial Day so it must be the heat that...

TEACHER 1: In California, the school tried to go back to traditional and the teachers and parents, primarily the parents, fought to keep the balanced because the parents liked to be able to go on vacation in the winter and not have to pull their kids out. And they felt it was better for the kids. They felt the summer was too long for the kids and they do lose things. And once they got used to it, you know they had done it for awhile, they had already arranged their day care. Their day care was a few weeks in the summer and then it picked up again once school was in session.

TEACHER 2: From my standpoint, we have to start all over after the summer break with my kids.

TEACHER 5: And wouldn't you think that would be the case in first and second grade, too? That they would lose a lot over the summer.

TEACHER 2: Well, LD [learning disabled] kids lose almost everything. We reteach throughout September and October.

TEACHER 3: I went from kindergarten to second grade one year and I thought the second graders were, like geniuses. That was a whole grade level jump for me, though.

TEACHER 4: What do you think the parent support would be for something like that, a change to a balanced calendar, year-round?

TEACHER 3: I don't talk to parents.

TEACHER 4: What do you think? A lot of them complain when we have inservices because they have to find day care. Day care is a big thing. Here they'd have to find it more frequently. I don't have a problem with it because I'm home in the summer. Here they get someone situated for the summer and then they don't have to worry about it for 12 weeks. They get them in a program like GE or something. But what about when you have frequent breaks like this? I'm just thinking I wouldn't have a problem with it because I'd be off. But parents who work the full year...

TEACHER 2: But don't you think three weeks frequently would be easier than once a month, half a day? I would think a day care provider would be willing to say, yeah, I'll take them for three weeks than a once a month half day.

TEACHER 1: I would've anticipated that it would be really unpopular with parents.

TEACHER 4: Year round?

TEACHER 1: Yes, but interestingly enough they loved it. But the reason the school wanted to go back to the traditional calendar was because they found it was more expensive to have the balanced.

TEACHER 2: But was that a multi-track school system?

TEACHER 1: You know, I'm thinking...

TEACHER 5: What do you mean by multi-track?

MODERATOR: Multi-track is where you have three groups of kids on all different year-round schedules and they overlap.

TEACHER 5: You know, I wanted to ask you about that because the school where I went to was like that.

MODERATOR: There is multi-track and single-track. Multi-track is usually what they use in urban areas...

TEACHER 2: So the teachers are there year-round but the kids aren't.

MODERATOR: No, they aren't. They hire teachers for every track. So, a teacher may be on Track A, B, or C, along with the class they are currently teaching.

TEACHER 5: So there are other teachers teaching in your room while you're off. Is that what you're saying? You would share a room? And you may not go back to the same room when you come back after a vacation?

MODERATOR: Right.

TEACHER 5: Because this is what happened in the St. Louis school I was in, in M_____. They had too many kids and this was the only way they could compensate to get all the kids through and I never understood how they could do this, but it must be what they did. It must've been multi-track so they could put more kids into the same building.

TEACHER 1: Now, in California it wasn't like that. It was a single track. But I was trying to figure out how it would be more expensive...

TEACHER 4: To have a balanced?

TEACHER 5: Well, for one thing you are using the building all the time.

TEACHER 4: Yeah, in the summer there's a 12 week break where the building is not used.

TEACHER 1: But wouldn't you close down the building during the two or three-week breaks?

TEACHER 2: I would think not heating the building Thanksgiving break...well, we're heating the building by fall break. And we're still heating in spring...I mean, we're still heating the building now, for heaven's sakes. That seems like there are more days: three, 3-week breaks, which means there would be 48 days where you could turn the heat off. That seems like you could save money right there.

TEACHER 1: Yeah, it seems like it. And I mean, the support staff work per hour, so that wouldn't be different.

TEACHER 5: Are you talking about California?

TEACHER 1: And the school's perception was that it was more expensive.

TEACHER 5: Was it air conditioned?

TEACHER 1: No, no it wasn't.

TEACHER 3: You know, a lot of families up here can't afford to fly their family to go somewhere in the winter. Many families here vacation, go camping, whatever in the summer. That's their vacation. And if you start cutting into that...

TEACHER 1: But the summer is still 6 weeks.

TEACHER 3: But I'm just saying that some people go to their camp the day school gets out and they don't come back until the end of summer. It would be a change for them.

TEACHER 1: Then you start thinking...is there something to do during these breaks?

TEACHER 3: Because let me tell you during spring break when we didn't have the money to go on vacation and it was muddy...last spring I was so grateful I didn't have little kids. Thank you.

TEACHER 2: And this year it snowed, we had a blizzard.

TEACHER 3: I know! It was terrible. And I would've been stuck at home with 5 kids. And you have to remember that somebody is in that position. Spring break was never my favorite when I had little kids.

TEACHER 2: I always hated the fact that the school's spring break was never the same time as Tech's.

TEACHER 5: Oh, me too.

TEACHER 2: So I just took the kids out of school when [my husband] had his break and then I had to find some way to entertain them when they had their break.

MODERATOR: How would you anticipate a year-round calendar impacting students, families, community?

TEACHER 2: I think it is better for students because they forget a lot. Every September you spend time reviewing and then they have to take MEAPs in October.

TEACHER 5: You know, think about how hard it got on the students between Christmas and spring break. I mean, March wasn't too bad in my room this year but in the past it has been just awful. If the kids knew they were getting a break every 45 days, it might be a little easier. I think it would be. I really think we need a break in the middle of February.

TEACHER 1: 45 days is 9 weeks, right? So that would be a break after every marking period.

TEACHER 2: So we'd have 45 days and a marking period. And then 30 days until Thanksgiving and then another 15 days and a marking period. Then 45 days and a marking period. Then another 45 days and then they would be in the next class.

TEACHER 4: Do you think they would transition very well? Coming off the breaks and coming back to school? I've found that after spring break it was horrible. The kids thought they were done. Spring break, they come back, we're done with school. I have kids who have not settled down ever since. So, if you have the balanced calendar would this happen?

TEACHER 2: You'd think that would work. It might happen the first year when they were getting into it, but I don't think they would after that.

TEACHER 3: I'm wondering if the teachers would give a homework assignment over the break, while the kids were on vacation.

TEACHER 1: No, I don't think so.

TEACHER 3: Why would they?

TEACHER 2: I bet in high school, they would. Would they?

TEACHER 3: Well, in summer you're done.

TEACHER 2: I can see the high school teachers giving an assignment. Research...look at all the time they'd have to do a research paper.

TEACHER 3: But that wouldn't be a break.

TEACHER 1: When Greg went to school in California, break was his break.

TEACHER 2: They didn't give homework.

TEACHER 4: We'd have to make that clear.

TEACHER 5: Well, we don't give homework over breaks now. Why would we then?

TEACHER 2: High school teachers give homework over break. My kids always had something over Christmas break. But it was to read a book, or decide what they were going to write a research paper on, or start their research. They always had something to do.

TEACHER 5: Oh, I didn't realize they did that in high school. In college, you do, but...

TEACHER 1: I think the hardest part would be talking people into giving up their summer. I enjoy your summer.

TEACHER 5: And I think what TEACHER 3: brought up is valid. In this community, especially because we have such long winters, many people do have camps and love to live out at the lake.

TEACHER 1: And if teachers were told we're cutting half your summer off, there would be an outcry about that. I can see that would be a problem.

TEACHER 4: Yeah, you pay for your camp all winter long and you want to use it while you're able to, and that's during the summer.

MODERATOR: How do you think this would impact teachers?

TEACHER 2: I think what was mentioned about taking classes in the summer. NMU would have to redo their schedules for that 30 days. Continuing education would be the biggest impact I would see.

TEACHER 5: I just wonder, though, because when I was teaching at MTU Nursery, it was so neat that every 10 weeks I'd have 2 weeks off.

TEACHER 2: That's like Australia. 10 weeks on, 2 weeks off.

TEACHER 5: When I had two weeks off it gave me a chance to clean up my room, freshen it up and everything, and it just seemed like an ideal schedule for me as a teacher. And so I'm wondering if teachers would eventually feel that same way, too, refreshed if they were getting a break.

TEACHER 2: I'm not sure if the MTU Nursery does that anymore now that Tech is on semesters. They were still on terms when you were teaching there.

TEACHER 5: Oh yeah. You're right.

TEACHER 2: I don't know what they're doing now.

TEACHER 5: I don't know whether that would help or not.

MODERATOR: Does anyone have any concerns that they haven't aired yet?

TEACHER 1: I think that if you approached the staff about this and asked them how do you feel about this, I think for the most part they would be resistant.

TEACHER 2: I would think most of them would not want to do it.

TEACHER 3: Hard to know. It would be interesting to see, maybe do a vote. You know, change is...change is...I don't like change, in case you haven't figured that out. But do you know what? When I'm forced into it I usually realize, oh, this is fine.

TEACHER 1: Change is good. It is just scary going into it.

TEACHER 5: I think there are a lot of problems we don't anticipate until we step in.

TEACHER 3: I know that having a longer spring break for people who have children at home, they will be screeching for three weeks in March.

TEACHER 4: But at that time it is still snowing out and they love to play outside.

TEACHER 2: Say we started after the last week in July...that's 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9 and then three weeks off, 1-2-3. No, that doesn't quite work. I thought I had it so it worked.

TEACHER 3: It would be March, April, something like that.

TEACHER 2: 1-2-3-4-5-

TEACHER 5: Maybe in Missouri it would be okay, because it would be warm.

TEACHER 3: Even in Wisconsin it would probably be okay, but not here.

TEACHER 5: And maybe even southern Michigan.

TEACHER 1: You know, if we had a good winter with snow, a lot of people up here would be downhill skiing.

TEACHER 3: That's okay at Christmas, then it isn't a problem. But three weeks in the spring?

TEACHER 5: If it is yucky weather, it wouldn't be fun.

TEACHER 2: 5-6-7-8-9. That's it. The first three weeks of March. For the 2006-2007 school year it would've been March 5th through the 23rd.

TEACHER 1: It is still cold then.

TEACHER 3: It's freezing.

TEACHER 1: Yeah, but I mean the snow...

TEACHER 5: But the snow is pretty decent.

TEACHER 1: It's not ugly yet.

TEACHER 2: 1-2-3-4-5...

TEACHER 1: The skiing would be good.

TEACHER 5: Yeah, usually some of the best skiing I've done is in March.

TEACHER 3: But that's cross-country. You can usually cross-country ski until the end of March.

TEACHER 1: A lot of families cross-country ski.

TEACHER 2: 6-7-8-9...that takes us until the 9th of July...that can't be right...

TEACHER 3: I think it is clear what my opinion is...I look at this and I just think yuck.

TEACHER 1: I have to say I'm not nuts about losing my summer.

TEACHER 3: You know what, though? I'm thinking that by August 10 I'm ready to start school. And basically a lot of us are here.

TEACHER 4: But the weather is just getting perfect at that time. Even if we adjusted it so we get out later and we start later. Still September it's 80 degrees out some days.

TEACHER 3: September is usually nicer than June.

TEACHER 4: It has been. June is not a good month.

TEACHER 3: One thing, is that here you can't really depend on the weather.

TEACHER 5: Yeah, it is 75 one day and 32 the next.

TEACHER 3: You know how when the weather is bad we have snow days? I've often wondered if when the weather is nice we could have a day off.

TEACHER 2: A sun day.

TEACHER 4: Now that would be fun.

TEACHER 3: Even just once.

MODERATOR: If we were implementing year-round education, is there anything that makes you excited?

TEACHER 2: Not having to reteach everything in September.

TEACHER 1: Breaks in the winter.

TEACHER 5: Knowing that it isn't endless, knowing you'll have a break coming up.

TEACHER 4: Yeah, knowing you've got breaks more often.

TEACHER 2: I like that 15 day fall break.

TEACHER 3: How many days of learning do we have between Christmas and spring break?

TEACHER 5: 55 days here on the example.

TEACHER 2: This year we had 63 of class.

TEACHER 2: Somehow the 75 days from the beginning to Thanksgiving doesn't feel as long.

TEACHER 4: No, because we're refreshed from summer. The kids are still anxious to learn.

TEACHER 1: So we had 65 days...no, 63...on the year-round calendar we'd be almost a month earlier getting a break. Right when we needed it.

TEACHER 4: Mmm-hmmm.

TEACHER 5: At the beginning of March is when I really started losing them.

TEACHER 2: No, we didn't go 75 days until Thanksgiving this year. 58, because we start after Labor Day.

MODERATOR: Is there anything that we haven't talked about that you would like to say?

TEACHER 2: I think that it's a great idea and if [the superintendent] could ever figure out that it would save him some money, he won't ask anybody.

TEACHER 4: The money crunch.

TEACHER 2: If he thinks it would save him money, we'll do it.

TEACHER 5: But will it save us money?

TEACHER 2: I don't know.

TEACHER 5: I'm not sure that it would.

TEACHER 2: You'd have to figure it out.

TEACHER 1: I don't know, though...what about the support staff?

TEACHER 2: They work the month of June, and then they lay them off for the months of July and August. On the year-round calendar they wouldn't be able to lay them off for those 3 week periods.

TEACHER 1: But why would they have them here if the kids aren't here?

TEACHER 4: Cleaning the building.

TEACHER 1: Every 45 days? Well, maybe the building could use the cleaning more often, but I think they would shut the doors except during the summer for deep-cleaning. I didn't realize that with the aides, we'd talked about going to a 4-day work instead of a 5-day week, and that would save the school a lot of money because they'd be paying the aides for fewer days.

TEACHER 2: On this [year-round] calendar, it is still 180 days, and they would still be paid the same. They get paid by their hours, and we'd still be working the same number of hours.

TEACHER 1: But you know where it hurts them is before school, after school, and that kind of stuff. And that changes it. That's different. So you know, that actually would save the school a lot of money.

TEACHER 3: Four days, but going an hour longer.

TEACHER 1: No, it is something like 7 minutes a day.

TEACHER 5: Baraga and L'Anse are now getting out before Memorial Day because of that.

TEACHER 3: They aren't doing 180 days anymore, they are going by hours.

TEACHER 4: They do 170 days.

TEACHER 2: But we aren't doing 180 days this year, either. I've kept a careful count and we're on day 169 now and we do not have 11 days left.

TEACHER 3: We have 10 days.

TEACHER 1: So do Baraga and L'Anse have a four day week then?

TEACHER 4: No, they just added a few minutes to the beginning and end of their day.

TEACHER 1: Back to the 4 day week. I had only thought about how it could save the school money, but when it was brought up the aides knew. The aides knew it would be coming from their pockets.

TEACHER 2: Because they're hourly.

TEACHER 1: Would a calendar like this impact them?

TEACHER 2: I don't see why if it is the same number of days. Now if we went to a longer school day, like now we have 7.75 hour day. If we went to an 8 hour day and a 4 day week, that would make 32 hours a week. Right now we're 7.75 for 5 days, which comes out to 77.5 for two weeks.

TEACHER 3: I don't get it. How would the L'Anse/Baraga when we are going more hours if they get paid more by going 5 days...why aren't we getting out early?

TEACHER 2: More hours. Because they are going for a longer school day.

TEACHER 4: That's a whole other calendar.

TEACHER 3: But it's like 14 minutes.

TEACHER 1: They do a longer school day, but a shorter year. They have fewer days. They don't do the 4 days.

TEACHER 5: Now it's on time, it's not by days.

TEACHER 2: They do 5 days, and they do a longer school day.

TEACHER 5: Then they get out earlier at the end of the school year.

TEACHER 2: They go by contact time, as opposed to the 180 days.

TEACHER 5: So they've been getting out early for quite a few years now.

TEACHER 3: I think we should be out the day after Memorial Day the way it's going now. But if we had year-round school that wouldn't matter.

TEACHER 2: As soon as we get out of school, the weather is going to go down the crapper.

MODERATOR: Thank you for coming and sharing your ideas. I really appreciate your support. I hope you will have more snacks before you go.

May 23 Focus Group
Room 141, Houghton Elementary
5:00 p.m.

Participants:

- MODERATOR
 - PARENT 1: Two children currently attending school in the Copper Country
 - PARENT 2: Two children currently attending school in the Copper Country
 - TEACHER 6: Grown children attended school in the Copper Country
 - COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: Grown children attended school in the Copper Country
-

MODERATOR: Schools nationwide have adopted year-round calendars for a variety of reasons allowing continuous education with a shorter summer break. What do you know about year-round education?

PARENT 1: I know it is typical of what is done in Europe. I think Germany has a calendar very similar to the balanced calendar. I guess the nice thing there is you have more breaks during the school year. Of course it is harder to take a long summer vacation.

PARENT 2: I don't really know anything about it.

TEACHER 6: I associate year-round education with not having enough facilities and it helps to have more kids in the school, logistics and everything. That's what I associate with year-round school. Fewer buildings, too many kids to teach, utilize the building all year round. That's my thought process.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: I feel the same way. Another thing I associate with it is more of a constant exposure to learning so there is no longer interim breaks between learning experiences. I think that would be notorious if you were a teacher or an educator. I think you'd be met with more success.

MODERATOR: What are some issues you could see surfacing, perhaps negative issues, if a local school were to adopt a year-round calendar?

TEACHER 6: Cost.

PARENT 2: That would be the first thing I would think about. The cost of keeping the school open year-round.

TEACHER 6: I think that there are, what I've understood and I may not understand correctly, is there are plusses to utilizing a building all year round because it is a building, let's use it. But at the same time you're employing people year-round and right now

we're going to outsourcing. Not outsourcing...now, what is it? You know, you don't hire unionized employees. You hire them from an outside corporation. What's that called?

PARENT 2: Isn't it outsourcing?

TEACHER 6: Is it outsourcing? Is that what it's called?

COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: Outsourcing.

TEACHER 6: OK, outsourcing. You're outsourcing. I would think that would be very expensive. You would have to hire bus drivers all year round as opposed to being a nine month employee. Cleaning...they probably don't hire cleaners in the summertime because the building isn't used as much. Where, to me, if you were using it year-round the upkeep of a building when busses are being used, to me that would be an added cost factor. But I don't know if it is, it is just what I think it might be.

PARENT 1: One concern I would have is in the summertime the temperature in the buildings, because we don't have air conditioning, it might possibly become unbearable in the buildings in the summer.

TEACHER 6: And I think that in this community we would be competing with Tech and their breaks and you wouldn't have...our times off sometimes coincide with theirs, where if you're going to school all year round and you've got professors or you've got parents who are students, and they've got the summer off and they've got two weeks here and we don't, to me that would be a nightmare in the sense of how many kids are going to be coming to school. But, I don't know again if that would necessarily be a huge factor, but to me competing with the calendar at Michigan Tech could cause problems.

PARENT 2: It already causes problems when their spring break doesn't match ours.

TEACHER 6: It does. But you've got students who are parents, or parents who are students, and they finish in May. Well, I'm leaving, I'm going somewhere. And it's like whoa, but wait a minute, your child is not done with their school year. Can we plan on your child coming back in June or July? But I don't truly understand how the whole calendar works.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: Well, I think you have sort of an innate down side, too, and that is sort of an outreach training people up to snuff to even accept this kind of scheduling. I think any change is usually met with some kind of resistance. And you might find the biggest hurdle you might encounter is just change.

