

## **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Correspondents: Wayne M. Worner  
Laurel N. Tanner  
Daniel Tanner

### **Growth of Year-Round Education**

Dear Editor:

In the "News Notes" section of your November 1973 issue, Professors Tanner and Tanner make several observations regarding the development and status of year-round education efforts in America.<sup>1</sup>

As the non-paid Administrative Coordinator of the non-profit National Council on Year-Round Education, I found several of the assumptions included in their article superficial, if not wholly inaccurate.

There are currently available substantial data which accurately reflect the level of interest in year-round school programs in America, including: number of programs by type and location; major rationale for development of operational programs; legislative activity throughout the 50 states relative to year-round programming, and a host of other already researched topics, for example, parent attitudes, teacher attitudes, achievement of students, and cost benefit studies. It is entirely accurate, as the authors have pointed out, that a comparatively small number of districts have implemented year-round programming since its most recent revival. The inference that negative parent reaction has slowed progress is, however, unfounded (see Gallup Study reported in *Phi Delta Kappan*, September 1972, which reports quite the contrary). The suggestion that state education departments have been major promoters of the concept is likewise an overgeneralization.

Finally, the identification of two major corporate concerns as promoters both underestimates the interest of certain segments of

the business community (as well as many citizen groups) and ignores the vocal but negative positions of other corporate and private interests. Witness the impact of lobbyist activity against proposed New York legislation which would have permitted school districts to implement year-round programs.

The authors, I believe, overlook the one major activity which has been consistently present in school districts undertaking studies relating to year-round programming. That ingredient has been the serious consideration of alternate program delivery systems in nearly all of the 300 or more districts which have conducted feasibility studies. Invariably, an activity which often was begun as a study in finance and calendar modification has resulted in serious study and discussion relating to instructional programs and teacher-learner interaction. As such, the recent interest on the part of hundreds of school districts and thousands of individuals and organizations that have contacted us over the past year suggests a more serious investigation of the topic than the passing comments and observations made by authors Tanner and Tanner.

The National Council on Year-Round Education neither promotes nor advocates year-round education, but exists primarily to provide information to those who wish to consider the concept as a more appropriate plan for individual school communities and the students they serve. Additional information may be obtained by writing: Wayne M. Worner, Administrative Coordinator, NCY-RE, 100 Lane Hall, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061.

—WAYNE M. WORNER, *National Council on Year-Round Education.*

<sup>1</sup> Laurel N. Tanner and Daniel Tanner. "News Notes." *Educational Leadership* 31 (2): 186; November 1973.

## Year-Round Education: A Reply

Dear Editor:

We are sorry that the item on year-round schools was so disturbing to Dr. Worner that he was impelled to label it "superficial" and "inaccurate." However, the facts enumerated in the item are wholly accurate and speak for themselves: (a) claims are being made that the schools are moving to all-year use, but the actual enrollment data reveal that only about one-half of one percent of the total U.S. school population is enrolled in year-round schools; (b) a considerable proportion of the enrollment claimed for year-round schools actually is in beefed-up summer programs rather than genuine twelve-month schedules; (c) all-year use of schools has been promoted by some state education departments in an effort to reduce educational expenditures; (d) the campaign for year-round schools has been supported financially by private corporations that serve to make financial gains from favorable legislation; for example, North American Van Lines, one of the largest household movers, has spent over \$150,000 on a film promoting year-round schools for the businesslike reason that almost half of its multimillion dollar household moving business is conducted during the summer. North American realizes that parents do not like to break up their youngsters' school year, and so families move during the summer; (e) ITT-Nesbit, an air-conditioning manufacturer, has pushed year-round schools by financing seminars around the country in the expectation of profits to be realized as schools install air conditioning; (f) other business groups have promoted year-round schools for similar profit-motivated reasons; (g) there is widespread parental opposition to all-year scheduling; and (h) in each of the past six years the New York State legislature has rejected bills allowing schools to operate year-round despite the support of these bills by the state department of education (a story in *The New York Times* last spring reported that the latest bill was rejected by the legislature on the grounds that year-round schooling

is "detrimental educationally and would play havoc with family vacation plans").

Regarding the Gallup study, the citizens surveyed were asked the following question:

"To utilize school buildings to the full extent, would you favor keeping the school open year around? Each student would attend school for nine months over the course of a year. Do you approve or disapprove?"

Despite the vague wording of the question (no mention being made of youngsters having to forego their summer vacations), and despite the fact that the poll was not targeted on parents but rather on an adult population sample, 41 percent opposed and 53 percent responded affirmatively to the question. Thus a sizable proportion of our adult population, including those who do not have children in school, is opposed to the concept.

Teachers' groups also have raised opposition to the concept. We do not dispute the statement by Dr. Worner that the lobbyists promoting year-round education have been opposed by certain groups (mainly summer camp and teachers' organizations).

Finally, our "News Notes" item reported that the year-round concept has been supported by "some state education departments." We cannot understand Dr. Worner's objection to this statement. Worner says this is an "overgeneralization," but the fact is that such leading state departments as New York, California, and Illinois have supported the program. As reported in our January column, a national conference on year-round education will be sponsored April 30-May 3 in Chicago by the Illinois state education department.

By its very nature, the "News Notes" column is not intended to treat items in great depth, but we do strive to report items accurately. We respect the intelligence of our readership, and so we have avoided using the column to promote the programs of special-interest groups.

—LAUREL N. TANNER, DANIEL TANNER,  
Co-editors, "News Notes."

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