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From traditional to year-round education: Making the transition at the K-5 level: Dry Creek Joint Elementary School District's approach (Heritage Oak Elementary School)

Gordon Thomas Medd

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FROM TRADITIONAL TO YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION
MAKING THE TRANSITION AT THE K-5 LEVEL

DRY CREEK JOINT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT'S
APPROACH
(HERITAGE OAK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL)

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Educational Administration

by
Gordon Thomas Medd
September 1993
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Thank you, and may God bless each and every one of you.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In July of 1968, Year Round Education (YRE) came to California when Hayward Unified School District implemented a 50-15 single-track calendar. The following year the National Association for Year Round Education (NAYRE) held its first conference in Little Rock, Arkansas. That same year, 1969, the Frances Howell School District in St. Charles, Missouri, implemented the nation's first multi-track YRE program (Brekke, 1990). California's first multi-track YRE program began in 1971 when the La Mesa - Spring Valley and Chula Vista School Districts in San Diego initiated their YRE programs.

Since that time, the number of YRE schools has grown at a dramatic rate. Currently YRE serves 522,525 students in 628 schools in 19 states (Brekke, 1987). Various YRE calendars have been developed and are presently being utilized. Many of the districts that have transitioned to a YRE program have done so as a result of several factors within their schools, communities, counties, and states. It was a combination of these factors that led the Dry Creek Joint School District in California to examine YRE as a possible educational alternative.

During the latter part of the 1980's several areas within the Dry Creek Joint Elementary School District became prime housing developments and student enrollment experienced a rapid growth. What was once a school of 42 students and three teachers in 1950, became a district with over 1,200 students in 1988. The immediate need for adequate facilities and additional schools became obvious. Unfortunately,
the money required to build additional facilities was not as readily available.

The district examined possible sources of funding that would help them deal with their new found dilemma. The most obvious solution that was identified was Year Round Education (YRE). This offered a way to better utilize the existing facilities and put the district in a more likely position to receive state building funds. Districts that implement a YRE plan are considered a higher priority for obtaining state building funds.

In October of 1989 the Dry Creek School Board requested that a Year Round Feasibility Study be undertaken. District personnel involved in this study included: Superintendent, Business Manager, Principal, Teachers, Parents, and Community Members. This report looked at a variety of YRE program alternatives, district needs, growth projections, available funding, current district goals, and goals for the future. The report was presented to the Board of Education on January 18th, 1990. It was then determined that Year Round Education was feasible in the Dry Creek Joint Elementary School District.

As a result of this study it then became apparent that the District Master Plan, completed in September of 1990, would need to be updated to include YRE. This revision included a comprehensive report that outlined housing projections, population, and student growth through the year 2010. A possible YRE implementation schedule was included in the District Master Plan. On December 13, 1990, the Board of Education passed resolution No. 1990-42, stating the intent to implement Year Round Education.
Kelvin Lee, the district superintendent, appointed a Task Force to review YRE programs and their appropriateness in the Dry Creek School District. This Task Force was responsible for examining current research on YRE during six three-hour meetings from January-March of 1991. While the Task Force was examining the current literature on Year-Round Education, the Dry Creek Board of Trustees were holding meetings in community members' homes to disseminate known information and listen to concerns expressed regarding YRE.

In addition, Task Force members performed visitations at nine YRE schools to examine positive aspects of programs and become aware of any "roadblocks" that may slow the implementation process. Finally, six Task Force representatives attended the annual conference sponsored by the National Association of Year Round Education. Upon completion of these responsibilities the YRE Task Force then presented its report to the Board of Education. Based on this report the Board approved the superintendent to go forward with the implementation of YRE in the district.

The purpose of this project is to examine the history of Year-Round Education and review the processes used by the Dry Creek Joint Elementary School District to make a successful transition from a traditional calendar to a YRE calendar.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Year Round Education (YRE) is a process of reorganizing a school calendar so that the instructional blocks and student vacations are more evenly distributed across the calendar year. This process further allows school buildings to be utilized for the entire year instead of sitting dormant for two months of the year. On a YRE campus the instructional program traditionally offered on a 10-month calendar (September - June) is offered throughout the entire 12 months of the year (July - June). Individual students do not go to school all year, they have vacation times at various times during the year rather than only in July and August.

When schools in America were initially established, the design of the school-year calendar focused on the needs and conditions that existed in each community. As a result of our agrarian historical roots, the "traditional" calendar was developed to allow children time off in the summer to assist with the harvesting of crops. For decades, in fact centuries, the school calendar was dictated by the needs of our farming communities. In the past one hundred years we have seen America change from an agrarian society to one of manufacturing and industry. Yet the school calendar continued to allow for up to three months off in the summer.