MODERATOR: Why would a local school want to adopt a year-round calendar? What would be a positive aspect of change?

TEACHER 6: I think what COMMUNITY MEMBER 1 said that the time from the end of the traditional school year to picking up classes in September there is a period of time

where you have to review and I would think that would lessen if it was a constant sort of thing with more breaks but the breaks are shorter, so the continuum would be more cohesive. But other than that...

PARENT 1: I think one very good advantage is, probably more so for the older students, where you really get burned out before Christmas comes or by the time summer comes because you haven't really had a break. I think having a 15 day break three times during the year would just be really nice. To be able to take off, possibly with your parents if they are lucky enough to have vacation at the same time you do, and then be able to just get a complete break from school. One thing that I know in Europe, where they have this balanced calendar, is that parents often get 6 weeks of vacation and so families will often go for vacations during each of those breaks. Whereas, if you have someone who only has 2 weeks of vacation during the year, this benefit won't be there.

MODERATOR: What would you anticipate to be a big impact for families, besides the vacation that was mentioned? What else could be a positive or negative impact for families?

PARENT 2: Well, if you have two working parents it could make a big difference. For instance, during the summer, with two working parents, they need to find someplace for their kids to be. If the kids are in school during the summer, this would lift the burden from the parents of finding a place for their kids to be and their child would be doing something educational rather than just being in daycare.

TEACHER 6: What about finding daycare up here? I mean, if you've got many, many breaks as shown on this balanced calendar and your child needs daycare, it would be tough to find daycare for the little ones, kindergarteners and first graders, if mom and dad do have a traditional type of job where you get 2 or 3, 4 weeks off a year, they don't follow this balanced calendar. To me it would be extremely hard to find daycare for this many days with the number of day care centers we have. We have limited resources there, I believe, but I'm not a parent, so I don't know the problems. But I would think it would be a problem around here.

PARENT 1: It seems like in the summertime people have figured out how to do the daycare and they're all set up. The school systems currently have summer programs. I would think that if a school was to adopt a balanced calendar part of the burden might fall upon the school system, like some form of daycare for the younger kids during those breaks. Because if now the school has the summer program, basically it is for grade school students, so if they were to institute the same program during the shorter breaks that might get rid of a lot of problems for parents.

MODERATOR: Do you think it would be easier to secure daycare for the summer or for several three week breaks during the school year?

PARENT 1: If it is provided through a school system, like Head Start, then it doesn't make a difference. If there aren't enough Head Start spaces, then it might be a problem. I

think in the summertime people have figured out how to do it. I think if the system changes I would think it would take awhile for people to adjust. I assume that parents who are faculty or both parents are faculty in this community [Michigan Tech University faculty], the traditional calendar serves them well because the parents are all off during the summer vacation of the children. Whereas, with the balanced calendar, if Tech stays the same, then all the faculty will be scrambling.

TEACHER 6: And the cost. If we were to go to BHK [Head Start], who's to say they can afford it?

PARENT 1: Faculty most likely could. It would be the lower-income families who might have a problem. Because if you have school-working faculty members I would think paying for daycare would be difficult.

TEACHER 6: No, but I think that in this community we have a lot of people who are not Tech [employees] as well. I'm looking at other districts, too, and that would be very difficult for them to pay for daycare during the 15 days and BHK seems to be pretty strapped right now, financially, and its like how could they afford to stretch out a program for the balanced calendar? Can it be done? I'm sure it probably can be. But, to me, that could be a possible problem.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: Well, you know we can talk about daycare and other things, but if you think about a bigger picture, you know, you are going to look at changes in the food service program, the bussing program, daycare is what we've discussed, vacation periods. You know, you're looking across the boards at change in our community and how people do things. I mean, it is an overall change. It isn't just daycare, you know. It goes into all sorts of stuff, many facets.

MODERATOR: Can we talk about some of those things you think would be impacted?

COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: Sure. I guess. Well, how about food service? All of sudden you have year-round food service. What does that mean? Does that mean more cost? I think it seems like you'd have more people there and for longer periods, probably. I think it gets back to a lot of cost ramifications for these changes. You may be more effectively teaching, but you are also keeping that building illuminated during the course of the year longer and you have more staff there to keep it clean and open and functioning. I think it really pivots around cost. You could focus on man hours or day length. You name it. More food...there are all kinds of things you could think about.

PARENT 1: It seems like the number of vacation days and the number of work days is identical. So the question is, can you get the people who do the work, the teachers, the custodians, the food service people, to accept the same salary working year-round with the vacations evenly spread instead of working nine months with the long summer? If the people are using the summers as vacation, it may not matter much. But if the people are using their summers for other jobs, then it may matter a great deal.

PARENT 2: It is true that some people [school employees] work other jobs during the summer. So this calendar could affect that kind of thing.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: And what does the state have to say? Does the state mandate contact time or number of hours? The state law would...you'd have to stay within those parameters of course. Now, to come down on you and say it's bad to exceed that, I'm sure, I'm sure you have to weigh that as well.

PARENT 1: But if the number of hours is identical, which they seem to be, then you wouldn't think the state would care. So the one great advantage of the balanced calendar, I think, would just be the sense of more balance in the school year for the kids. Not getting bored by the end of the summer, not knowing what to do, but each vacation is a vacation that you're really looking forward to and by the end of it you're still not tired of it. I think with the shorter vacations you'd really be eager for every one of them. And even the 30 days off [in the summer], I think would add up to 6 weeks, and even with 6 weeks off, by that time I don't think the kids would be bored to tears or up to their ears in trouble, for the teenagers. So there may be benefits to kids, especially the older kids when they aren't in daycare. My kids aren't there yet, and I'm not a working mom, but the people who are working moms who have teenagers on their own all summer long, the balanced calendar may be a great benefit because after 6 weeks, they may be at sports camp or this or that and it may be reasonably easy to find activities to keep them busy for 6 weeks. Whereas now, I don't know that people can find activities to keep them busy for all 3 months of summer vacation. So, in addition to giving you breaks during the school calendar, it may have a benefit for the kids where it is more balanced. There are not periods of great boredom or periods of great stress, but just more even.

TEACHER 6: I guess we hear a lot about cost of running the buildings and so forth and so on, and I guess I look at this balanced calendar and when you're using a building all year round, your utilities have to be considerably higher than if you...you'd have to air condition, I mean, I don't know how you could possibly not. These buildings, I don't think are constructed, at least the older part of the building is not constructed, to have air conditioning put in so if you did it would be very costly. So I'm thinking, what does that do to the budget? How much does that take out of it? To me, it would be very costly to implement. Maybe in the long run it would work, but the initial cost would cause the budget to skyrocket.

PARENT 1: Would the cost, other than the air conditioning, be terribly different? Because in the [break] times, the 15 day vacation periods during the winter, you could turn the heat down and you could drop all the utility costs during those periods, which are typically heating periods. And so the air conditioning time in the summer would be additional, but you may actually save during the school year because you would only pay for the building when it is used and the use would be identical.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: So what you're saying is the retrofitting of the buildings with air conditioning might be a wash in costs after a while.

PARENT 1: It could be.

TEACHER 6: Yes, it could.

PARENT 1: I don't know how air conditioning compares to heating in cost up here.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: I don't air condition.

MODERATOR: You've talked about how this would impact students, families, and the community; what about teachers?

TEACHER 6: For myself, I think we'd have to go back to what COMMUNITY MEMBER 1 said, the comment that COMMUNITY MEMBER 1 made, it is just changing a mindset. Something that we would have to get accustomed to is a new calendar, and having never experienced it, I really don't know the impact it would have on my personal life and how I view things. It is certainly a different mindset that I would have to take. Would it be more positive after I had experienced it? I may find out this is great! I can't foresee any serious problems and yet I haven't experienced it. And yet is a matter of getting used to something very, very different.

PARENT 2: I agree. It would just take some getting used to. But it can be something that teachers may come to like. They would just have to think differently, and not focus on that big summer break, instead focus on the shorter breaks.

TEACHER 6: I said this before, but one thing we are competing against is Tech's calendar. And when Tech is on Thanksgiving break, now that they are on semesters, it is not uncommon for me the whole week before Thanksgiving I've lost 3-4 kids. And if their Christmas break doesn't follow ours, I've lost 3-4 kids because they've gone home or whatever. And so as a teacher I would be concerned about how this balanced calendar is going to compete with Michigan Tech's schedule. Losing 3-5 kids, you pretty much put the brakes on, especially in the middle of the year because there is so much instruction going on. So I think Tech is a big influence on the traditional calendar. Can it be worked around? Maybe. But right now I would find that to be a real problem being an instructor and having 5 kids gone during our 45 days of learning while Tech's on break. Well, I've lost those kids. So I think we'd have to talk to Tech and how do they view a balanced calendar.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: I'm going to be a devil's advocate and move over a little bit over here. One of the basic concepts, if you're going to go into teaching, is that you say I'm going to... I'm not going to make a lot of money, I have sort of an altruistic bent about me, I'm going to teach kids, I'm going to better society, and all the altruistic things that teachers need to have. But part of the game is that they think they have a trade-off. They have the summers off. I don't want to use the word off too loudly because people are now forced to go back and have continuing credits. But that is one of the big trade-offs for the profession. I'm not going to make as much money but I have my summers, a good chunk of my summer, off. So I can go off with my family somewhere, we can

vacation, go to Europe, whatever we want, for an extended period of time. That's one of the benefits that you as a teacher on a conventional, traditional system have. Now if you removed that and you don't have a big block of time would it be harder, I'm just saying the devil's advocate, would it be harder, would you have to pay people more, would you have to offer other incentives to get people to join the profession?

PARENT 2: I think so.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: I think so, too.

PARENT 2: I think, yes, because the way teachers are going to view it is now you're asking me to work year round, and I want more money.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: Even though it is the same contact time, the same number of hours of instruction.

PARENT 2: I think so.

PARENT 1: Not being a teacher, but having thought about the benefits of having that as your job, I would think one of the biggest advantages is that your times off are the same times off as your kids. So if the children are off of school, you're off of school. Now with the traditional calendar or the balanced calendar, it is not so crucial. But if only 2-3 school systems adopt the balanced calendar and the other ones don't, then that would wreck havoc. Because the reason so many moms pick teaching, in my view, is so that they have their time with the kids when the kids are home. I think that's one of the reasons women sign up to be a teacher. Now say Chassell and Houghton went to balanced calendars but Calumet and E. B. Holman did not, you might teach in E. B. Holman and your kids go to Houghton. Then you've just ruined your life, you know. I mean, now you've got to scramble to find days off with your kids. In order for this to really work for teachers, I think a lot of school districts in the area would have to agree to do it at the same time and on the same schedule.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: Probably even Michigan Tech. Maybe they could orient their breaks a little differently instead of on the conventional system. I mean, with Tech professors, instead of the traditional calendar, if they could somehow work around that a little bit. Have a little bit, that would help, too.

TEACHER 6: I think because we have so many districts in this community, you brought up something, PARENT 1, that I'm not sure how many programs we share in our district with other school districts, but everybody would have to be on the same page. I mean, you could not have Chassell saying we're opting for the traditional and Houghton opting for the balanced because if we're sharing any programs with other school districts that's no longer an advantage and in these remote areas sometimes that's the only way we can have a program is if we share it with Hancock, long distance or whatever, so everybody needs to be on the same page, and I think even trying to get a calendar among all of these school districts is difficult in the sense of a traditional one. You know, they want to start

before Labor Day, though legally that is no longer an issue. We want to have a mid-spring break or mid-winter break, we want to be out by the end of May. Even locally this is a nightmare for superintendents and principals because some districts are marching to their own tune. And right now they're allowed to do that because there isn't a balanced calendar. They just put in their x-amount of hours in x-amount of days, the union agrees, and they can have whatever calendar they want. But it would have to be a matter of every district saying we opt for a balanced calendar. If one district doesn't want to do it, you've lost your shared programs, or they could not share it with you, obviously.

PARENT 2: This would really affect the high school. Especially with their career-tech program through the CCISD and dual-enrollment with Michigan Tech...

PARENT 1: You're right. The dual-enrollment would be affected.

TEACHER 6: So this could have serious consequences if every school district is not moving to a balanced calendar.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: How many seniors go? I know they go in the morning...how many seniors are there participating in these programs?

PARENT 2: For career-tech?

COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: You might see 30-40 students participating in those programs?

PARENT 2: Yes. It is offered to juniors and seniors.

PARENT 1: And there are a lot of kids who take advanced math courses at Tech so that would be very difficult to do with the balanced calendar. And I don't think that Tech would be in the least willing to change their calendar because their goal is to get kids in summer internships. And they want the longest possible, they seem to be stretching their summers longer and longer, and cutting their year length shorter and shorter, to give the students the maximum number of hours for their internship possible. And their school year stops so soon in the spring because if your students aren't ready to begin their internship by a certain date, the internship will be swiped up by someone who can begin earlier. And so I can't imagine them, Tech, changing their calendar.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: Well, if you've been to Career Days, that's a big deal. A third of the kids, two thirds of the kids standing in line (I represent [a government agency] there) I'd say two thirds of the kids standing there are interested in internships versus permanent, full-time positions. You're competing against General Motors, and anybody else. These kids are getting out at a certain time and they're weighing how long they can have some kind of summer experience and we lose a lot of them to earlier positions in the Forest Service and everything else because we might start 2-3 weeks later.

TEACHER 6: So we think we have to consider these programs.

PARENT 2: We also have shared programs. Sometimes our high school offers a class that Hancock doesn't offer, so the kids come over for the class. Or we send kids to Hancock to take a course we don't offer. How would distance learning work?

TEACHER 6: That would definitely cause problems.

MODERATOR: Do you have any other concerns or thoughts, anything we haven't talked about, that you really want to say about the year-round calendar?

TEACHER 6: Is there a feeling about how the state department of education views year-round education? Are they trying to, down in Lansing, are they trying to force or to encourage year-round schools in the state? Is there a feel for what the state department is doing?

MODERATOR: I'm not sure what the state department is doing, but I do know there are year-round schools in Michigan.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 1: Why is there such a preponderous number in California, let's say? Because of the overwhelming numbers and they have you go year-round to take advantage of their facilities? Why so many out there? Why do they choose to do it.

TEACHER 6: I don't think she can tell us, and we respect that.

MODERATOR: Anything else?

PARENT 2: I'm just thinking that with the balanced calendar it would really affect high school kids. If they work in the summer, they take summer jobs, how that is going to affect them being employed in the summer if they have shorter summer breaks? And that could affect a lot of businesses in the community who depend on summer workers.

TEACHER 6: It almost goes back to the farmers needing the extra hands in the fields. But here it is working in a restaurant.

PARENT 1: But in a way I think the purpose of school is to learn, not to be making money when you're in high school. So I think...

PARENT 2: Some kids need the extra money to help their families.

PARENT 1: The families need the high school students' earnings?

PARENT 2: Sometimes they need that extra money.

TEACHER 6: Look at just by us starting after Labor Day. Look at what the tourism industry had the power to say you're starting school after Labor Day because we need the kids to work in Copper Harbor, we need kids to work in these tourist areas...

PARENT 1: I thought it was so families would go on vacation.

PARENT 2: No, it was the tourism board.

PARENT 1: That decision was based upon child labor?

TEACHER 6: I think so. I think they wanted to keep the kids working in Copper Harbor and the touristy areas and they pushed for it. You know, PARENT 2, you brought up a good point. How would a business view a balanced calendar? You would lose a lot of cheap labor, and I don't think that they would be happy about that.

PARENT 1: I guess it works because if you moved to a place that has a year-round calendar, you would adjust. So, you would just go with the flow. It's just when you have to make a change, and everybody makes a change, that people get all up in arms. But I guess the big thing to do would be to ask those communities that have gone and made the change, has this been beneficial? What problems did this cause? I think that would be what to do.

TEACHER 6: But you'd have to find communities that share your type of standard of living, and what is the trade that keeps your community viable? Well, for us it is tourism. Without tourism and Tech...they are both very influential. And so you have to take in not just your school community and how the decisions would affect them, but also the greater community. Copper Harbor, and how does it affect Tech...whereas, in other places that might not be a problem. I think tourism is really what generates money for this community so we need to be sensitive to what their needs are, too.

MODERATOR: Thank you so much for coming. I appreciate your input and comments. Thank you for assisting me with my research. I hope you will enjoy some more snacks before you go.

May 24 Focus Group
Room 141, Houghton Elementary
5:00 p.m.

Participants:

- MODERATOR
 - PARENT 3: One child currently attending school in the Copper Country
 - PARENT 4: Two children currently attending school in the Copper Country, and two children approaching school age
 - TEACHER 7: Three children currently attending school in the Copper Country
 - COMMUNITY MEMBER 2: Grown children attended school in the Copper Country
-

MODERATOR: Schools nationwide have adopted year-round calendars for a variety of reasons allowing continuous education with a shorter summer break. What do you know about year-round education?

TEACHER 7: Not much.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 2: Not much at all. This is the first time that I realized that year-round education didn't mean more days of school.

PARENT 3: What was the question again?

MODERATOR: I'm just wondering what your prior knowledge is of year-round education.

PARENT 3: I know it is quite common in other countries and those countries are actually much further ahead of us in education, in educating their kids. It seems to be more efficient, the kids seem to be able to advance further without that large summer break, and actually I think they usually have a smaller summer break. This is probably a pretty long one relative to some of the countries that have year-round education. And you know, I know that we did the summer vacation thing because we were an agricultural-based country. Well, that hasn't been true for 50 years and we seemed to not have moved forward in that 50 years.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 2: One thing, because I just graduated in 2004 with my elementary ed degree, and in learning about things, because it was discussed when we were in school, you know, year round education and stuff. In Europe it is not, education isn't really the same as it is here. We are expected to teach all children. They don't. As early as 6th or 7th grade, they take tests to see what their aptitude is. So they're put into something that goes higher or into a trade-type job, and they don't really teach to all the students.

PARENT 3: Right, it isn't the one-size-fits-all education system which serves no one. But that's a whole other topic for discussion.

MODERATOR: PARENT 4, did you have any prior knowledge?

PARENT 4: I did have some prior knowledge. My brother is from California and all his children were in a year-round system there and it seemed to really work well. They were all very good students and they didn't have those few weeks of you know, get back into the swing of school, and learn the things you may have forgotten from the previous year. So, instead of wasting those weeks of review, they were able to just keep going.

TEACHER 7: And my children are beyond sitters, but I'm just wondering how that would work out with parents and babysitters, you know, with year-round school. I don't know if it would make it easier or if it would make it harder. That would be something to look into, too.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 2: And if most of the schools were generally the same calendar, it would be like, okay we need daycare for this 6 weeks and that 3 weeks. And you wonder, too, with high school students. I mean, a lot of them work all the time, like 10 hours a week. But some only work during the summer. And I think a lot of it is that nobody likes change. They just want to do it the way it was.

MODERATOR: Some issues were already raised about childcare or high school aged students working summer jobs, so what other issues do you think might be problems if schools around here were going to consider year-round education?

TEACHER 7: The cost of air conditioning for schools, because going through the summer, we cannot go like we've been in 80 degree heat. It is too much. The cost of putting air conditioning into the schools is a big issue.

PARENT 3: No one performs well in such warm temperatures.

TEACHER 7: No. And around here because of the area, the summers are when people want to be out and doing things and having school during that time is harder, you know. The kids shut down, the parents shut down.

PARENT 4: Although maybe with more breaks they may not get that way. It might not be that bad.

TEACHER 7: Although having the breaks during the winter...

COMMUNITY MEMBER 2: Not everyone can afford to go somewhere. You know, like during the winter, you may not be able to afford to go somewhere warm or whatever. Whereas in the summertime it is easier to hang out in the yard, or go to the local park, to the lakehouse.

PARENT 3: In the winter you could always go skiing or snowshoeing...

PARENT 4: As a school of choice parent, I would really like three weeks of the winter that I don't have to drive the kids in. That would be just thrilling not to have to go out in the cold and do that.

TEACHER 7: That is true

MODERATOR: Can you think of any other negative issues associated with year-round education?

TEACHER 7: Working during the summer.

PARENT 3: I work in the summer all the time.

TEACHER 7: I know you do. But that is something teachers have gotten used to. And it is hard for them to change.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 2: And a lot of teachers take their continuing education credits during the summer.

TEACHER 7: That's true.

PARENT 3: Yeah, but with online courses and stuff that is so easy now to do.

TEACHER 7: Not when you're working full time and you have a family.

PARENT 3: Yeah, I've done it. I've worked and gone to school. I've done all my homework at 2:00 in the morning...

TEACHER 7: That works for some people, but not all.

PARENT 3: You can do it if you really want to. And those online courses, you can find classes that are really flexible that have open-ended enrollments.

MODERATOR: I heard a couple topics come up that were positive. I know PARENT 4 mentioned not driving for three weeks in the winter, and summer learning loss was something else I picked up on. I'm wondering what other positive issues you suspect could surface as a result of year-round education.

PARENT 3: Well, I think of the summer learning loss as a big piece of what you would gain. I have a son that has a learning disability and I notice that in the summer he might retain more of the things he doesn't have a problem with, but in that area where he has a problem, we lose a lot because that muscle needs to be worked every day. It is like physical therapy. You can't take three months off and then expect to walk back in and be in the same place. It just isn't going to happen.

TEACHER 7: Coming from the standpoint also as a parent, there are things you can do as a parent to help your child not lose as much, knowing that that happens. Um, I've had to do that with my son. He's a slow reader and I've had to make sure he read and did all kinds of things during the summer.

PARENT 3: Well, I've had him tutored, I've had him you know...I've spent a fortune, believe me. It isn't that I'm not doing those things. But the school piece happening, it would just do him a lot better to have a consistent program.

MODERATOR: Besides the summer learning loss, how else do you think year-round education would impact students?

TEACHER 7: I worry about burn-out with kids going all year. I truly do. But we're starting children in school at a much younger age and having it continuous, I worry about burnout by high school years and the dropout rate.

PARENT 3: Well, I think the dropout rate is from the school system disenfranchising groups of students with the one-size-fits-all education. I think that's where the dropout rate comes from. You folks probably realize that more than I do. That you can't make, you know, 30 kids in the classroom happy and put them in a situation where they're going to learn effectively. Some are going to be bored, some aren't going to get it, and you're going to lose people because of that. That, I think, is the biggest cause of the dropout rate.

TEACHER 7: That definitely is a cause, but I do worry about burnout, and I'm not sure this would. It's just something I think should be looked at.

PARENT 3: If you could deliver a curriculum at a person's learning level and pace it, the burnout wouldn't be there. It all has to be gauged. With the differences in students and this one-size-fits-all stuff, it is a problem. I mean, look at Detroit. They're graduating 40% of their students on time, 40%. Something's got to happen. Now it's not, I don't think that's burnout. I think there's a lot more going on there, and it has to do with their social structures in their homes and all the obstacles that are in the way of them learning and getting to school. But I think there is a lot bigger problems, and in fact I think summer vacation can actually add to that because the students see summer vacation as: see what I could have if I didn't go to school, I could have all this time off. And they don't get the consequences until they're in prison somewhere. It is just the way that they aren't mature enough to understand it. I think there are other contributing factors that are much more significant to the burnout rate than time spent in school.

PARENT 4: Just from my experience with my kids, they are...that last month of summer is very difficult because they're bored, they're at each other's throats, they need to be back in school.

PARENT 3: Parents say, I can't wait for school to start, I can't wait. My kid is driving me crazy. You can only be...you have to be a social director.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 2: Well, for me now, I grew up on a dairy and beef farm. I was never bored during the summer. I missed school right away because I lived out in the country so I didn't get to see my friends. But even for my own children, they weren't ever really bored. They always had something to do. My parents still had the family farm, we had a vegetable garden, they had to go and weed, and they had a lot of jobs to do. So I think a lot of times now if they're in households where one or both parents work, they have a lot of time on their hands. They aren't always doing something constructive, so it is easy for them to become bored.

PARENT 4: I keep my kids real active, but it is a personality thing in our household. There are four kids, and they are all so different. They are at each other's throats.

PARENT 3: Yeah. Well, they're kids. They're siblings. That is going to happen.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 2: Like my four, they fought, and then they had to sit in the chair and they had to put their arms around one another. One time I even sewed their shorts together and made them wear them for the day. And it was, like, you know...we all have to learn to get along with other people.

PARENT 3: My mom would sit us in opposite ends of the room and we had to look at each other. That was another one of her punishments when we were mad at each other.

MODERATOR: You've talked about how this calendar could impact students and families, what about our community?

PARENT 3: Well, I've seen, I remember coming home from a business trip one summer and pulling in, I came into that midnight flight, and I had to run into Econo to grab something on the way home. And I couldn't believe the number of students in that parking lot. You know, the kids in that parking lot. There were 40-50 cars with teenagers in them. This was at like 2 a.m.

TEACHER 7: On a weekend?

PARENT 3: No, during the week in the summer. And so I think you might have less problems with kids getting into things if they didn't have as much time on their hands.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 2: One of the things, too, because of our area, a lot of things in the summer focus on tourism. I mean, we're developing it more so that it is more year-round. Summer, I think, is where we get the bulk of tourists coming in. Local businesses depend on local students for their job force and I think that it may be tough for them. In other states or you've got people who don't have kids who are coming to vacation, whether we'd be able to address the tourism issue adequately or not, I don't know.

TEACHER 7: Because they did have the problem...that's why we now start after Labor Day because of tourism. Isn't that right?

PARENT 3: Well, they wanted the kids to be able to travel with their parents on Labor Day. That was the issue. They wanted the tourist dollars. This year they won't be able to afford the gas, so we aren't going anywhere. We're staying at home.

TEACHER 7: I think the issue with the area...

PARENT 3: That was a statewide mandate and one of the reasons that they did this is because the state has suffered from an economic decline. We have no diversity in our economy, in our industrial base, and you know we're not making up for it with tourism. We need to do something about that. That's a bigger problem than a Labor Day vacation.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 2: I think Michigan needs to be more business friendly, too.

PARENT 3: Oh, absolutely.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 2: There needs to be different taxes that business is encouraged.

PARENT 3: It has slowly gotten worse. And this year will be worse than last year because Wisconsin is growing in leaps and bounds and we're declining. And it is because they have a varied medium-sized business. They're medium-sized business friendly, and that is the largest growing sector of businesses.

MODERATOR: So what about teachers?

PARENT 3: You guys are working the same days....

MODERATOR: You had mentioned before that continuing education may be a possible conflict. How else do you think year-round education would impact teachers?

TEACHER 7: Some teachers, not all, have summer jobs. They work another job in the summer, and that would be harder for them to do.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 2: Plus, you know...I haven't had the opportunity to have my own classroom yet, so I don't know for sure...as far as recharging your batteries and getting yourself planned, you know, planning out what you are going to do for the next year. A lot of teachers use a good part of the summer to plan and coming up with what they're going to do for next year.

PARENT 3: It seems like you would probably do that a quarter at a time with this calendar.

TEACHER 7: But that's hard to do. Summers you can do it because it is coming up. The fall break I'm not going to be thinking about the next fall.

PARENT 3: No, I'm saying you'd probably be thinking about the next quarter. At fall break, you'd be thinking about the winter quarter and really working out what you're going to do there.

TEACHER 7: I think, this part isn't very nice, but this calendar may get rid of some older teachers that may need to go.

PARENT 3: There's some reality in that!

MODERATOR: You'd mentioned before about the schools being impacted by needing air conditioning. What else do you think would be an impact?

PARENT 3: Well, you'd gain three weeks of snow plowing in the winter! That would be a plus.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 2: Although they pretty much keep the school plowed out during the day, even on vacation. Custodial would be in doing cleaning and maintenance at that time. That's one thing that would be impacted. The summer time is when they really go through and that's when they shampoo all the carpets in the building. You know in 6 weeks, they couldn't do it as easily. They'd have to hire a bigger staff to be able to get all that work done in that 6 week time period.

PARENT 3: Or you'd rotate and have the school cleaned in sections over each of the breaks. That's what I would do. You'd break it up into pieces. Do this piece this break, and that piece that break.

PARENT 4: It would definitely impact any department in the school. But there are just different ways of doing things. And as we said earlier, nobody likes change. And change is the biggest hurdle.

MODERATOR: Personally, what would be your biggest concern or biggest thrill if local schools were considering year-round education?

COMMUNITY MEMBER 2: If I had a job...well, I'd be thrilled...I wouldn't care when the vacation was!

TEACHER 7: Okay, pretend you have your own classroom.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 2: When you look at this balanced chart, because it is like 15 days for the fall, winter, and spring break...so I mean, to have 3 weeks off would be wow, gosh. You know, you could have a few days to just sleep or whatever. Then it would be like, ok, you're looking forward again. Maybe it wouldn't feel like you were losing out on the summer.

TEACHER 7: I just thought of a real big thing. The children, and granted when you have your big summer break, you have to retrain the kids. If you have them off for 15 days, you have to retrain them. So this means you'd have to retrain them 1-2-3-4 times. 4 times you're retraining those kids to your routine in the classroom.

PARENT 3: If budget wasn't an issue, this would be my take on this. Instead of having 3 weeks off, I would have maybe two. Two weeks off for each of these breaks, and then do like the Europeans and have a month off for the summer. Now, of course you folks would get paid proportionately more. You'd pick up another 7 weeks, really 7 weeks, because then you would have less of that transitioning.

TEACHER 7: 2 weeks you still have the transitioning. When they're off for Christmas break and they come back, they...

PARENT 3: But I don't think it is as much as summer vacation.

TEACHER 7: No, not like summer...

PARENT 3: Summer vacation is a long time to regroup.

TEACHER 7: I was just thinking...oh, I have to do this 4 times?

PARENT 3: For me, looking at this, I think 3 weeks is probably a little too long.

TEACHER 7: I think people would really go for this if those 3 weeks fell during deer season!

PARENT 3: Yeah, that would really push it through. You could rotate everything so that the fall break fell in November.

PARENT 4: Or you could eliminate the fall break and then have your long break at Thanksgiving.

PARENT 3: Maybe we could go to school in June when the bugs are really bad, and then when the bugs are gone in July, then we take off. We enjoy July and August, because they were really nasty last night. They were bad. And it is not even June yet!

PARENT 4: I would really like the balanced calendar because I think for my kids, especially my 4th grader with ADHD, I think it would be a lot easier for him to have the shorter breaks. He's not going to lose focus, he can have the breaks in between to fall back and take a breather, and I wouldn't have to feel like I want to kill my children at the end of summer.

PARENT 3: Sounds like you need Dial Help on speed dial...

PARENT 4: You know how there's animals who eat their children, I start thinking like that.

PARENT 3: You know, there's a reason for that.

MODERATOR: Is there anything else about year-round education that we haven't talked about that you're burning to say?

TEACHER 7: I guess if it went to this, I would want it to be on a one-year trial, so that it could be voted to go back if we didn't like it. I would be really concerned about having just 30 days in the summer and being able to recharge.

PARENT 3: That's 30 school days, now, so that's 6 weeks.

TEACHER 7: Don't we come back and start prepping for class by then anyway. But if it was a trial thing...

COMMUNITY MEMBER 2: Even like a 2-year trial, because you'd need the second year to work out the kinks.

PARENT 3: I think that would be an option. And the deer season has to be worked in to the calendar, definitely.

TEACHER 7: So, has anyone heard if it is more economical for schools to adopt a year-round calendar? After the initial cost of air conditioning, I don't know.

PARENT 3: I think the students would be more productive.

TEACHER 7: But don't they lay people off in the summer sometimes.

COMMUNITY MEMBER 2: So you'd have to figure all the kitchen help, all the custodial help, that isn't year-round employees, do not work in the summer.

TEACHER 7: So this would change by making a shorter lay-off.

PARENT 3: They would probably collect unemployment during all of those times.

TEACHER 7: Would it affect benefits? Would part-time people be considered full-time or is it based upon the number of hours?

PARENT 3: I would think you could be creative with that. Usually the definition of full time and part time is based upon the number of hours you work a week. So they aren't contractual.

TEACHER 7: But I think for school employees, that's different. I think it is how many hours you work in a calendar year.

PARENT 3: You mean, from a union basis?

TEACHER 7: Well, I was a preschool teacher in Lake Linden and I don't know if it was hours a week or...I'm just wondering about the other staff, like the aides.

PARENT 3: Yeah, they're hourly. So their pay is based upon the number of hours they work in a week. Then they can collect unemployment benefits, depending on whether or not they...

TEACHER 7: I don't think they can. I don't think school employees can collect unemployment in the summer. Because that's your school year, so during this time can they?

PARENT 3: But if you aren't collecting unemployment during this large summer vacation, you certainly aren't going to collect it during the 2-3 weeks off.

TEACHER 7: But if it was considered a year-round calendar, they may have to. I don't know...I'm just wondering.

MODERATOR: Anything else? Well, thank you very much for volunteering your time. I really appreciate your help in my research. Please help yourself to more snacks on your way out.

APPENDIX G: CODING SCHEME

1. Defining YRE
 - a. Break times or intersessions
 - b. Instructional dates
2. Summer Learning Loss and the Impact of YRE on Student Learning
 - a. Refreshed teachers or students
 - b. Less review or re-teaching
 - c. Burnout
 - d. Homework
3. Economics of YRE
 - a. School finance
 - b. Air conditioning
 - c. Using the building year-round
 - d. Salary and benefits
4. Implementing YRE
 - a. Change
 - b. People shifting their mindset
 - c. Transitioning to a new routine
 - d. Impact on family vacations, activities, or childcare
 - e. District scheduling (e.g. bussing, custodial, professional development)
 - f. Shared programming/teachers with other school districts
5. Community Characteristics
 - a. Climate
 - b. Tourism
 - c. Local universities' academic calendars (Michigan Tech University, Finlandia University)
6. Conversational chatter, clarifications, and repetition of ideas

APPENDIX H: CODING RELIABILITY INSTRUMENT

Group	ID#	Coder2	Qualitative Response
1	1		Well, when we lived in CA, my son went to school at a year-round school. And it worked very nicely there. Particularly, you know, one of the things that made a big difference was that it was Monterrey, California, so the temperature was pretty much the same all year. And so there wasn't a big time when you wanted to be off or not. But it was very nice because 6 weeks is actually a pretty long break for kids in the summer. I mean, I love my whole 3 months off, don't get me wrong, but it was a pretty long break really. I mean, it wasn't like they had not a nice summer vacation. And then they went to school for like 45 days. And then you had a 2 week break, a 2 week vacation.
1	2		The example here says 15 days.
1	1		Well, I don't remember exactly what [the break] was. But I know it seemed like he was getting out of school all the time.
1	2		Three weeks at Christmas would be just wonderful.
1	1		Yeah. So, the nice thing about it is, you know how you get so burned out, and you get like, so exhausted, it gives you a nice opportunity to just stop and really look at your class and see how and what they're doing, and so I thought that was a nice thing. I never really felt like I missed the summer that much because I knew that I would be getting another break coming up pretty soon.
1	3		But the weather there is always summer. The temperature is like what, 75?
1	1		Yeah. There were problems with it. I mean, people who work have to make arrangements for childcare. So that was...
1	5		What about teachers, as far as being able to go back to school. How did they work that out? Like a lot of times, I know I took three 6-weeks to go to school in the summer.
1	2		Well, the local universities would have to do some calendar adjustments for teachers, for their teaching classes.
1	1		Yeah, they'd have to offer them during that 30-day break. But you know, a lot of people are taking classes online now and then it doesn't even have to be done at certain times.
1	4		Or at night. I know I took a lot of my classes at night.
1	1		Yeah, the ones I took, I took at night. And if they went off the traditional calendar it might be easier to take those night classes because you'd have breaks to work on projects and class stuff.
1	5		I think that most countries other than our own, actually do have shorter summer break. India has the month of June off.

1	2		England has the month of August.
1	5		And then they come back because they have a lot of holidays.
1	2		They have a lot of holidays in England as well. A lot of times when there's a Friday/Monday weekend.
1	5		They're just holidays in India. But they have a lot of breaks. They only have the one month off. And they feel it is important because there's more continuity.
1	3		After that month, then do they switch grades?
1	5		In the summer. They switch in the summer then. They start in about the second week of July. Their finals are the end of May. And then they get off.
1	1		That's what they did in California, too. They went through to summer break and then that was the end of your school year. Then after the summer break of 6 weeks off they'd start back in the next grade.
1	2		Now here I think we should go through June and have July and part of August as our summer break.
1	1		Well, and you know I liked it in California but this is a very different climate. And I don't know, I don't know if it would be. It was very, very appreciated there.
1	2		I wonder where the fall break would be if we were to do this.
1	2		Do you have a calendar we can look at? Well, if we were to have July and the first two weeks of August off, then we would have to come back in mid-August. The state says we can't come to school in August.
1	4		Yes, it is the state law now that we begin after Labor Day.
1	2		So if we start after Labor Day the fall break would be the first three weeks of October.
1	2		That doesn't give 30 instructional days until Thanksgiving. They'd have to change that law.
1	5		6 weeks of school would be 30 days.
1	5		Yeah, because it is probably from a district in a warmer climate.
1	2		They probably have the last two weeks of June and the month of July off, or something like that, yeah.
1	3		I know in New Mexico they start in the middle of August.
1	5		Texas, Oklahoma...they all start the second week of August.
1	5		I don't know why, because it is hot there. I don't really get it but it really hot in June and they get off after Memorial Day so it must be the heat that...
1	1		In California, the school tried to go back to traditional and the teachers and parents, primarily the parents, fought to keep the balanced because the parents liked to be able to go on vacation in the winter and not have to pull their kids out.
1	1		And they felt it was better for the kids. They felt the summer was too long for the kids and they do lose things.