Except for the limited use during summer school, the traditional schedule leaves expensive school facilities and resources unused for three months of each year. Other local agencies - churches, Post Offices, hospitals and banks - do not close their doors and remain unoccupied for
months at a time. However, it is considered normal for schools to remain unused every summer. How would society react if banks decided to close every summer, or hospitals sent everyone home in June and did not provide service until September? This is perhaps the greatest example of our time of the ultimate power of "TRADITION".

The question is often asked, "Why do we bother changing the 'traditional' system of education?" To effectively answer that question we must examine the three prominent factors that led to the creation of year-round schools: **Learning**, **Space**, and **Money**. This review of literature will examine how each of these factors plays an integral role in the development of Year-Round Education.

**LEARNING**

For years educators have questioned a system that permits a two to three-month disruption. Learning is sequential and continuous. Educators have developed curriculum that assumes sequence and development (Thomas, 1973). However, the traditional school calendar (September - June) interrupts this continuity in the summer months resulting in the need for extensive review at the beginning of each school year (Glines, 1987). This review requires valuable time and as a result much instructional time is "wasted". By using September and October for review the instructional time in a traditional school year is actually shortened to eight months. Many educational researchers have investigated the actual losses that occur during summer vacation. Though the jury is still deliberating, the evidence
points clearly to the fact that long summer vacations are detrimental to the learning process.

Many prominent educators this century have argued against the logic of such a system and examined the effects of such a lengthy break on student retention and achievement (Alcorn, 1990). As a result of these investigations many questions were raised (Thomas, 1973). Why do America's schools continue to allow three month interruptions of instruction? What is the reasoning for continuing a calendar created for our agricultural society in the eighteenth century? What percentage of school aged children in 1965 assisted with the summer harvest? Are there ways of reorganizing the school year to eliminate the unnecessary three month break? In answer to these questions many educators began to experiment with modified and imaginative schedules that focused on the learner instead of the antiquated needs of the local community.

Although there is great debate of amount of loss in the summer, there continues to be agreement that alternative methods need to be examined. For many years educators argued that a more instructionally sound calendar be adopted. In the late 1950's and early 1960's a small collection of school districts across the country piloted a variety of school calendars that attempted to improve schools' instructional programs. Unfortunately many of these school were so resistant to the "changing" of the school year that they were unable to see the instructional value of the new calendars. There is no institution in our society more resistant to change than schools. It has been said that change in schools, is like moving a cemetery: You move one body at a time! (Brekke, 1990).
Evidence is growing which supports the belief that year-round schools improve the academic achievement of all students. In fact, recent research indicates that this is especially true for "At-Risk" students - low-income, limited English proficient, and other special education students. In 1978, a study by the New York State Board of Regents found that high achieving students improve by one year and three months during a school year, and one month improvement during summer. Therefore, in one calendar year, a high achieving student will improve on average one year and four months. However, a low achieving student improves by approximately one year and one month during the school year, but loses between three to four months of knowledge during the summer. Thus, the low achieving student has a calendar year net gain of eight months. After seven years of schooling, the high achieving student scores at the ninth grade level while the low achieving student tops out at the fourth to fifth grade level.

Low achieving students not only learn more slowly, but lose knowledge more rapidly. Year-round programs that utilize several shorter breaks instead of the three-month summer vacation can improve the continuity of instruction and limit retention losses of educationally and economically disadvantaged students (Alcorn, 1992). Additionally, teachers need not spend the first six to eight weeks of the traditional school year reviewing curriculum last taught in May or June.

The San Diego Unified School District is recognized as one of the leading district in year-round circles. From 1984 to 1990, the district's test scores of traditional and year-round schools were compared. It was
found that in examining CAP scores for third and sixth grade students that a higher percent of year-round schools improved or maintained levels of achievement than that of their traditional counterparts (Alcorn, 1992). These results prompted a 1991 study by the San Diego Unified School District to further examine traditional and year-round results. A total of twenty-seven comparisons was examined - three grades, three subjects and three times during the school year. Of the twenty-seven comparisons, year-round schools exceeded traditional schools in seventeen. In nine of the comparisons there was no significant difference found. In only one of the twenty-seven comparisons did a traditional school exceed year-round.

Richard Alcorn has made several recommendations in response to this study. In the April 1992, Thrust For Educational Leadership, Alcorn recommends the following:

1. Restructure the school year to a year-round calendar.
2. Continue research on summer learning loss and the importance of continuous learning.
3. Year-round education be considered an instructional strategy to meet the needs of educationally disadvantaged students, drop-outs and limited english proficient students.
4. The year-round calendar be an accepted strategy for developmentally appropriate primary grade programs.