1	1		And once they got used to it, you know they had done it for awhile, they had already arranged their day care. Their day care was a few weeks in the summer and then it picked up again once school was in session.
1	2		From my standpoint, we have to start all over after the summer break with my kids.
1	5		And wouldn't you think that would be the case in first and second grade, too? That they would lose a lot over the summer.
1	2		Well, LD [learning disabled] kids lose almost everything. We reteach throughout September and October.
1	3		I went from kindergarten to second grade one year and I thought the second graders were, like geniuses. That was a whole grade level jump for me, though.
1	4		What do you think the parent support would be for something like that, a change to a balanced calendar, year-round?
1	4		What do you think? A lot of them complain when we have inservices because they have to find day care. Day care is a big thing. Here they'd have to find it more frequently. I don't have a problem with it because I'm home in the summer. Here they get someone situated for the summer and then they don't have to worry about it for 12 weeks. They get them in a program like GE or something. But what about when you have frequent breaks like this? I'm just thinking I wouldn't have a problem with it because I'd be off. But parents who work the full year...
1	2		But don't you think three weeks frequently would be easier than once a month, half a day? I would think a day care provider would be willing to say, yeah, I'll take them for three weeks than a once a month half day.
1	1		Yes, but interestingly enough they loved it. But the reason the school wanted to go back to the traditional calendar was because they found it was more expensive to have the balanced.
1	2		But was that a multi-track school system?
1	5		What do you mean by multi-track?
1	5		So there are other teachers teaching in your room while you're off. Is that what you're saying? You would share a room? And you may not go back to the same room when you come back after a vacation?
1	5		Because this is what happened in the St. Louis school I was in... it must've been multi-track so they could put more kids into the same building.
1	5		Well, for one thing you are using the building all the time.
1	4		Yeah, in the summer there's a 12 week break where the building is not used.

1	1		But wouldn't you close down the building during the two or three-week breaks?
1	2		I would think not heating the building Thanksgiving break...well, we're heating the building by fall break. And we're still heating in spring...I mean, we're still heating the building now, for heaven's sakes. That seems like there are more days: three, 3-week breaks, which means there would be 48 days where you could turn the heat off. That seems like you could save money right there.
1	1		Yeah, it seems like it. And I mean, the support staff work per hour, so that wouldn't be different.
1	5		Was it air conditioned?
1	1		No, no it wasn't.
1	3		You know, a lot of families up here can't afford to fly their family to go somewhere in the winter. Many families here vacation, go camping, whatever in the summer. That's their vacation. And if you start cutting into that...
1	3		But I'm just saying that some people go to their camp the day school gets out and they don't come back until the end of summer.
1	3		It would be a change for them
1	1		Then you start thinking...is there something to do during these breaks?
1	3		Because let me tell you during spring break when we didn't have the money to go on vacation and it was muddy...last spring I was so grateful I didn't have little kids. Thank you.
1	2		And this year it snowed, we had a blizzard.
1	3		I know! It was terrible. And I would've been stuck at home with 5 kids. And you have to remember that somebody is in that position. Spring break was never my favorite when I had little kids.
1	2		I always hated the fact that the school's spring break was never the same time as Tech's.
1	2		I think it is better for students because they forget a lot. Every September you spend time reviewing and then they have to take MEAPs in October.
1	5		You know, think about how hard it got on the students between Christmas and spring break. I mean, March wasn't too bad in my room this year but in the past it has been just awful. If the kids knew they were getting a break every 45 days, it might be a little easier. I think it would be. I really think we need a break in the middle of February.
1	1		45 days is 9 weeks, right? So that would be a break after every marking period.
1	2		So we'd have 45 days and a marking period. And then 30 days until Thanksgiving and then another 15 days and a

			marking period. Then 45 days and a marking period. Then another 45 days and then they would be in the next class.
1	4		Do you think they would transition very well? Coming off the breaks and coming back to school? I've found that after spring break it was horrible. The kids thought they were done. Spring break, they come back, we're done with school. I have kids who have not settled down ever since. So, if you have the balanced calendar would this happen?
1	2		You'd think that would work. It might happen the first year when they were getting into it, but I don't think they would after that.
1	3		I'm wondering if the teachers would give a homework assignment over the break, while the kids were on vacation.
1	2		I can see the high school teachers giving an assignment. Research...look at all the time they'd have to do a research paper.
1	1		When [my son] went to school in California, break was his break.
1	2		They didn't give homework.
1	4		We'd have to make that clear.
1	5		Well, we don't give homework over breaks now. Why would we then?
1	2		High school teachers give homework over break. My kids always had something over Christmas break. But it was to read a book, or decide what they were going to write a research paper on, or start their research. They always had something to do.
1	1		I think the hardest part would be talking people into giving up their summer. I enjoy your summer.
1	5		And I think what brought up is valid. In this community, especially because we have such long winters, many people do have camps and love to live out at the lake.
1	1		And if teachers were told we're cutting half your summer off, there would be an outcry about that. I can see that would be a problem.
1	4		Yeah, you pay for your camp all winter long and you want to use it while you're able to, and that's during the summer.
1	2		I think what was mentioned about taking classes in the summer. NMU would have to redo their schedules for that 30 days. Continuing education would be the biggest impact I would see.
1	5		I just wonder, though, because when I was teaching at MTU Nursery, it was so neat that every 10 weeks I'd have 2 weeks off.
1	2		That's like Australia. 10 weeks on, 2 weeks off.
1	5		When I had two weeks off it gave me a chance to clean up

			my room, freshen it up and everything, and it just seemed like an ideal schedule for me as a teacher. And so I'm wondering if teachers would eventually feel that same way, too, refreshed if they were getting a break.
1	2		I'm not sure if the MTU Nursery does that anymore now that Tech is on semesters. They were still on terms when you were teaching there.
1	1		I think that if you approached the staff about this and asked them how do you feel about this, I think for the most part they would be resistant.
1	2		I would think most of them would not want to do it.
1	3		Hard to know. It would be interesting to see, maybe do a vote. You know, change is...change is...I don't like change, in case you haven't figured that out. But do you know what? When I'm forced into it I usually realize, oh, this is fine.
1	1		Change is good. It is just scary going into it.
1	5		I think there are a lot of problems we don't anticipate until we step in.
1	3		I know that having a longer spring break for people who have children at home, they will be screeching for three weeks in March.
1	4		But at that time it is still snowing out and they love to play outside.
1	2		Say we started after the last week in July...that's 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9 and then three weeks off, 1-2-3. No, that doesn't quite work. I thought I had it so it worked.
1	3		It would be March, April, something like that.
1	5		Maybe in Missouri it would be okay, because it would be warm.
1	3		Even in Wisconsin it would probably be okay, but not here.
1	5		And maybe even southern Michigan.
1	1		You know, if we had a good winter with snow, a lot of people up here would be downhill skiing.
1	3		That's okay at Christmas, then it isn't a problem. But three weeks in the spring?
1	5		If it is yucky weather, it wouldn't be fun.
1	2		5-6-7-8-9. That's it. The first three weeks of March. For the 2006-2007 school year it would've been March 5 th through the 23 rd .
1	1		It is still cold then.
1	3		It's freezing.
1	1		Yeah, but I mean the snow...
1	5		But the snow is pretty decent.
1	1		It's not ugly yet.
1	2		1-2-3-4-5...
1	1		The skiing would be good.

1	5	Yeah, usually some of the best skiing I've done is in March.
1	3	But that's cross-country. You can usually cross-country ski until the end of March.
1	1	A lot of families cross-country ski.
1	2	6-7-8-9...that takes us until the 9 th of July...that can't be right...
1	3	I think it is clear what my opinion is...I look at this and I just think yuck.
1	1	I have to say I'm not nuts about losing my summer.
1	3	You know what, though? I'm thinking that by August 10 I'm ready to start school. And basically a lot of us are here.
1	4	But the weather is just getting perfect at that time. Even if we adjusted it so we get out later and we start later. Still September it's 80 degrees out some days.
1	2	Not having to reteach everything in September.
1	1	Breaks in the winter.
1	5	Knowing that it isn't endless, knowing you'll have a break coming up.
1	4	Yeah, knowing you've got breaks more often.
1	2	I like that 15 day fall break.
1	3	How many days of learning do we have between Christmas and spring break?
1	5	55 days here on the example.
1	2	This year we had 63 of class.
1	2	Somehow the 75 days from the beginning to Thanksgiving doesn't feel as long.
1	4	No, because we're refreshed from summer. The kids are still anxious to learn.
1	1	So we had 65 days...no, 63...on the year-round calendar we'd be almost a month earlier getting a break. Right when we needed it.
1	5	At the beginning of March is when I really started losing them.
1	2	I think that it's a great idea and if [the superintendent] could ever figure out that it would save him some money, he won't ask anybody.
1	5	I'm not sure that it would.
1	2	You'd have to figure it out.
1	1	I don't know, though...what about the support staff?
1	2	They work the month of June, and then they lay them off for the months of July and August. On the year-round calendar they wouldn't be able to lay them off for those 3 week periods.
1	1	But why would they have them [cleaners] here if the kids aren't here?

1	4		Cleaning the building.
1	1		Every 45 days? Well, maybe the building could use the cleaning more often, but I think they would shut the doors except during the summer for deep-cleaning. I didn't realize that with the aides, we'd talked about going to a 4-day work instead of a 5-day week, and that would save the school a lot of money because they'd be paying the aides for fewer days.
1	2		On this [year-round] calendar, it is still 180 days, and they would still be paid the same. They get paid by their hours, and we'd still be working the same number of hours.
1	1		But you know where it hurts them is before school, after school, and that kind of stuff. And that changes it. That's different. So you know, that actually would save the school a lot of money.
1	3		Four days, but going an hour longer.
1	1		No, it is something like 7 minutes a day.
1	5		Baraga and L'Anse are now getting out before Memorial Day because of that.
1	3		They aren't doing 180 days anymore, they are going by hours.
1	4		They do 170 days.
1	2		But we aren't doing 180 days this year, either. I've kept a careful count and we're on day 169 now and we do not have 11 days left.
1	3		We have 10 days.
1	1		So do Baraga and L'Anse have a four day week then?
1	4		No, they just added a few minutes to the beginning and end of their day.
1	1		Back to the 4 day week. I had only thought about how it could save the school money, but when it was brought up the aides knew. The aides knew it would be coming from their pockets.
1	2		Because they're hourly.
1	1		Would a calendar like this impact them?
1	2		I don't see why if it is the same number of days. Now if we went to a longer school day, like now we have 7.75 hour day. If we went to an 8 hour day and a 4 day week, that would make 32 hours a week. Right now we're 7.75 for 5 days, which comes out to 77.5 for two weeks.
1	3		I don't get it. How would the L'Anse/Baraga when we are going more hours if they get paid more by going 5 days... why aren't we getting out early?
1	2		More hours. Because they are going for a longer school day.
1	4		That's a whole other calendar.
1	3		But it's like 14 minutes.
1	1		They do a longer school day, but a shorter year. They have

			fewer days. They don't do the 4 days.
1	5		Now it's on time, it's not by days.
1	2		They do 5 days, and they do a longer school day.
1	5		Then they get out earlier at the end of the school year.
1	2		They go by contact time, as opposed to the 180 days.
1	5		So they've been getting out early for quite a few years now.
1	3		I think we should be out the day after Memorial Day the way it's going now. But if we had year-round school that wouldn't matter.
1	2		As soon as we get out of school, the weather is going to go down the crapper.
2	7		I know it is typical of what is done in Europe. I think Germany has a calendar very similar to the balanced calendar. I guess the nice thing there is you have more breaks during the school year. Of course it is harder to take a long summer vacation.
2	8		I don't really know anything about it.
2	6		I associate year-round education with not having enough facilities and it helps to have more kids in the school, logistics and everything. That's what I associate with year-round school. Fewer buildings, too many kids to teach, utilize the building all year round. That's my thought process.
2	9		I feel the same way. Another thing I associate with it is more of a constant exposure to learning so there is no longer interim breaks between learning experiences. I think that would be notorious if you were a teacher or an educator. I think you'd be met with more success.
2	6		Cost.
2	8		That would be the first thing I would think about. The cost of keeping the school open year-round.
2	6		I think that there are, what I've understood and I may not understand correctly, is there are plusses to utilizing a building all year round because it is a building, let's use it. But at the same time you're employing people year-round and right now we're going to outsourcing. Not outsourcing...now, what is it? You know, you don't hire unionized employees. You hire them from an outside corporation. What's that called?
2	8		Isn't it outsourcing?
2	6		Is it outsourcing? Is that what it's called?
2	9		Outsourcing.
2	6		OK, outsourcing. You're outsourcing. I would think that would be very expensive. You would have to hire bus drivers all year round as opposed to being a nine month employee. Cleaning...they probably don't hire cleaners in the summertime because the building isn't used as much. Where,

			to me, if you were using it year-round the upkeep of a building when busses are being used, to me that would be an added cost factor. But I don't know if it is, it is just what I think it might be.
2	7		One concern I would have is in the summertime the temperature in the buildings, because we don't have air conditioning, it might possibly become unbearable in the buildings in the summer.
2	6		And I think that in this community we would be competing with Tech and their breaks and you wouldn't have...our times off sometimes coincide with theirs, where if you're going to school all year round and you've got professors or you've got parents who are students, and they've got the summer off and they've got two weeks here and we don't, to me that would be a nightmare in the sense of how many kids are going to be coming to school. But, I don't know again if that would necessarily be a huge factor, but to me competing with the calendar at Michigan Tech could cause problems.
2	8		It already causes problems when [MTU's] spring break doesn't match ours.
2	6		It does. But you've got students who are parents, or parents who are students, and they finish in May. Well, I'm leaving, I'm going somewhere. And it's like whoa, but wait a minute, your child is not done with their school year. Can we plan on your child coming back in June or July? But I don't truly understand how the whole calendar works.
2	9		Well, I think you have sort of an innate down side, too, and that is sort of an outreach training people up to snuff to even accept this kind of scheduling. I think any change is usually met with some kind of resistance. And you might find the biggest hurdle you might encounter is just change.
2	6		I think what ID#9 said that the time from the end of the traditional school year to picking up classes in September there is a period of time where you have to review and I would think that would lessen if it was a constant sort of thing with more breaks but the breaks are shorter, so the continuum would be more cohesive. But other than that...
2	7		I think one very good advantage is, probably more so for the older students, where you really get burned out before Christmas comes or by the time summer comes because you haven't really had a break. I think having a 15 day break three times during the year would just be really nice. To be able to take off, possibly with your parents if they are lucky enough to have vacation at the same time you do, and then be able to just get a complete break from school.
2	7		One thing that I know in Europe, where they have this

			balanced calendar, is that parents often get 6 weeks of vacation and so families will often go for vacations during each of those breaks. Whereas, if you have someone who only has 2 weeks of vacation during the year, this benefit won't be there.
2	8		Well, if you have two working parents it could make a big difference. For instance, during the summer, with two working parents, they need to find someplace for their kids to be. If the kids are in school during the summer, this would lift the burden from the parents of finding a place for their kids to be and their child would be doing something educational rather than just being in daycare.
2	6		What about finding daycare up here? I mean, if you've got many, many breaks as shown on this balanced calendar and your child needs daycare, it would be tough to find daycare for the little ones, kindergarteners and first graders, if mom and dad do have a traditional type of job where you get 2 or 3, 4 weeks off a year, they don't follow this balanced calendar. To me it would be extremely hard to find daycare for this many days with the number of day care centers we have. We have limited resources there, I believe, but I'm not a parent, so I don't know the problems. But I would think it would be a problem around here.
2	7		It seems like in the summertime people have figured out how to do the daycare and they're all set up. The school systems currently have summer programs. I would think that if a school was to adopt a balanced calendar part of the burden might fall upon the school system, like some form of daycare for the younger kids during those breaks. Because if now the school has the summer program, basically it is for grade school students, so if they were to institute the same program during the shorter breaks that might get rid of a lot of problems for parents.
2	7		If it is provided through a school system, like Head Start, then it doesn't make a difference. If there aren't enough Head Start spaces, then it might be a problem. I think in the summertime people have figured out how to do it.
2	7		I think if the system changes I would think it would take awhile for people to adjust.
2	7		I assume that parents who are faculty or both parents are faculty in this community [Michigan Tech University faculty], the traditional calendar serves them well because the parents are all off during the summer vacation of the children. Whereas, with the balanced calendar, if Tech stays the same, then all the faculty will be scrambling.
2	6		And the cost. If we were to go to BHK [Head Start], who's to

			say they can afford it?
2	7		Faculty most likely could. It would be the lower-income families who might have a problem. Because if you have school-working faculty members I would think paying for daycare would be difficult.
2	6		No, but I think that in this community we have a lot of people who are not Tech [employees] as well. I'm looking at other districts, too, and that would be very difficult for them to pay for daycare during the 15 days and BHK seems to be pretty strapped right now, financially, and its like how could they afford to stretch out a program for the balanced calendar? Can it be done? I'm sure it probably can be. But, to me, that could be a possible problem.
2	9		Well, you know we can talk about daycare and other things, but if you think about a bigger picture, you know, you are going to look at changes in the food service program, the bussing program, daycare is what we've discussed, vacation periods. You know, you're looking across the boards at change in our community and how people do things. I mean, it is an overall change. It isn't just daycare, you know. It goes into all sorts of stuff, many facets.
2	9		Sure. I guess. Well, how about food service? All of sudden you have year-round food service. What does that mean? Does that mean more cost? I think it seems like you'd have more people there and for longer periods, probably. I think it gets back to a lot of cost ramifications for these changes.
2	9		You may be more effectively teaching
2	9		but you are also keeping that building illuminated during the course of the year longer and you have more staff there to keep it clean and open and functioning. I think it really pivots around cost. You could focus on man hours or day length. You name it. More food...there are all kinds of things you could think about.
2	7		It seems like the number of vacation days and the number of work days is identical. So the question is, can you get the people who do the work, the teachers, the custodians, the food service people, to accept the same salary working year-round with the vacations evenly spread instead of working nine months with the long summer? If the people are using the summers as vacation, it may not matter much. But if the people are using their summers for other jobs, then it may matter a great deal.
2	8		It is true that some people [school employees] work other jobs during the summer. So this calendar could affect that kind of thing.
2	9		And what does the state have to say? Does the state mandate

			contact time or number of hours? The state law would...you'd have to stay within those parameters of course. Now, to come down on you and say it's bad to exceed that, I'm sure, I'm sure you have to weigh that as well.
2	7		But if the number of hours is identical, which they seem to be, then you wouldn't think the state would care. So the one great advantage of the balanced calendar, I think, would just be the sense of more balance in the school year for the kids. Not getting bored by the end of the summer, not knowing what to do, but each vacation is a vacation that you're really looking forward to and by the end of it you're still not tired of it. I think with the shorter vacations you'd really be eager for every one of them. And even the 30 days off [in the summer], I think would add up to 6 weeks, and even with 6 weeks off, by that time I don't think the kids would be bored to tears or up to their ears in trouble, for the teenagers.
2	7		So there may be benefits to kids, especially the older kids when they aren't in daycare. My kids aren't there yet, and I'm not a working mom, but the people who are working moms who have teenagers on their own all summer long, the balanced calendar may be a great benefit because after 6 weeks, they may be at sports camp or this or that and it may be reasonably easy to find activities to keep them busy for 6 weeks. Whereas now, I don't know that people can find activities to keep them busy for all 3 months of summer vacation.
2	7		So, in addition to giving you breaks during the school calendar, it may have a benefit for the kids where it is more balanced. There are not periods of great boredom or periods of great stress, but just more even.
2	6		I guess we hear a lot about cost of running the buildings and so forth and so on, and I guess I look at this balanced calendar and when you're using a building all year round, your utilities have to be considerably higher
2	6		you'd have to air condition, I mean, I don't know how you could possibly not. These buildings, I don't think are constructed, at least the older part of the building is not constructed, to have air conditioning put in so if you did it would be very costly. So I'm thinking, what does that do to the budget? How much does that take out of it? To me, it would be very costly to implement. Maybe in the long run it would work, but the initial cost would cause the budget to skyrocket.
2	7		Would the cost, other than the air conditioning, be terribly different? Because in the [break] times, the 15 day vacation periods during the winter, you could turn the heat down and

			you could drop all the utility costs during those periods, which are typically heating periods. And so the air conditioning time in the summer would be additional, but you may actually save during the school year because you would only pay for the building when it is used and the use would be identical.
2	9		So what you're saying is the retrofitting of the buildings with air conditioning might be a wash in costs after a while.
2	7		It could be.
2	6		Yes, it could.
2	7		I don't know how air conditioning compares to heating in cost up here.
2	9		I don't air condition.
2	6		For myself, I think we'd have to go back to what ID#9 said, the comment that ID#9 made, it is just changing a mindset. Something that we would have to get accustomed to is a new calendar, and having never experienced it, I really don't know the impact it would have on my personal life and how I view things. It is certainly a different mindset that I would have to take. Would it be more positive after I had experienced it? I may find out this is great! I can't foresee any serious problems and yet I haven't experienced it. And yet is a matter of getting used to something very, very different.
2	8		I agree. It would just take some getting used to. But it can be something that teachers may come to like. They would just have to think differently, and not focus on that big summer break, instead focus on the shorter breaks.
2	6		I said this before, but one thing we are competing against is Tech's calendar. And when Tech is on Thanksgiving break, now that they are on semesters, it is not uncommon for me the whole week before Thanksgiving I've lost 3-4 kids. And if their Christmas break doesn't follow ours, I've lost 3-4 kids because they've gone home or whatever. And so as a teacher I would be concerned about how this balanced calendar is going to compete with Michigan Tech's schedule. Losing 3-5 kids, you pretty much put the brakes on, especially in the middle of the year because there is so much instruction going on. So I think Tech is a big influence on the traditional calendar. Can it be worked around? Maybe. But right now I would find that to be a real problem being an instructor and having 5 kids gone during our 45 days of learning while Tech's on break. Well, I've lost those kids. So I think we'd have to talk to Tech and how do they view a balanced calendar.
2	9		I'm going to be a devil's advocate and move over a little bit over here. One of the basic concepts, if you're going to go

			<p>into teaching, is that you say I'm going to...I'm not going to make a lot of money, I have sort of an altruistic bent about me, I'm going to teach kids, I'm going to better society, and all the altruistic things that teachers need to have. But part of the game is that they think they have a trade-off. They have the summers off. I don't want to use the word off too loudly because people are now forced to go back and have continuing credits. But that is one of the big trade-offs for the profession. I'm not going to make as much money but I have my summers, a good chunk of my summer, off. So I can go off with my family somewhere, we can vacation, go to Europe, whatever we want, for an extended period of time. That's one of the benefits that you as a teacher on a conventional, traditional system have. Now if you removed that and you don't have a big block of time would it be harder, I'm just saying the devil's advocate, would it be harder, would you have to pay people more, would you have to offer other incentives to get people to join the profession?</p>
2	8		<p>I think, yes, because the way teachers are going to view it is now you're asking me to work year round, and I want more money.</p>
2	9		<p>Even though it is the same contact time, the same number of hours of instruction.</p>
2	7		<p>Not being a teacher, but having thought about the benefits of having that as your job, I would think one of the biggest advantages is that your times off are the same times off as your kids. So if the children are off of school, you're off of school. Now with the traditional calendar or the balanced calendar, it is not so crucial. But if only 2-3 school systems adopt the balanced calendar and the other ones don't, then that would wreck havoc.</p>
2	7		<p>Because the reason so many moms pick teaching, in my view, is so that they have their time with the kids when the kids are home. I think that's one of the reasons women sign up to be a teacher. Now say Chassell and Houghton went to balanced calendars but Calumet and E. B. Holman did not, you might teach in E. B. Holman and your kids go to Houghton. Then you've just ruined your life, you know. I mean, now you've got to scramble to find days off with your kids. In order for this to really work for teachers, I think a lot of school districts in the area would have to agree to do it at the same time and on the same schedule.</p>
2	9		<p>Probably even Michigan Tech. Maybe they could orient their breaks a little differently instead of on the conventional system. I mean, with Tech professors, instead of the traditional calendar, if they could somehow work around that</p>

			a little bit. Have a little bit, that would help, too.
2	6		I think because we have so many districts in this community, you brought up something, ID#7, that I'm not sure how many programs we share in our district with other school districts, but everybody would have to be on the same page. I mean, you could not have Chassell saying we're opting for the traditional and Houghton opting for the balanced because if we're sharing any programs with other school districts that's no longer an advantage and in these remote areas sometimes that's the only way we can have a program is if we share it with Hancock, long distance or whatever, so everybody needs to be on the same page, and I think even trying to get a calendar among all of these school districts is difficult in the sense of a traditional one. You know, they want to start before Labor Day, though legally that is no longer an issue. We want to have a mid-spring break or mid-winter break, we want to be out by the end of May. Even locally this is a nightmare for superintendents and principals because some districts are marching to their own tune. And right now they're allowed to do that because there isn't a balanced calendar. They just put in their x-amount of hours in x-amount of days, the union agrees, and they can have whatever calendar they want. But it would have to be a matter of every district saying we opt for a balanced calendar. If one district doesn't want to do it, you've lost your shared programs, or they could not share it with you, obviously.
2	8		This would really affect the high school. Especially with their career-tech program through the CCISD
2	8		and dual-enrollment with Michigan Tech...
2	7		You're right. The dual-enrollment would be affected.
2	6		So this could have serious consequences if every school district is not moving to a balanced calendar.
2	9		How many seniors go? I know they go in the morning...how many seniors are there participating in these programs?
2	8		For career-tech?
2	9		You might see 30-40 students participating in those programs?
2	8		Yes. It is offered to juniors and seniors.
2	7		And there are a lot of kids who take advanced math courses at Tech so that would be very difficult to do with the balanced calendar. And I don't think that Tech would be in the least willing to change their calendar because their goal is to get kids in summer internships. And they want the longest possible, they seem to be stretching their summers longer and longer, and cutting their year length shorter and shorter, to give the students the maximum number of hours for their

			internship possible. And their school year stops so soon in the spring because if your students aren't ready to begin their internship by a certain date, the internship will be swiped up by someone who can begin earlier. And so I can't imagine them, Tech, changing their calendar.
2	9		Well, if you've been to Career Days, that's a big deal. A third of the kids, two thirds of the kids standing in line (I represent [a government agency] there) I'd say two thirds of the kids standing there are interested in internships versus permanent, full-time positions. You're competing against General Motors, and anybody else. These kids are getting out at a certain time and they're weighing how long they can have some kind of summer experience and we lose a lot of them to earlier positions in the Forest Service and everything else because we might start 2-3 weeks later.
2	6		So we think we have to consider these programs.
2	8		We also have shared programs. Sometimes our high school offers a class that Hancock doesn't offer, so the kids come over for the class. Or we send kids to Hancock to take a course we don't offer. How would distance learning work?
2	6		Is there a feeling about how the state department of education views year-round education? Are they trying to, down in Lansing, are they trying to force or to encourage year-round schools in the state? Is there a feel for what the state department is doing?
2	9		Why is there such a preponderous number in California, let's say? Because of the overwhelming numbers and they have you go year-round to take advantage of their facilities? Why so many out there? Why do they choose to do it.
2	6		I don't think she can tell us, and we respect that.
2	8		I'm just thinking that with the balanced calendar it would really affect high school kids. If they work in the summer, they take summer jobs, how that is going to affect them being employed in the summer if they have shorter summer breaks? And that could affect a lot of businesses in the community who depend on summer workers.
2	6		It almost goes back to the farmers needing the extra hands in the fields. But here it is working in a restaurant.
2	7		But in a way I think the purpose of school is to learn, not to be making money when you're in high school. So I think...
2	8		Some kids need the extra money to help their families.
2	7		The families need the high school students' earnings?
2	8		Sometimes they need that extra money.
2	6		Look at just by us starting after Labor Day. Look at what the tourism industry had the power to say you're starting school after Labor Day because we need the kids to work in Copper

			Harbor, we need kids to work in these tourist areas...
2	7		I thought it was so families would go on vacation.
2	8		No, it was the tourism board.
2	7		That decision was based upon child labor?
2	6		I think so. I think they wanted to keep the kids working in Copper Harbor and the touristy areas and they pushed for it. You know, ID#8, you brought up a good point. How would a business view a balanced calendar? You would lose a lot of cheap labor, and I don't think that they would be happy about that.
2	7		I guess it works because if you moved to a place that has a year-round calendar, you would adjust. So, you would just go with the flow. It's just when you have to make a change, and everybody makes a change, that people get all up in arms. But I guess the big thing to do would be to ask those communities that have gone and made the change, has this been beneficial? What problems did this cause? I think that would be what to do.
2	6		But you'd have to find communities that share your type of standard of living, and what is the trade that keeps your community viable? Well, for us it is tourism.
2	6		Without tourism and Tech...they are both very influential. And so you have to take in not just your school community and how the decisions would affect them, but also the greater community. Copper Harbor, and how does it affect Tech...whereas, in other places that might not be a problem. I think tourism is really what generates money for this community so we need to be sensitive to what their needs are, too.
3	12		Not much.
3	13		Not much at all. This is the first time that I realized that year-round education didn't mean more days of school.
3	10		What was the question again?
3	10		I know it is quite common in other countries and those countries are actually much further ahead of us in education, in educating their kids. It seems to be more efficient, the kids seem to be able to advance further without that large summer break, and actually I think they usually have a smaller summer break. This is probably a pretty long one relative to some of the countries that have year-round education. And you know, I know that we did the summer vacation thing because we were an agricultural-based country. Well, that hasn't been true for 50 years and we seemed to not have moved forward in that 50 years.
3	13		One thing, because I just graduated in 2004 with my elementary ed degree, and in learning about things, because it

		was discussed when we were in school, you know, year round education and stuff. In Europe it is not, education isn't really the same as it is here. We are expected to teach all children. They don't. As early as 6 th or 7 th grade, they take tests to see what their aptitude is. So they're put into something that goes higher or into a trade-type job, and they don't really teach to all the students.
3	10	Right, it isn't the one-size-fits-all education system which serves no one. But that's a whole other topic for discussion.
3	11	I did have some prior knowledge. My brother is from California and all his children were in a year-round system there and it seemed to really work well. They were all very good students and they didn't have those few weeks of you know, get back into the swing of school, and learn the things you may have forgotten from the previous year. So, instead of wasting those weeks of review, they were able to just keep going.
3	12	And my children are beyond sitters, but I'm just wondering how that would work out with parents and babysitters, you know, with year-round school. I don't know if it would make it easier or if it would make it harder. That would be something to look into, too.
3	13	And if most of the schools were generally the same calendar, it would be like, okay we need daycare for this 6 weeks and that 3 weeks.
3	13	And you wonder, too, with high school students. I mean, a lot of them work all the time, like 10 hours a week. But some only work during the summer.
3	13	And I think a lot of it is that nobody likes change. They just want to do it the way it was.
3	12	The cost of air conditioning for schools, because going through the summer, we cannot go like we've been in 80 degree heat. It is too much. The cost of putting air conditioning into the schools is a big issue.
3	10	No one performs well in such warm temperatures.
3	12	No. And around here because of the area, the summers are when people want to be out and doing things and having school during that time is harder, you know. The kids shut down, the parents shut down.
3	11	Although maybe with more breaks they may not get that way. It might not be that bad.
3	12	Although having the breaks during the winter...
3	13	Not everyone can afford to go somewhere. You know, like during the winter, you may not be able to afford to go somewhere warm or whatever. Whereas in the summertime it is easier to hang out in the yard, or go to the local park, to the

			lake house.
3	10		In the winter you could always go skiing or snowshoeing...
3	11		As a school of choice parent, I would really like three weeks of the winter that I don't have to drive the kids in. That would be just thrilling not to have to go out in the cold and do that.
3	12		That is true
3	12		[I do not prefer to] work during the summer.
3	10		I work in the summer all the time.
3	12		I know you do. But that is something teachers have gotten used to. And it is hard for them to change.
3	13		And a lot of teachers take their continuing education credits during the summer.
3	10		Yeah, but with online courses and stuff that is so easy now to do.
3	12		Not when you're working full time and you have a family.
3	10		Yeah, I've done it. I've worked and gone to school. I've done all my homework at 2:00 in the morning...
3	12		That works for some people, but not all.
3	10		You can do it if you really want to. And those online courses, you can find classes that are really flexible that have open-ended enrollments.
3	10		Well, I think of the summer learning loss as a big piece of what you would gain. I have a son that has a learning disability and I notice that in the summer he might retain more of the things he doesn't have a problem with, but in that area where he has a problem, we lose a lot because that muscle needs to be worked every day. It is like physical therapy. You can't take three months off and then expect to walk back in and be in the same place. It just isn't going to happen.
3	12		Coming from the standpoint also as a parent, there are things you can do as a parent to help your child not lose as much, knowing that that happens. Um, I've had to do that with my son. He's a slow reader and I've had to make sure he read and did all kinds of things during the summer.
3	10		Well, I've had him tutored, I've had him you know... I've spent a fortune, believe me. It isn't that I'm not doing those things. But the school piece happening, it would just do him a lot better to have a consistent program.
3	12		I worry about burn-out with kids going all year. I truly do. But we're starting children in school at a much younger age and having it continuous, I worry about burnout by high school years and the dropout rate.
3	10		Well, I think the dropout rate is from the school system disenfranchising groups of students with the one-size-fits-all education. I think that's where the dropout rate comes from.

			You folks probably realize that more than I do. That you can't make, you know, 30 kids in the classroom happy and put them in a situation where they're going to learn effectively. Some are going to be bored, some aren't going to get it, and you're going to lose people because of that. That, I think, is the biggest cause of the dropout rate.
3	12		That definitely is a cause, but I do worry about burnout, and I'm not sure this would. It's just something I think should be looked at.
3	10		If you could deliver a curriculum at a person's learning level and pace it, the burnout wouldn't be there. It all has to be gauged. With the differences in students and this one-size-fits-all stuff, it is a problem. I mean, look at Detroit. They're graduating 40% of their students on time, 40%. Something's got to happen. Now it's not, I don't think that's burnout. I think there's a lot more going on there, and it has to do with their social structures in their homes and all the obstacles that are in the way of them learning and getting to school. But I think there is a lot bigger problems, and in fact I think summer vacation can actually add to that because the students see summer vacation as: see what I could have if I didn't go to school, I could have all this time off. And they don't get the consequences until they're in prison somewhere. It is just the way that they aren't mature enough to understand it. I think there are other contributing factors that are much more significant to the burnout rate than time spent in school.
3	11		Just from my experience with my kids, they are...that last month of summer is very difficult because they're bored, they're at each other's throats, they need to be back in school.
3	10		Parents say, I can't wait for school to start, I can't wait. My kid is driving me crazy. You can only be...you have to be a social director.
3	13		Well, for me now, I grew up on a dairy and beef farm. I was never bored during the summer. I missed school right away because I lived out in the country so I didn't get to see my friends. But even for my own children, they weren't ever really bored. They always had something to do. My parents still had the family farm, we had a vegetable garden, they had to go and weed, and they had a lot of jobs to do. So I think a lot of times now if they're in households where one or both parents work, they have a lot of time on their hands. They aren't always doing something constructive, so it is easy for them to become bored.
3	11		I keep my kids real active, but it is a personality thing in our household. There are four kids, and they are all so different. They are at each other's throats.

3	10		Yeah. Well, they're kids. They're siblings. That is going to happen.
3	13		Like my four, they fought, and then they had to sit in the chair and they had to put their arms around one another. One time I even sewed their shorts together and made them wear them for the day. And it was, like, you know...we all have to learn to get along with other people.
3	10		My mom would sit us in opposite ends of the room and we had to look at each other. That was another one of her punishments when we were mad at each other.
3	10		Well, I've seen, I remember coming home from a business trip one summer and pulling in, I came into that midnight flight, and I had to run into Econo to grab something on the way home. And I couldn't believe the number of students in that parking lot. You know, the kids in that parking lot. There were 40-50 cars with teenagers in them. This was at like 2 a.m.
3	12		On a weekend?
3	10		No, during the week in the summer. And so I think you might have less problems with kids getting into things if they didn't have as much time on their hands.
3	13		One of the things, too, because of our area, a lot of things in the summer focus on tourism. I mean, we're developing it more so that it is more year-round. Summer, I think, is where we get the bulk of tourists coming in. Local businesses depend on local students for their job force and I think that it may be tough for them. In other states or you've got people who don't have kids who are coming to vacation, whether we'd be able to address the tourism issue adequately or not, I don't know.
3	12		Because they did have the problem...that's why we now start after Labor Day because of tourism. Isn't that right?
3	10		Well, they wanted the kids to be able to travel with their parents on Labor Day. That was the issue. They wanted the tourist dollars. This year they won't be able to afford the gas, so we aren't going anywhere. We're staying at home.
3	10		That was a statewide mandate and one of the reasons that they did this is because the state has suffered from an economic decline. We have no diversity in our economy, in our industrial base, and you know we're not making up for it with tourism. We need to do something about that. That's a bigger problem than a Labor Day vacation.
3	13		I think Michigan needs to be more business friendly, too.
3	10		Oh, absolutely.
3	13		There needs to be different taxes that business is encouraged.
3	10		It has slowly gotten worse. And this year will be worse than

			last year because Wisconsin is growing in leaps and bounds and we're declining. And it is because they have a varied medium-sized business. They're medium-sized business friendly, and that is the largest growing sector of businesses.
3	10		You guys are working the same days....
3	12		Some teachers, not all, have summer jobs. They work another job in the summer, and that would be harder for them to do.
3	13		Plus, you know...I haven't had the opportunity to have my own classroom yet, so I don't know for sure...as far as recharging your batteries and getting yourself planned, you know, planning out what you are going to do for the next year. A lot of teachers use a good part of the summer to plan and coming up with what they're going to do for next year.
3	10		It seems like you would probably do that a quarter at a time with this calendar.
3	12		But that's hard to do. Summers you can do it because it is coming up. The fall break I'm not going to be thinking about the next fall.
3	10		No, I'm saying you'd probably be thinking about the next quarter. At fall break, you'd be thinking about the winter quarter and really working out what you're going to do there.
3	12		I think, this part isn't very nice, but this calendar may get rid of some older teachers that may need to go.
3	10		There's some reality in that!
3	10		Well, you'd gain three weeks of snow plowing in the winter! That would be a plus.
3	13		Although they pretty much keep the school plowed out during the day, even on vacation. Custodial would be in doing cleaning and maintenance at that time. That's one thing that would be impacted. The summer time is when they really go through and that's when they shampoo all the carpets in the building. You know in 6 weeks, they couldn't do it as easily. They'd have to hire a bigger staff to be able to get all that work done in that 6 week time period.
3	10		Or you'd rotate and have the school cleaned in sections over each of the breaks. That's what I would do. You'd break it up into pieces. Do this piece this break, and that piece that break.
3	11		It would definitely impact any department in the school. But there are just different ways of doing things. And as we said earlier, nobody likes change. And change is the biggest hurdle.
3	13		When you look at this balanced chart, because it is like 15 days for the fall, winter, and spring break...so I mean, to have 3 weeks off would be wow, gosh. You know, you could have a few days to just sleep or whatever. Then it would be like, ok, you're looking forward again. Maybe it wouldn't feel like

			you were losing out on the summer.
3	12		I just thought of a real big thing. The children, and granted when you have your big summer break, you have to retrain the kids. If you have them off for 15 days, you have to retrain them. So this means you'd have to retrain them 1-2-3-4 times. 4 times you're retraining those kids to your routine in the classroom.
3	10		If budget wasn't an issue, this would be my take on this. Instead of having 3 weeks off, I would have maybe two. Two weeks off for each of these breaks, and then do like the Europeans and have a month off for the summer. Now, of course you folks would get paid proportionately more. You'd pick up another 7 weeks, really 7 weeks, because then you would have less of that transitioning.
3	10		Summer vacation is a long time to regroup.
3	10		For me, looking at this, I think 3 weeks is probably a little too long.
3	12		I think people would really go for this if those 3 weeks fell during deer season!
3	10		Yeah, that would really push it through. You could rotate everything so that the fall break fell in November.
3	11		Or you could eliminate the fall break and then have your long break at Thanksgiving.
3	10		Maybe we could go to school in June when the bugs are really bad, and then when the bugs are gone in July, then we take off. We enjoy July and August, because they were really nasty last night. They were bad. And it is not even June yet!
3	11		I would really like the balanced calendar because I think for my kids, especially my 4 th grader with ADHD, I think it would be a lot easier for him to have the shorter breaks. He's not going to lose focus, he can have the breaks in between to fall back and take a breather, and I wouldn't have to feel like I want to kill my children at the end of summer.
3	10		Sounds like you need Dial Help on speed dial...
3	11		You know how there's animals who eat their children, I start thinking like that.
3	10		You know, there's a reason for that.
3	12		I guess if it went to this, I would want it to be on a one-year trial, so that it could be voted to go back if we didn't like it.
3	12		I would be really concerned about having just 30 days in the summer and being able to recharge.
3	10		That's 30 school days, now, so that's 6 weeks.
3	12		Don't we come back and start prepping for class by then anyway. But if it was a trial thing...
3	13		Even like a 2-year trial, because you'd need the second year to work out the kinks.