There appears to be little doubt that a year-round calendar is academically beneficial to all students, especially those who are
educationally or economically disadvantaged. In addition to the academic benefits, it has been found that a year-round program also improves attendance. Most year-round districts have found that not only does student attendance improve, but teacher attendance is also improved. It seems that the improved attendance is related to the increased number of vacation times available throughout the school year. With the increased number of vacations, students and teachers alike are more rested and ready to return to school after each break. If both student and teacher attendance is high, the likelihood of academic improvement is great.

**SPACE**

The rapid growth of the sixties, a result of the baby-boomers entering school, brought forth the second issue directly related to Year-Round Education - overcrowding. School districts could not keep up with the influx of students entering school in the early to middle sixties. California was especially hard hit by overcrowding as thousands of people from across America came west to the "Golden State" (Quinlan, 1987).

To further compound the problem, in the 1970's California taxpayers slammed the door shut on government spending by enacting Proposition 13 and Proposition 4. These two initiatives effectively restricted local tax rates collected from property taxes and set unreasonably low spending limits. This shifted the burden of building schools to the state. Unfortunately, the growth of the late seventies and early eighties was greater than anticipated and a shortage of school building funds became real.
Estimates for student growth in California for the 1990's are frightening. Experts are predicting an average of 200,000 new students annually up to the year 2000. This growth is no longer centralized in the metropolitan areas as 48 of California's 58 counties are predicted to grow by more than twenty percent by the year 2000. Public schools in California have no alternative but to find adequate housing for these students. Solving this problem of overcrowding is at the top of most district's priority list.

California schools are in for tough times in the nineties. The school building construction need is sitting at approximately six billion dollars (Quinlan, 1987). In the next ten years, California schools are predicted to increase by more than two million students. To adequately house these students California will need to build more than two thousand new schools. To help address this need, the State Legislature put an eight hundred million dollar bond initiative on the June, 1992, ballot. Fortunately, this bond passed. However, much of the eight hundred million dollars has already been accounted for by schools who have completed construction of new schools or were in the process of constructing a school.

As a result of the state's inability to properly finance new construction, school districts have been forced to investigate a variety of alternative methods of housing students. The following list contains alternative methods of alleviating overcrowding, their effectiveness, and their limitations.

1. **Double Sessions/Extended Day**  - This involves the lengthening of the day so that the school can be divided into two groups
that essentially attend school in overlapping sessions. One group may begin at 6:45 am and end at 12:15 pm, whereas the second group would attend from 11:00 am to 4:30 pm. This is a very unpopular alternative as it eliminates school unity and divides the school into two separate factions. In addition, it creates an extremely long instructional day for some teachers and most administrators.

2. **Portable Classrooms** - These prefabricated trailers can be rolled onto a campus and placed almost anywhere (especially if they are not having water hooked up). On several occasions, entire schools have been constructed using only portable buildings. The biggest advantage of portable buildings is that they can be set up or taken away rather quickly. Another advantage is that they can be rented, leased, or purchased outright depending on the need and financial condition of the district. The disadvantage of portable classrooms is that they do not have all the amenities of regular classrooms, and they can put a strain on the playground space or parking lots available for students. Currently over fifty thousand portables are being used in California schools. This means that almost 30 percent of the state's students are being housed in portable buildings.

3. **Increased Class Size** - Over the last three decades class size in California has continually been on the increase. If a school of eight hundred students increased the class size by "just" two students, it can eliminate the need for two classrooms and the equal number of teachers. Fortunately, educators have studied the effects of class size on learning and found that increased class size is instructionally unsound (Alcorn, 1992).
Furthermore, California currently has the second highest average class size in the nation. Any additional raising of classes will only overcrowd individual classrooms and teacher loads.

4. **Grade Configurations** - If a junior high school (7-8) is uncrowded, a district may decide to create a middle school (6-8 or 5-8) in an effort to alleviate crowding at the elementary level. However, if creating a middle school or changing any other types of grade configurations, it should be the result of extensive study and for the instructional benefit of students in addition to helping solve overcrowding issues.

5. **Alternative/WorkSite Schools** - An alternative school site is a school or classroom that has been set up at a location other than the primary school site. Public or private buildings, vacant classrooms at another school or nearby college can be used in an effort to solve space problems that a school may be facing. Unfortunately, these building are hard to find as they must not only be close enough for adequate transportation, but must also meet health and safety codes of the district and state. A worksite school is a rather new concept in housing students. This method allows large businesses to have a district controlled school located on the site of the business. Dade County School District in Florida pioneered this idea when they established an elementary school at the Miami Airport. Workers could bring their children to work and students would attend school in classrooms located in vacant airport buildings or offices.
6. **Year-Round Schools** - As mentioned previously, Year Round Education (YRE) is a process of reorganizing a school calendar so that the instructional blocks and student vacations are more evenly distributed across the calendar year. This process further allows school buildings to be utilized for the entire year instead of sitting dormant for two months of the year with the instructional program traditionally offered on a 10-month calendar being offered throughout the entire 12 months of the year. Individual students do not go to school all year, they have vacation times at various times during the year rather than only in July and August.