3	10		I think that would be an option. And the deer season has to be worked in to the calendar, definitely.
3	12		So, has anyone heard if it is more economical for schools to adopt a year-round calendar? After the initial cost of air conditioning, I don't know.
3	10		I think the students would be more productive.
3	12		But don't they lay people off in the summer sometimes.
3	13		So you'd have to figure all the kitchen help, all the custodial help, that isn't year-round employees, do not work in the summer.
3	12		So this would change by making a shorter lay-off.
3	10		They would probably collect unemployment during all of those times.
3	12		Would it affect benefits? Would part-time people be considered full-time or is it based upon the number of hours?
3	10		I would think you could be creative with that. Usually the definition of full time and part time is based upon the number of hours you work a week. So they aren't contractual.
3	12		But I think for school employees, that's different. I think it is how many hours you work in a calendar year.
3	10		You mean, from a union basis?
3	12		Well, I was a preschool teacher in _____ and I don't know if it was hours a week or...I'm just wondering about the other staff, like the aides.
3	10		Yeah, they're hourly. So their pay is based upon the number of hours they work in a week. Then they can collect unemployment benefits, depending on whether or not they...
3	12		I don't think they can. I don't think school employees can collect unemployment in the summer. Because that's your school year, so during this time can they?
3	10		But if you aren't collecting unemployment during this large summer vacation, you certainly aren't going to collect it during the 2-3 weeks off.
3	12		But if it was considered a year-round calendar, they may have to. I don't know...I'm just wondering.

APPENDIX I: CODED FOCUS GROUP DATA

Group	ID#	Coder1	Coder2	Qualitative Response
1	1	1	1	Well, when we lived in CA, my son went to school at a year-round school. And it worked very nicely there. Particularly, you know, one of the things that made a big difference was that it was Monterrey, California, so the temperature was pretty much the same all year. And so there wasn't a big time when you wanted to be off or not. But it was very nice because 6 weeks is actually a pretty long break for kids in the summer. I mean, I love my whole 3 months off, don't get me wrong, but it was a pretty long break really. I mean, it wasn't like they had not a nice summer vacation. And then they went to school for like 45 days. And then you had a 2 week break, a 2 week vacation.
1	2	1	1	The example here says 15 days.
1	1	6	6	Well, I don't remember exactly what [the break] was. But I know it seemed like he was getting out of school all the time.
1	2	6	6	Three weeks at Christmas would be just wonderful.
1	1	2	2	Yeah. So, the nice thing about it is, you know how you get so burned out, and you get like, so exhausted, it gives you a nice opportunity to just stop and really look at your class and see how and what they're doing, and so I thought that was a nice thing. I never really felt like I missed the summer that much because I knew that I would be getting another break coming up pretty soon.
1	3	5	5	But the weather there is always summer. The temperature is like what, 75?
1	1	4	4	Yeah. There were problems with it. I mean, people who work have to make arrangements for childcare. So that was...
1	5	4	4	What about teachers, as far as being able to go back to school. How did they work that out? Like a lot of times, I know I took three 6-weeks to go to school in the summer.
1	2	4	4	Well, the local universities would have to do some calendar adjustments for teachers, for their teaching classes.
1	1	4	4	Yeah, they'd have to offer them during that 30-day break. But you know, a lot of people are taking classes online now and then it doesn't even have to

				be done at certain times.
1	4	4	4	Or at night. I know I took a lot of my classes at night.
1	1	4	4	Yeah, the ones I took, I took at night. And if they went off the traditional calendar it might be easier to take those night classes because you'd have breaks to work on projects and class stuff.
1	5	1	1	I think that most countries other than our own, actually do have shorter summer break. India has the month of June off.
1	2	1	1	England has the month of August.
1	5	6	6	And then they come back because they have a lot of holidays.
1	2	6	6	They have a lot of holidays in England as well. A lot of times when there's a Friday/Monday weekend.
1	5	2	1	They're just holidays in India. But they have a lot of breaks. They only have the one month off. And they feel it is important because there's more continuity.
1	3	1	6	After that month, then do they switch grades?
1	5	6	1	In the summer. They switch in the summer then. They start in about the second week of July. Their finals are the end of May. And then they get off.
1	1	1	1	That's what they did in California, too. They went through to summer break and then that was the end of your school year. Then after the summer break of 6 weeks off they'd start back in the next grade.
1	2	1	1	Now here I think we should go through June and have July and part of August as our summer break.
1	1	5	5	Well, and you know I liked it in California but this is a very different climate. And I don't know, I don't know if it would be. It was very, very appreciated there.
1	2	1	1	I wonder where the fall break would be if we were to do this.
1	2	1	1	Do you have a calendar we can look at? Well, if we were to have July and the first two weeks of August off, then we would have to come back in mid-August. The state says we can't come to school in August.
1	4	1	4	Yes, it is the state law now that we begin after Labor Day.
1	2	6	6	So if we start after Labor Day the fall break would be the first three weeks of October.
1	2	6	6	That doesn't give 30 instructional days until Thanksgiving. They'd have to change that law.
1	5	6	6	6 weeks of school would be 30 days.

1	5	5	5	Yeah, because it is probably from a district in a warmer climate.
1	2	1	1	They probably have the last two weeks of June and the month of July off, or something like that, yeah.
1	3	1	1	I know in New Mexico they start in the middle of August.
1	5	1	1	Texas, Oklahoma...they all start the second week of August.
1	5	5	5	I don't know why, because it is hot there. I don't really get it but it really hot in June and they get off after Memorial Day so it must be the heat that...
1	1	4	4	In California, the school tried to go back to traditional and the teachers and parents, primarily the parents, fought to keep the balanced because the parents liked to be able to go on vacation in the winter and not have to pull their kids out.
1	1	2	2	And they felt it was better for the kids. They felt the summer was too long for the kids and they do lose things.
1	1	4	4	And once they got used to it, you know they had done it for awhile, they had already arranged their day care. Their day care was a few weeks in the summer and then it picked up again once school was in session.
1	2	2	2	From my standpoint, we have to start all over after the summer break with my kids.
1	5	2	2	And wouldn't you think that would be the case in first and second grade, too? That they would lose a lot over the summer.
1	2	2	2	Well, LD [learning disabled] kids lose almost everything. We reteach throughout September and October.
1	3	6	6	I went from kindergarten to second grade one year and I thought the second graders were, like geniuses. That was a whole grade level jump for me, though.
1	4	4	4	What do you think the parent support would be for something like that, a change to a balanced calendar, year-round?
1	4	4	4	What do you think? A lot of them complain when we have inservices because they have to find day care. Day care is a big thing. Here they'd have to find it more frequently. I don't have a problem with it because I'm home in the summer. Here they get someone situated for the summer and then they don't have to worry about it for 12 weeks. They get them in a program like GE or something. But what about

				when you have frequent breaks like this? I'm just thinking I wouldn't have a problem with it because I'd be off. But parents who work the full year...
1	2	4	4	But don't you think three weeks frequently would be easier than once a month, half a day? I would think a day care provider would be willing to say, yeah, I'll take them for three weeks than a once a month half day.
1	1	3	3	Yes, but interestingly enough they loved it. But the reason the school wanted to go back to the traditional calendar was because they found it was more expensive to have the balanced.
1	2	6	6	But was that a multi-track school system?
1	5	6	6	What do you mean by multi-track?
1	5	1	4	So there are other teachers teaching in your room while you're off. Is that what you're saying? You would share a room? And you may not go back to the same room when you come back after a vacation?
1	5	3	3	Because this is what happened in the St. Louis school I was in... it must've been multi-track so they could put more kids into the same building.
1	5	3	3	Well, for one thing you are using the building all the time.
1	4	3	3	Yeah, in the summer there's a 12 week break where the building is not used.
1	1	3	3	But wouldn't you close down the building during the two or three-week breaks?
1	2	3	3	I would think not heating the building Thanksgiving break... well, we're heating the building by fall break. And we're still heating in spring... I mean, we're still heating the building now, for heaven's sakes. That seems like there are more days: three, 3-week breaks, which means there would be 48 days where you could turn the heat off. That seems like you could save money right there.
1	1	3	3	Yeah, it seems like it. And I mean, the support staff work per hour, so that wouldn't be different.
1	5	3	3	Was it air conditioned?
1	1	6	6	No, no it wasn't.
1	3	4	4	You know, a lot of families up here can't afford to fly their family to go somewhere in the winter. Many families here vacation, go camping, whatever in the summer. That's their vacation. And if you start cutting into that...
1	3	4	4	But I'm just saying that some people go to their

				camp the day school gets out and they don't come back until the end of summer.
1	3	4	4	It would be a change for them
1	1	4	4	Then you start thinking...is there something to do during these breaks?
1	3	4	4	Because let me tell you during spring break when we didn't have the money to go on vacation and it was muddy...last spring I was so grateful I didn't have little kids. Thank you.
1	2	5	6	And this year it snowed, we had a blizzard.
1	3	6	6	I know! It was terrible. And I would've been stuck at home with 5 kids. And you have to remember that somebody is in that position. Spring break was never my favorite when I had little kids.
1	2	5	5	I always hated the fact that the school's spring break was never the same time as Tech's.
1	2	2	2	I think it is better for students because they forget a lot. Every September you spend time reviewing and then they have to take MEAPs in October.
1	5	2	2	You know, think about how hard it got on the students between Christmas and spring break. I mean, March wasn't too bad in my room this year but in the past it has been just awful. If the kids knew they were getting a break every 45 days, it might be a little easier. I think it would be. I really think we need a break in the middle of February.
1	1	1	1	45 days is 9 weeks, right? So that would be a break after every marking period.
1	2	1	1	So we'd have 45 days and a marking period. And then 30 days until Thanksgiving and then another 15 days and a marking period. Then 45 days and a marking period. Then another 45 days and then they would be in the next class.
1	4	2	2	Do you think they would transition very well? Coming off the breaks and coming back to school? I've found that after spring break it was horrible. The kids thought they were done. Spring break, they come back, we're done with school. I have kids who have not settled down ever since. So, if you have the balanced calendar would this happen?
1	2	2	2	You'd think that would work. It might happen the first year when they were getting into it, but I don't think they would after that.
1	3	2	2	I'm wondering if the teachers would give a homework assignment over the break, while the kids were on vacation.

1	2	2	2	I can see the high school teachers giving an assignment. Research...look at all the time they'd have to do a research paper.
1	1	2	2	When [my son] went to school in California, break was his break.
1	2	6	6	They didn't give homework.
1	4	6	6	We'd have to make that clear.
1	5	2	2	Well, we don't give homework over breaks now. Why would we then?
1	2	6	6	High school teachers give homework over break. My kids always had something over Christmas break. But it was to read a book, or decide what they were going to write a research paper on, or start their research. They always had something to do.
1	1	4	4	I think the hardest part would be talking people into giving up their summer. I enjoy your summer.
1	5	5	5	And I think what brought up is valid. In this community, especially because we have such long winters, many people do have camps and love to live out at the lake.
1	1	4	4	And if teachers were told we're cutting half your summer off, there would be an outcry about that. I can see that would be a problem.
1	4	5	5	Yeah, you pay for your camp all winter long and you want to use it while you're able to, and that's during the summer.
1	2	4	4	I think what was mentioned about taking classes in the summer. NMU would have to redo their schedules for that 30 days. Continuing education would be the biggest impact I would see.
1	5	6	6	I just wonder, though, because when I was teaching at MTU Nursery, it was so neat that every 10 weeks I'd have 2 weeks off.
1	2	6	6	That's like Australia. 10 weeks on, 2 weeks off.
1	5	2	2	When I had two weeks off it gave me a chance to clean up my room, freshen it up and everything, and it just seemed like an ideal schedule for me as a teacher. And so I'm wondering if teachers would eventually feel that same way, too, refreshed if they were getting a break.
1	2	6	6	I'm not sure if the MTU Nursery does that anymore now that Tech is on semesters. They were still on terms when you were teaching there.
1	1	4	4	I think that if you approached the staff about this and asked them how do you feel about this, I think for the most part they would be resistant.

1	2	4	4	I would think most of them would not want to do it.
1	3	4	4	Hard to know. It would be interesting to see, maybe do a vote. You know, change is...change is...I don't like change, in case you haven't figured that out. But do you know what? When I'm forced into it I usually realize, oh, this is fine.
1	1	4	4	Change is good. It is just scary going into it.
1	5	4	4	I think there are a lot of problems we don't anticipate until we step in.
1	3	4	4	I know that having a longer spring break for people who have children at home, they will be screeching for three weeks in March.
1	4	4	4	But at that time it is still snowing out and they love to play outside.
1	2	6	1	Say we started after the last week in July...that's 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9 and then three weeks off, 1-2-3. No, that doesn't quite work. I thought I had it so it worked.
1	3	6	6	It would be March, April, something like that.
1	5	5	5	Maybe in Missouri it would be okay, because it would be warm.
1	3	5	5	Even in Wisconsin it would probably be okay, but not here.
1	5	6	6	And maybe even southern Michigan.
1	1	5	5	You know, if we had a good winter with snow, a lot of people up here would be downhill skiing.
1	3	6	6	That's okay at Christmas, then it isn't a problem. But three weeks in the spring?
1	5	6	6	If it is yucky weather, it wouldn't be fun.
1	2	1	1	5-6-7-8-9. That's it. The first three weeks of March. For the 2006-2007 school year it would've been March 5 th through the 23 rd .
1	1	6	6	It is still cold then.
1	3	6	6	It's freezing.
1	1	6	6	Yeah, but I mean the snow...
1	5	6	6	But the snow is pretty decent.
1	1	6	6	It's not ugly yet.
1	2	6	6	1-2-3-4-5...
1	1	6	6	The skiing would be good.
1	5	4	4	Yeah, usually some of the best skiing I've done is in March.
1	3	4	6	But that's cross-country. You can usually cross-country ski until the end of March.
1	1	4	4	A lot of families cross-country ski.
1	2	6	6	6-7-8-9...that takes us until the 9 th of July...that

				can't be right...
1	3	4	4	I think it is clear what my opinion is...I look at this and I just think yuck.
1	1	4	4	I have to say I'm not nuts about losing my summer.
1	3	4	4	You know what, though? I'm thinking that by August 10 I'm ready to start school. And basically a lot of us are here.
1	4	5	5	But the weather is just getting perfect at that time. Even if we adjusted it so we get out later and we start later. Still September it's 80 degrees out some days.
1	2	2	2	Not having to reteach everything in September.
1	1	2	2	Breaks in the winter.
1	5	2	2	Knowing that it isn't endless, knowing you'll have a break coming up.
1	4	2	2	Yeah, knowing you've got breaks more often.
1	2	1	1	I like that 15 day fall break.
1	3	6	6	How many days of learning do we have between Christmas and spring break?
1	5	6	6	55 days here on the example.
1	2	6	6	This year we had 63 of class.
1	2	6	6	Somehow the 75 days from the beginning to Thanksgiving doesn't feel as long.
1	4	2	2	No, because we're refreshed from summer. The kids are still anxious to learn.
1	1	2	2	So we had 65 days...no, 63...on the year-round calendar we'd be almost a month earlier getting a break. Right when we needed it.
1	5	2	2	At the beginning of March is when I really started losing them.
1	2	3	3	I think that it's a great idea and if [the superintendent] could ever figure out that it would save him some money, he won't ask anybody.
1	5	3	3	I'm not sure that it would.
1	2	3	3	You'd have to figure it out.
1	1	3	3	I don't know, though...what about the support staff?
1	2	3	3	They work the month of June, and then they lay them off for the months of July and August. On the year-round calendar they wouldn't be able to lay them off for those 3 week periods.
1	1	4	4	But why would they have them [cleaners] here if the kids aren't here?
1	4	4	4	Cleaning the building.
1	1	3	3	Every 45 days? Well, maybe the building could use the cleaning more often, but I think they would shut the doors except during the summer for deep-

				cleaning. I didn't realize that with the aides, we'd talked about going to a 4-day work instead of a 5-day week, and that would save the school a lot of money because they'd be paying the aides for fewer days.
1	2	3	3	On this [year-round] calendar, it is still 180 days, and they would still be paid the same. They get paid by their hours, and we'd still be working the same number of hours.
1	1	3	3	But you know where it hurts them is before school, after school, and that kind of stuff. And that changes it. That's different. So you know, that actually would save the school a lot of money.
1	3	6	6	Four days, but going an hour longer.
1	1	6	6	No, it is something like 7 minutes a day.
1	5	6	6	Baraga and L'Anse are now getting out before Memorial Day because of that.
1	3	6	6	They aren't doing 180 days anymore, they are going by hours.
1	4	6	6	They do 170 days.
1	2	6	6	But we aren't doing 180 days this year, either. I've kept a careful count and we're on day 169 now and we do not have 11 days left.
1	3	6	6	We have 10 days.
1	1	6	6	So do Baraga and L'Anse have a four day week then?
1	4	6	6	No, they just added a few minutes to the beginning and end of their day.
1	1	6	3	Back to the 4 day week. I had only thought about how it could save the school money, but when it was brought up the aides knew. The aides knew it would be coming from their pockets.
1	2	6	6	Because they're hourly.
1	1	6	6	Would a calendar like this impact them?
1	2	3	3	I don't see why if it is the same number of days. Now if we went to a longer school day, like now we have 7.75 hour day. If we went to an 8 hour day and a 4 day week, that would make 32 hours a week. Right now we're 7.75 for 5 days, which comes out to 77.5 for two weeks.
1	3	6	6	I don't get it. How would the L'Anse/Baraga when we are going more hours if they get paid more by going 5 days...why aren't we getting out early?
1	2	6	6	More hours. Because they are going for a longer school day.
1	4	6	6	That's a whole other calendar.

1	3	6	6	But it's like 14 minutes.
1	1	6	6	They do a longer school day, but a shorter year. They have fewer days. They don't do the 4 days.
1	5	6	6	Now it's on time, it's not by days.
1	2	6	6	They do 5 days, and they do a longer school day.
1	5	6	6	Then they get out earlier at the end of the school year.
1	2	6	6	They go by contact time, as opposed to the 180 days.
1	5	6	6	So they've been getting out early for quite a few years now.
1	3	6	6	I think we should be out the day after Memorial Day the way it's going now. But if we had year-round school that wouldn't matter.
1	2	6	6	As soon as we get out of school, the weather is going to go down the crapper.
2	7	1	1	I know it is typical of what is done in Europe. I think Germany has a calendar very similar to the balanced calendar. I guess the nice thing there is you have more breaks during the school year. Of course it is harder to take a long summer vacation.
2	8	6	6	I don't really know anything about it.
2	6	3	3	I associate year-round education with not having enough facilities and it helps to have more kids in the school, logistics and everything. That's what I associate with year-round school. Fewer buildings, too many kids to teach, utilize the building all year round. That's my thought process.
2	9	2	2	I feel the same way. Another thing I associate with it is more of a constant exposure to learning so there is no longer interim breaks between learning experiences. I think that would be notorious if you were a teacher or an educator. I think you'd be met with more success.
2	6	3	3	Cost.
2	8	3	3	That would be the first thing I would think about. The cost of keeping the school open year-round.
2	6	3	3	I think that there are, what I've understood and I may not understand correctly, is there are pluses to utilizing a building all year round because it is a building, let's use it. But at the same time you're employing people year-round and right now we're going to outsourcing. Not outsourcing...now, what is it? You know, you don't hire unionized employees. You hire them from an outside corporation. What's that called?
2	8	6	6	Isn't it outsourcing?

2	6	6	6	Is it outsourcing? Is that what it's called?
2	9	6	6	Outsourcing.
2	6	3	3	OK, outsourcing. You're outsourcing. I would think that would be very expensive. You would have to hire bus drivers all year round as opposed to being a nine month employee. Cleaning...they probably don't hire cleaners in the summertime because the building isn't used as much. Where, to me, if you were using it year-round the upkeep of a building when busses are being used, to me that would be an added cost factor. But I don't know if it is, it is just what I think it might be.
2	7	3	3	One concern I would have is in the summertime the temperature in the buildings, because we don't have air conditioning, it might possibly become unbearable in the buildings in the summer.
2	6	5	5	And I think that in this community we would be competing with Tech and their breaks and you wouldn't have...our times off sometimes coincide with theirs, where if you're going to school all year round and you've got professors or you've got parents who are students, and they've got the summer off and they've got two weeks here and we don't, to me that would be a nightmare in the sense of how many kids are going to be coming to school. But, I don't know again if that would necessarily be a huge factor, but to me competing with the calendar at Michigan Tech could cause problems.
2	8	5	5	It already causes problems when [MTU's] spring break doesn't match ours.
2	6	5	5	It does. But you've got students who are parents, or parents who are students, and they finish in May. Well, I'm leaving, I'm going somewhere. And it's like whoa, but wait a minute, your child is not done with their school year. Can we plan on your child coming back in June or July? But I don't truly understand how the whole calendar works.
2	9	4	4	Well, I think you have sort of an innate down side, too, and that is sort of an outreach training people up to snuff to even accept this kind of scheduling. I think any change is usually met with some kind of resistance. And you might find the biggest hurdle you might encounter is just change.
2	6	2	2	I think what ID#9 said that the time from the end of the traditional school year to picking up classes in September there is a period of time where you have

				to review and I would think that would lessen if it was a constant sort of thing with more breaks but the breaks are shorter, so the continuum would be more cohesive. But other than that...
2	7	2	2	I think one very good advantage is, probably more so for the older students, where you really get burned out before Christmas comes or by the time summer comes because you haven't really had a break. I think having a 15 day break three times during the year would just be really nice. To be able to take off, possibly with your parents if they are lucky enough to have vacation at the same time you do, and then be able to just get a complete break from school.
2	7	4	4	One thing that I know in Europe, where they have this balanced calendar, is that parents often get 6 weeks of vacation and so families will often go for vacations during each of those breaks. Whereas, if you have someone who only has 2 weeks of vacation during the year, this benefit won't be there.
2	8	4	4	Well, if you have two working parents it could make a big difference. For instance, during the summer, with two working parents, they need to find someplace for their kids to be. If the kids are in school during the summer, this would lift the burden from the parents of finding a place for their kids to be and their child would be doing something educational rather than just being in daycare.
2	6	4	4	What about finding daycare up here? I mean, if you've got many, many breaks as shown on this balanced calendar and your child needs daycare, it would be tough to find daycare for the little ones, kindergarteners and first graders, if mom and dad do have a traditional type of job where you get 2 or 3, 4 weeks off a year, they don't follow this balanced calendar. To me it would be extremely hard to find daycare for this many days with the number of day care centers we have. We have limited resources there, I believe, but I'm not a parent, so I don't know the problems. But I would think it would be a problem around here.
2	7	4	4	It seems like in the summertime people have figured out how to do the daycare and they're all set up. The school systems currently have summer programs. I would think that if a school was to adopt a balanced calendar part of the burden might fall upon the

				school system, like some form of daycare for the younger kids during those breaks. Because if now the school has the summer program, basically it is for grade school students, so if they were to institute the same program during the shorter breaks that might get rid of a lot of problems for parents.
2	7	4	4	If it is provided through a school system, like Head Start, then it doesn't make a difference. If there aren't enough Head Start spaces, then it might be a problem. I think in the summertime people have figured out how to do it.
2	7	4	4	I think if the system changes I would think it would take awhile for people to adjust.
2	7	5	5	I assume that parents who are faculty or both parents are faculty in this community [Michigan Tech University faculty], the traditional calendar serves them well because the parents are all off during the summer vacation of the children. Whereas, with the balanced calendar, if Tech stays the same, then all the faculty will be scrambling.
2	6	4	4	And the cost. If we were to go to BHK [Head Start], who's to say they can afford it?
2	7	4	4	Faculty most likely could. It would be the lower-income families who might have a problem. Because if you have school-working faculty members I would think paying for daycare would be difficult.
2	6	4	4	No, but I think that in this community we have a lot of people who are not Tech [employees] as well. I'm looking at other districts, too, and that would be very difficult for them to pay for daycare during the 15 days and BHK seems to be pretty strapped right now, financially, and its like how could they afford to stretch out a program for the balanced calendar? Can it be done? I'm sure it probably can be. But, to me, that could be a possible problem.
2	9	4	4	Well, you know we can talk about daycare and other things, but if you think about a bigger picture, you know, you are going to look at changes in the food service program, the bussing program, daycare is what we've discussed, vacation periods. You know, you're looking across the boards at change in our community and how people do things. I mean, it is an overall change. It isn't just daycare, you know. It goes into all sorts of stuff, many facets.
2	9	3	3	Sure. I guess. Well, how about food service? All of sudden you have year-round food service. What does

				that mean? Does that mean more cost? I think it seems like you'd have more people there and for longer periods, probably. I think it gets back to a lot of cost ramifications for these changes.
2	9	2	2	You may be more effectively teaching
2	9	3	3	but you are also keeping that building illuminated during the course of the year longer and you have more staff there to keep it clean and open and functioning. I think it really pivots around cost. You could focus on man hours or day length. You name it. More food...there are all kinds of things you could think about.
2	7	4	4	It seems like the number of vacation days and the number of work days is identical. So the question is, can you get the people who do the work, the teachers, the custodians, the food service people, to accept the same salary working year-round with the vacations evenly spread instead of working nine months with the long summer? If the people are using the summers as vacation, it may not matter much. But if the people are using their summers for other jobs, then it may matter a great deal.
2	8	3	3	It is true that some people [school employees] work other jobs during the summer. So this calendar could affect that kind of thing.
2	9	6	6	And what does the state have to say? Does the state mandate contact time or number of hours? The state law would...you'd have to stay within those parameters of course. Now, to come down on you and say it's bad to exceed that, I'm sure, I'm sure you have to weigh that as well.
2	7	1	1	But if the number of hours is identical, which they seem to be, then you wouldn't think the state would care. So the one great advantage of the balanced calendar, I think, would just be the sense of more balance in the school year for the kids. Not getting bored by the end of the summer, not knowing what to do, but each vacation is a vacation that you're really looking forward to and by the end of it you're still not tired of it. I think with the shorter vacations you'd really be eager for every one of them. And even the 30 days off [in the summer], I think would add up to 6 weeks, and even with 6 weeks off, by that time I don't think the kids would be bored to tears or up to their ears in trouble, for the teenagers.
2	7	4	4	So there may be benefits to kids, especially the older

				kids when they aren't in daycare. My kids aren't there yet, and I'm not a working mom, but the people who are working moms who have teenagers on their own all summer long, the balanced calendar may be a great benefit because after 6 weeks, they may be at sports camp or this or that and it may be reasonably easy to find activities to keep them busy for 6 weeks. Whereas now, I don't know that people can find activities to keep them busy for all 3 months of summer vacation.
2	7	2	2	So, in addition to giving you breaks during the school calendar, it may have a benefit for the kids where it is more balanced. There are not periods of great boredom or periods of great stress, but just more even.
2	6	3	3	I guess we hear a lot about cost of running the buildings and so forth and so on, and I guess I look at this balanced calendar and when you're using a building all year round, your utilities have to be considerably higher
2	6	3	3	you'd have to air condition, I mean, I don't know how you could possibly not. These buildings, I don't think are constructed, at least the older part of the building is not constructed, to have air conditioning put in so if you did it would be very costly. So I'm thinking, what does that do to the budget? How much does that take out of it? To me, it would be very costly to implement. Maybe in the long run it would work, but the initial cost would cause the budget to skyrocket.
2	7	3	3	Would the cost, other than the air conditioning, be terribly different? Because in the [break] times, the 15 day vacation periods during the winter, you could turn the heat down and you could drop all the utility costs during those periods, which are typically heating periods. And so the air conditioning time in the summer would be additional, but you may actually save during the school year because you would only pay for the building when it is used and the use would be identical.
2	9	3	3	So what you're saying is the retrofitting of the buildings with air conditioning might be a wash in costs after a while.
2	7	6	6	It could be.
2	6	6	6	Yes, it could.
2	7	3	3	I don't know how air conditioning compares to

				heating in cost up here.
2	9	6	6	I don't air condition.
2	6	4	4	For myself, I think we'd have to go back to what ID#9 said, the comment that ID#9 made, it is just changing a mindset. Something that we would have to get accustomed to is a new calendar, and having never experienced it, I really don't know the impact it would have on my personal life and how I view things. It is certainly a different mindset that I would have to take. Would it be more positive after I had experienced it? I may find out this is great! I can't foresee any serious problems and yet I haven't experienced it. And yet is a matter of getting used to something very, very different.
2	8	4	4	I agree. It would just take some getting used to. But it can be something that teachers may come to like. They would just have to think differently, and not focus on that big summer break, instead focus on the shorter breaks.
2	6	5	5	I said this before, but one thing we are competing against is Tech's calendar. And when Tech is on Thanksgiving break, now that they are on semesters, it is not uncommon for me the whole week before Thanksgiving I've lost 3-4 kids. And if their Christmas break doesn't follow ours, I've lost 3-4 kids because they've gone home or whatever. And so as a teacher I would be concerned about how this balanced calendar is going to compete with Michigan Tech's schedule. Losing 3-5 kids, you pretty much put the brakes on, especially in the middle of the year because there is so much instruction going on. So I think Tech is a big influence on the traditional calendar. Can it be worked around? Maybe. But right now I would find that to be a real problem being an instructor and having 5 kids gone during our 45 days of learning while Tech's on break. Well, I've lost those kids. So I think we'd have to talk to Tech and how do they view a balanced calendar.
2	9	3	3	I'm going to be a devil's advocate and move over a little bit over here. One of the basic concepts, if you're going to go into teaching, is that you say I'm going to...I'm not going to make a lot of money, I have sort of an altruistic bent about me, I'm going to teach kids, I'm going to better society, and all the altruistic things that teachers need to have. But part

				of the game is that they think they have a trade-off. They have the summers off. I don't want to use the word off too loudly because people are now forced to go back and have continuing credits. But that is one of the big trade-offs for the profession. I'm not going to make as much money but I have my summers, a good chunk of my summer, off. So I can go off with my family somewhere, we can vacation, go to Europe, whatever we want, for an extended period of time. That's one of the benefits that you as a teacher on a conventional, traditional system have. Now if you removed that and you don't have a big block of time would it be harder, I'm just saying the devil's advocate, would it be harder, would you have to pay people more, would you have to offer other incentives to get people to join the profession?
2	8	3	3	I think, yes, because the way teachers are going to view it is now you're asking me to work year round, and I want more money.
2	9	1	6	Even though it is the same contact time, the same number of hours of instruction.
2	7	4	3	Not being a teacher, but having thought about the benefits of having that as your job, I would think one of the biggest advantages is that your times off are the same times off as your kids. So if the children are off of school, you're off of school. Now with the traditional calendar or the balanced calendar, it is not so crucial. But if only 2-3 school systems adopt the balanced calendar and the other ones don't, then that would wreck havoc.
2	7	4	4	Because the reason so many moms pick teaching, in my view, is so that they have their time with the kids when the kids are home. I think that's one of the reasons women sign up to be a teacher. Now say Chassell and Houghton went to balanced calendars but Calumet and E. B. Holman did not, you might teach in E. B. Holman and your kids go to Houghton. Then you've just ruined your life, you know. I mean, now you've got to scramble to find days off with your kids. In order for this to really work for teachers, I think a lot of school districts in the area would have to agree to do it at the same time and on the same schedule.
2	9	5	5	Probably even Michigan Tech. Maybe they could orient their breaks a little differently instead of on the conventional system. I mean, with Tech

				professors, instead of the traditional calendar, if they could somehow work around that a little bit. Have a little bit, that would help, too.
2	6	4	4	I think because we have so many districts in this community, you brought up something, ID#7, that I'm not sure how many programs we share in our district with other school districts, but everybody would have to be on the same page. I mean, you could not have Chassell saying we're opting for the traditional and Houghton opting for the balanced because if we're sharing any programs with other school districts that's no longer an advantage and in these remote areas sometimes that's the only way we can have a program is if we share it with Hancock, long distance or whatever, so everybody needs to be on the same page, and I think even trying to get a calendar among all of these school districts is difficult in the sense of a traditional one. You know, they want to start before Labor Day, though legally that is no longer an issue. We want to have a mid-spring break or mid-winter break, we want to be out by the end of May. Even locally this is a nightmare for superintendents and principals because some districts are marching to their own tune. And right now they're allowed to do that because there isn't a balanced calendar. They just put in their x-amount of hours in x-amount of days, the union agrees, and they can have whatever calendar they want. But it would have to be a matter of every district saying we opt for a balanced calendar. If one district doesn't want to do it, you've lost your shared programs, or they could not share it with you, obviously.
2	8	4	4	This would really affect the high school. Especially with their career-tech program through the CCISD
2	8	5	4	and dual-enrollment with Michigan Tech...
2	7	5	4	You're right. The dual-enrollment would be affected.
2	6	4	4	So this could have serious consequences if every school district is not moving to a balanced calendar.
2	9	4	6	How many seniors go? I know they go in the morning...how many seniors are there participating in these programs?
2	8	6	6	For career-tech?
2	9	6	6	You might see 30-40 students participating in those programs?
2	8	6	6	Yes. It is offered to juniors and seniors.

2	7	5	5	And there are a lot of kids who take advanced math courses at Tech so that would be very difficult to do with the balanced calendar. And I don't think that Tech would be in the least willing to change their calendar because their goal is to get kids in summer internships. And they want the longest possible, they seem to be stretching their summers longer and longer, and cutting their year length shorter and shorter, to give the students the maximum number of hours for their internship possible. And their school year stops so soon in the spring because if your students aren't ready to begin their internship by a certain date, the internship will be swiped up by someone who can begin earlier. And so I can't imagine them, Tech, changing their calendar.
2	9	5	5	Well, if you've been to Career Days, that's a big deal. A third of the kids, two thirds of the kids standing in line (I represent [a government agency] there) I'd say two thirds of the kids standing there are interested in internships versus permanent, full-time positions. You're competing against General Motors, and anybody else. These kids are getting out at a certain time and they're weighing how long they can have some kind of summer experience and we lose a lot of them to earlier positions in the Forest Service and everything else because we might start 2-3 weeks later.
2	6	6	6	So we think we have to consider these programs.
2	8	4	4	We also have shared programs. Sometimes our high school offers a class that Hancock doesn't offer, so the kids come over for the class. Or we send kids to Hancock to take a course we don't offer. How would distance learning work?
2	6	6	6	Is there a feeling about how the state department of education views year-round education? Are they trying to, down in Lansing, are they trying to force or to encourage year-round schools in the state? Is there a feel for what the state department is doing?
2	9	3	3	Why is there such a preponderous number in California, let's say? Because of the overwhelming numbers and they have you go year-round to take advantage of their facilities? Why so many out there? Why do they choose to do it.
2	6	6	6	I don't think she can tell us, and we respect that.
2	8	5	5	I'm just thinking that with the balanced calendar it would really affect high school kids. If they work in

				the summer, they take summer jobs, how that is going to affect them being employed in the summer if they have shorter summer breaks? And that could affect a lot of businesses in the community who depend on summer workers.
2	6	5	5	It almost goes back to the farmers needing the extra hands in the fields. But here it is working in a restaurant.
2	7	5	5	But in a way I think the purpose of school is to learn, not to be making money when you're in high school. So I think...
2	8	6	6	Some kids need the extra money to help their families.
2	7	6	6	The families need the high school students' earnings?
2	8	6	6	Sometimes they need that extra money.
2	6	5	5	Look at just by us starting after Labor Day. Look at what the tourism industry had the power to say you're starting school after Labor Day because we need the kids to work in Copper Harbor, we need kids to work in these tourist areas...
2	7	4	4	I thought it was so families would go on vacation.
2	8	5	5	No, it was the tourism board.
2	7	6	6	That decision was based upon child labor?
2	6	5	5	I think so. I think they wanted to keep the kids working in Copper Harbor and the touristy areas and they pushed for it. You know, ID#8, you brought up a good point. How would a business view a balanced calendar? You would lose a lot of cheap labor, and I don't think that they would be happy about that.
2	7	4	4	I guess it works because if you moved to a place that has a year-round calendar, you would adjust. So, you would just go with the flow. It's just when you have to make a change, and everybody makes a change, that people get all up in arms. But I guess the big thing to do would be to ask those communities that have gone and made the change, has this been beneficial? What problems did this cause? I think that would be what to do.
2	6	5	5	But you'd have to find communities that share your type of standard of living, and what is the trade that keeps your community viable? Well, for us it is tourism.
2	6	5	5	Without tourism and Tech...they are both very influential. And so you have to take in not just your school community and how the decisions would

				affect them, but also the greater community. Copper Harbor, and how does it affect Tech...whereas, in other places that might not be a problem. I think tourism is really what generates money for this community so we need to be sensitive to what their needs are, too.
3	12	6	6	Not much.
3	13	6	6	Not much at all. This is the first time that I realized that year-round education didn't mean more days of school.
3	10	6	6	What was the question again?
3	10	2	2	I know it is quite common in other countries and those countries are actually much further ahead of us in education, in educating their kids. It seems to be more efficient, the kids seem to be able to advance further without that large summer break, and actually I think they usually have a smaller summer break. This is probably a pretty long one relative to some of the countries that have year-round education. And you know, I know that we did the summer vacation thing because we were an agricultural-based country. Well, that hasn't been true for 50 years and we seemed to not have moved forward in that 50 years.
3	13	6	6	One thing, because I just graduated in 2004 with my elementary ed degree, and in learning about things, because it was discussed when we were in school, you know, year round education and stuff. In Europe it is not, education isn't really the same as it is here. We are expected to teach all children. They don't. As early as 6 th or 7 th grade, they take tests to see what their aptitude is. So they're put into something that goes higher or into a trade-type job, and they don't really teach to all the students.
3	10	1	6	Right, it isn't the one-size-fits-all education system which serves no one. But that's a whole other topic for discussion.
3	11	2	2	I did have some prior knowledge. My brother is from California and all his children were in a year-round system there and it seemed to really work well. They were all very good students and they didn't have those few weeks of you know, get back into the swing of school, and learn the things you may have forgotten from the previous year. So, instead of wasting those weeks of review, they were able to just keep going.

3	12	4	4	And my children are beyond sitters, but I'm just wondering how that would work out with parents and babysitters, you know, with year-round school. I don't know if it would make it easier or if it would make it harder. That would be something to look into, too.
3	13	4	4	And if most of the schools were generally the same calendar, it would be like, okay we need daycare for this 6 weeks and that 3 weeks.
3	13	5	4	And you wonder, too, with high school students. I mean, a lot of them work all the time, like 10 hours a week. But some only work during the summer.
3	13	4	4	And I think a lot of it is that nobody likes change. They just want to do it the way it was.
3	12	3	3	The cost of air conditioning for schools, because going through the summer, we cannot go like we've been in 80 degree heat. It is too much. The cost of putting air conditioning into the schools is a big issue.
3	10	2	5	No one performs well in such warm temperatures.
3	12	5	5	No. And around here because of the area, the summers are when people want to be out and doing things and having school during that time is harder, you know. The kids shut down, the parents shut down.
3	11	2	2	Although maybe with more breaks they may not get that way. It might not be that bad.
3	12	6	6	Although having the breaks during the winter...
3	13	4	4	Not everyone can afford to go somewhere. You know, like during the winter, you may not be able to afford to go somewhere warm or whatever. Whereas in the summertime it is easier to hang out in the yard, or go to the local park, to the lake house.
3	10	4	4	In the winter you could always go skiing or snowshoeing...
3	11	5	5	As a school of choice parent, I would really like three weeks of the winter that I don't have to drive the kids in. That would be just thrilling not to have to go out in the cold and do that.
3	12	6	6	That is true
3	12	4	4	[I do not prefer to] work during the summer.
3	10	6	6	I work in the summer all the time.
3	12	4	4	I know you do. But that is something teachers have gotten used to. And it is hard for them to change.
3	13	4	4	And a lot of teachers take their continuing education credits during the summer.

3	10	4	4	Yeah, but with online courses and stuff that is so easy now to do.
3	12	6	6	Not when you're working full time and you have a family.
3	10	6	6	Yeah, I've done it. I've worked and gone to school. I've done all my homework at 2:00 in the morning...
3	12	6	6	That works for some people, but not all.
3	10	4	4	You can do it if you really want to. And those online courses, you can find classes that are really flexible that have open-ended enrollments.
3	10	2	2	Well, I think of the summer learning loss as a big piece of what you would gain. I have a son that has a learning disability and I notice that in the summer he might retain more of the things he doesn't have a problem with, but in that area where he has a problem, we lose a lot because that muscle needs to be worked every day. It is like physical therapy. You can't take three months off and then expect to walk back in and be in the same place. It just isn't going to happen.
3	12	2	2	Coming from the standpoint also as a parent, there are things you can do as a parent to help your child not lose as much, knowing that that happens. Um, I've had to do that with my son. He's a slow reader and I've had to make sure he read and did all kinds of things during the summer.
3	10	2	2	Well, I've had him tutored, I've had him you know...I've spent a fortune, believe me. It isn't that I'm not doing those things. But the school piece happening, it would just do him a lot better to have a consistent program.
3	12	2	2	I worry about burn-out with kids going all year. I truly do. But we're starting children in school at a much younger age and having it continuous, I worry about burnout by high school years and the dropout rate.
3	10	2	2	Well, I think the dropout rate is from the school system disenfranchising groups of students with the one-size-fits-all education. I think that's where the dropout rate comes from. You folks probably realize that more than I do. That you can't make, you know, 30 kids in the classroom happy and put them in a situation where they're going to learn effectively. Some are going to be bored, some aren't going to get it, and you're going to lose people because of that. That, I think, is the biggest cause of the dropout rate.

3	12	6	6	That definitely is a cause, but I do worry about burnout, and I'm not sure this would. It's just something I think should be looked at.
3	10	2	2	If you could deliver a curriculum at a person's learning level and pace it, the burnout wouldn't be there. It all has to be gauged. With the differences in students and this one-size-fits-all stuff, it is a problem. I mean, look at Detroit. They're graduating 40% of their students on time, 40%. Something's got to happen. Now it's not, I don't think that's burnout. I think there's a lot more going on there, and it has to do with their social structures in their homes and all the obstacles that are in the way of them learning and getting to school. But I think there is a lot bigger problems, and in fact I think summer vacation can actually add to that because the students see summer vacation as: see what I could have if I didn't go to school, I could have all this time off. And they don't get the consequences until they're in prison somewhere. It is just the way that they aren't mature enough to understand it. I think there are other contributing factors that are much more significant to the burnout rate than time spent in school.
3	11	4	4	Just from my experience with my kids, they are...that last month of summer is very difficult because they're bored, they're at each other's throats, they need to be back in school.
3	10	4	4	Parents say, I can't wait for school to start, I can't wait. My kid is driving me crazy. You can only be...you have to be a social director.
3	13	4	4	Well, for me now, I grew up on a dairy and beef farm. I was never bored during the summer. I missed school right away because I lived out in the country so I didn't get to see my friends. But even for my own children, they weren't ever really bored. They always had something to do. My parents still had the family farm, we had a vegetable garden, they had to go and weed, and they had a lot of jobs to do. So I think a lot of times now if they're in households where one or both parents work, they have a lot of time on their hands. They aren't always doing something constructive, so it is easy for them to become bored.
3	11	6	6	I keep my kids real active, but it is a personality thing in our household. There are four kids, and they are all so different. They are at each other's throats.

3	10	6	6	Yeah. Well, they're kids. They're siblings. That is going to happen.
3	13	6	6	Like my four, they fought, and then they had to sit in the chair and they had to put their arms around one another. One time I even sewed their shorts together and made them wear them for the day. And it was, like, you know...we all have to learn to get along with other people.
3	10	6	6	My mom would sit us in opposite ends of the room and we had to look at each other. That was another one of her punishments when we were mad at each other.
3	10	4	4	Well, I've seen, I remember coming home from a business trip one summer and pulling in, I came into that midnight flight, and I had to run into Econo to grab something on the way home. And I couldn't believe the number of students in that parking lot. You know, the kids in that parking lot. There were 40-50 cars with teenagers in them. This was at like 2 a.m.
3	12	6	6	On a weekend?
3	10	4	4	No, during the week in the summer. And so I think you might have less problems with kids getting into things if they didn't have as much time on their hands.
3	13	5	5	One of the things, too, because of our area, a lot of things in the summer focus on tourism. I mean, we're developing it more so that it is more year-round. Summer, I think, is where we get the bulk of tourists coming in. Local businesses depend on local students for their job force and I think that it may be tough for them. In other states or you've got people who don't have kids who are coming to vacation, whether we'd be able to address the tourism issue adequately or not, I don't know.
3	12	5	5	Because they did have the problem...that's why we now start after Labor Day because of tourism. Isn't that right?
3	10	5	5	Well, they wanted the kids to be able to travel with their parents on Labor Day. That was the issue. They wanted the tourist dollars. This year they won't be able to afford the gas, so we aren't going anywhere. We're staying at home.
3	10	6	6	That was a statewide mandate and one of the reasons that they did this is because the state has suffered from an economic decline. We have no diversity in

				our economy, in our industrial base, and you know we're not making up for it with tourism. We need to do something about that. That's a bigger problem than a Labor Day vacation.
3	13	6	6	I think Michigan needs to be more business friendly, too.
3	10	6	6	Oh, absolutely.
3	13	6	6	There needs to be different taxes that business is encouraged.
3	10	6	6	It has slowly gotten worse. And this year will be worse than last year because Wisconsin is growing in leaps and bounds and we're declining. And it is because they have a varied medium-sized business. They're medium-sized business friendly, and that is the largest growing sector of businesses.
3	10	1	1	You guys are working the same days....
3	12	4	4	Some teachers, not all, have summer jobs. They work another job in the summer, and that would be harder for them to do.
3	13	2	2	Plus, you know...I haven't had the opportunity to have my own classroom yet, so I don't know for sure...as far as recharging your batteries and getting yourself planned, you know, planning out what you are going to do for the next year. A lot of teachers use a good part of the summer to plan and coming up with what they're going to do for next year.
3	10	2	2	It seems like you would probably do that a quarter at a time with this calendar.
3	12	6	6	But that's hard to do. Summers you can do it because it is coming up. The fall break I'm not going to be thinking about the next fall.
3	10	6	6	No, I'm saying you'd probably be thinking about the next quarter. At fall break, you'd be thinking about the winter quarter and really working out what you're going to do there.
3	12	2	6	I think, this part isn't very nice, but this calendar may get rid of some older teachers that may need to go.
3	10	6	6	There's some reality in that!
3	10	3	3	Well, you'd gain three weeks of snow plowing in the winter! That would be a plus.
3	13	3	3	Although they pretty much keep the school plowed out during the day, even on vacation. Custodial would be in doing cleaning and maintenance at that time. That's one thing that would be impacted. The summer time is when they really go through and

				that's when they shampoo all the carpets in the building. You know in 6 weeks, they couldn't do it as easily. They'd have to hire a bigger staff to be able to get all that work done in that 6 week time period.
3	10	3	3	Or you'd rotate and have the school cleaned in sections over each of the breaks. That's what I would do. You'd break it up into pieces. Do this piece this break, and that piece that break.
3	11	4	4	It would definitely impact any department in the school. But there are just different ways of doing things. And as we said earlier, nobody likes change. And change is the biggest hurdle.
3	13	2	2	When you look at this balanced chart, because it is like 15 days for the fall, winter, and spring break...so I mean, to have 3 weeks off would be wow, gosh. You know, you could have a few days to just sleep or whatever. Then it would be like, ok, you're looking forward again. Maybe it wouldn't feel like you were losing out on the summer.
3	12	2	2	I just thought of a real big thing. The children, and granted when you have your big summer break, you have to retrain the kids. If you have them off for 15 days, you have to retrain them. So this means you'd have to retrain them 1-2-3-4 times. 4 times you're retraining those kids to your routine in the classroom.
3	10	3	1	If budget wasn't an issue, this would be my take on this. Instead of having 3 weeks off, I would have maybe two. Two weeks off for each of these breaks, and then do like the Europeans and have a month off for the summer. Now, of course you folks would get paid proportionately more. You'd pick up another 7 weeks, really 7 weeks, because then you would have less of that transitioning.
3	10	2	2	Summer vacation is a long time to regroup.
3	10	1	1	For me, looking at this, I think 3 weeks is probably a little too long.
3	12	4	4	I think people would really go for this if those 3 weeks fell during deer season!
3	10	1	1	Yeah, that would really push it through. You could rotate everything so that the fall break fell in November.
3	11	1	1	Or you could eliminate the fall break and then have your long break at Thanksgiving.
3	10	4	5	Maybe we could go to school in June when the bugs

				are really bad, and then when the bugs are gone in July, then we take off. We enjoy July and August, because they were really nasty last night. They were bad. And it is not even June yet!
3	11	2	2	I would really like the balanced calendar because I think for my kids, especially my 4 th grader with ADHD, I think it would be a lot easier for him to have the shorter breaks. He's not going to lose focus, he can have the breaks in between to fall back and take a breather, and I wouldn't have to feel like I want to kill my children at the end of summer.
3	10	6	6	Sounds like you need Dial Help on speed dial...
3	11	6	6	You know how there's animals who eat their children, I start thinking like that.
3	10	6	6	You know, there's a reason for that.
3	12	4	4	I guess if it went to this, I would want it to be on a one-year trial, so that it could be voted to go back if we didn't like it.
3	12	2	2	I would be really concerned about having just 30 days in the summer and being able to recharge.
3	10	1	1	That's 30 school days, now, so that's 6 weeks.
3	12	4	4	Don't we come back and start prepping for class by then anyway. But if it was a trial thing...
3	13	4	4	Even like a 2-year trial, because you'd need the second year to work out the kinks.
3	10	6	6	I think that would be an option. And the deer season has to be worked in to the calendar, definitely.
3	12	3	3	So, has anyone heard if it is more economical for schools to adopt a year-round calendar? After the initial cost of air conditioning, I don't know.
3	10	2	2	I think the students would be more productive.
3	12	4	4	But don't they lay people off in the summer sometimes.
3	13	4	4	So you'd have to figure all the kitchen help, all the custodial help, that isn't year-round employees, do not work in the summer.
3	12	6	6	So this would change by making a shorter lay-off.
3	10	3	3	They would probably collect unemployment during all of those times.
3	12	3	3	Would it affect benefits? Would part-time people be considered full-time or is it based upon the number of hours?
3	10	4	3	I would think you could be creative with that. Usually the definition of full time and part time is based upon the number of hours you work a week. So they aren't contractual.

3	12	6	6	But I think for school employees, that's different. I think it is how many hours you work in a calendar year.
3	10	6	6	You mean, from a union basis?
3	12	4	4	Well, I was a preschool teacher in _____ and I don't know if it was hours a week or...I'm just wondering about the other staff, like the aides.
3	10	3	3	Yeah, they're hourly. So their pay is based upon the number of hours they work in a week. Then they can collect unemployment benefits, depending on whether or not they...
3	12	3	3	I don't think they can. I don't think school employees can collect unemployment in the summer. Because that's your school year, so during this time can they?
3	10	6	6	But if you aren't collecting unemployment during this large summer vacation, you certainly aren't going to collect it during the 2-3 weeks off.
3	12	6	6	But if it was considered a year-round calendar, they may have to. I don't know...I'm just wondering.

APPENDIX J: DATA ANALYSIS

Table 4

Focus Group Interview Content, Themes 1 through 6

	Coded Themes					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Group 1						
No. of Responses	18	22	17	34	12	60
% within Group	11.0%	13.5%	10.4%	20.9%	7.4%	36.8%
% within Code	66.7%	47.8%	38.6%	40.5%	33.3%	54.1%
% of Total	5.2%	6.3%	4.9%	9.8%	3.4%	17.2%
Group 2						
No. of Responses	3	5	17	24	18	18
% within Group	3.5%	5.9%	20.0%	28.2%	21.2%	21.2%
% within Code	11.1%	10.9%	38.6%	28.6%	50.0%	16.2%
% of Total	.9%	1.4%	4.9%	6.9%	5.2%	5.2%
Group 3						
No. of Responses	6	19	10	26	6	33
% within Group	6.0%	19.0%	10.0%	26.0%	6.0%	33.0%
% within Code	22.2%	41.3%	22.7%	31.0%	16.7%	29.7%
% of Total	1.7%	5.5%	2.9%	7.5%	1.7%	9.5%

Note. Coding themes were (1) defining YRE, (2) summer learning loss and the impact of YRE on student learning, (3) economics of YRE, (4) implementing YRE, and (5) community characteristics.

Table 5

Focus Group Interview Content, Themes 1 through 5

	Coded Themes				
	1	2	3	4	5
Group 1					
No. of Responses	18	22	17	34	12
% within Group	17.5%	21.4%	16.5%	33.0%	11.7%
% within Code	66.7%	47.8%	38.6%	40.5%	33.3%
% of Total	7.6%	9.3%	7.2%	14.3%	5.1%
Group 2					
No. of Responses	3	5	17	24	18
% within Group	4.5%	7.5%	25.4%	35.8%	26.9%
% within Code	11.1%	10.9%	38.6%	28.6%	50.0%
% of Total	1.3%	2.1%	7.2%	10.1%	7.6%
Group 3					
No. of Responses	6	19	10	26	6
% within Group	9.0%	28.4%	14.9%	38.8%	9.0%
% within Code	22.2%	41.3%	22.7%	31.0%	16.7%
% of Total	2.5%	8.0%	4.2%	11.0%	2.5%

Note. Coding themes were (1) defining YRE, (2) summer learning loss and the impact of YRE on student learning, (3) economics of YRE, (4) implementing YRE, and (5) community characteristics.

APPENDIX K: INTER-READER RELIABILITY

Table 6

Cohen's Kappa

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error (a)	Approx. T (b)	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Agreement (Kappa)	.923	.016	35.039	.000
N of Valid Cases	348			

Note. (a) Not assuming the null hypothesis. (b) Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Table 7

Inter-reader Reliability across Themes 1-6

		Coded Themes						Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
Coder 2								
Coder 1	1	22	0	0	2	0	3	27
	2	1	43	0	0	1	1	46
	3	1	0	43	0	0	0	44
	4	0	0	2	79	1	2	84
	5	0	0	0	3	32	1	36
	6	2	0	1	0	0	108	111
Total		26	43	46	84	34	115	348

Note. Coding themes were (1) defining YRE, (2) summer learning loss and the impact of YRE on student learning, (3) economics of YRE, (4) implementing YRE, and (5) community characteristics.