In 1971, in an effort to alleviate overcrowding, La Mesa Spring Valley and Chula Vista School Districts in San Diego became the first school districts in California to adopt a multi-track year-round calendar. A multi-track year-round program increases the seating capacity of a school from twenty-five to fifty percent without directly impacting instructional time. Currently, two-thirds of the nation's YRE schools are operating a multi-track program (Honig, 1986).

In 1990 the California State Legislature passed Assembly Bill 87 in an effort to persuade school districts to examine year-round education, this bill gave first priority for any school construction funds, to school districts with YRE or YRE implementation plans. In addition schools implementing a YRE program are eligible for one-time implementation grant to help with the transition to YRE.

Year-round schools do have their own unique demands that they put on buildings. Custodians and maintenance staff do not have three months in the summer to clean and repair facilities. However, the strain on these
buildings is less. With at least one-fourth of the students always out of school, a year-round schedule eases crowding in lunchrooms, libraries, computer labs and help contain class size.

When our schools are overcrowded and our students are not receiving the quality of education they deserve, it makes no sense to close a school for three months each year (Honig, 1986). Instead, we should be examining how to best use the available space to meet the needs of all the students in the state. The message is clear from the state that the funds needed to build schools are not readily available, so we need to utilize the resources and buildings we have. Year-round education does exactly that.

MONEY

If year-round schooling had little or no financial benefits, its assumed educational value would be worth the time and effort. However, recent studies have provided evidence of the potential savings to a school or district that transitions to a year-round calendar. Though a single-track year-round schedule brings little or no savings to a district, a multi-track program has the potential to save a district money in both operational and capital outlay costs (Ballinger, 1987).

In general, it has been found that the greater the increase in capacity usage, the more potential there is for cost savings. Oxnard School District in California studied the cost savings of a year-round program and found that in a one-year period the district could save over $100,000 a year per school in operational expenses on a multi-track year-round calendar. As a district, Oxnard saves approximately one million dollars annually in
operating costs. Capital outlay savings are even greater. Over a four year period, Oxnard will save in the neighborhood of ten million dollars in unneeded capital outlay costs (Brekke, 1990).

A year-round school also makes more efficient use of instructional materials. On a multi-track (4) calendar, four classes occupy three classrooms. There is not the need for a fourth set of textbooks, reference materials, maps, globes, overhead projectors, computers, and other instructional materials. When these savings are added to the monies saved by not purchasing the fourth set of desks, chairs, tables and of course a classroom, the operational savings potential of year-round schooling is enormous (Leonard, 1987).

Perhaps the most educationally sound cost savings directly related to a year-round program is the decrease in student absenteeism. Most school districts have reported that student attendance improves after a year-round program has been implemented. San Diego, Houston, Los Angeles, and Oxnard have all found that student attendance is higher at schools which operate in a year-round capacity (Honig, 1986). From 1981 to 1985 Oxnard School District examined the attendance practices at all of the schools within their district. During this time it was found that students on a traditional calendar were absent 10.8 days per school year. In comparison, those students who were on a year-round calendar were absent only 8.8 days per year. Since schools are funded for Average Daily Attendance (ADA), recapturing any unexcused absences will be financially advantageous to a year-round school district.
Improved attendance was not only evidenced in students but also with teachers. Teachers who worked at a year-round school were absent for illness 5.5 days per year whereas their traditional counterparts were absent 6.4 days per year, nearly an additional day per year. Two factors seem to contribute to the decreased absenteeism of students and teachers on a year-round calendar - more frequent vacations and shorter periods of time spent in school (Brekke, 1990).

Inner-city school districts have found that a YRE calendar also contributes to the reduction in vandalism. In the Oxnard School District burglary and vandalism decreased significantly after 1976 when a YRE program was implemented (Quinlan, 1987). This reduction can be reasonably attributed to two factors. The first being the fact that schools are not left unattended for three months of the year. Instead they are occupied all year long with custodians on campus until late each night. Secondly, as a result of more frequent vacations, there appears to be less tension between students and the school officials, thereby decreasing the provocation of vandalism (Utah State Board, 1989).

The California State Legislature has involved itself with the YRE issue. In the early stages of YRE the Legislature removed or revised Education Codes that were hindering the success of YRE. In addition, during the 1980's, incentive monies were offered to encourage districts to transition to a YRE calendar. Senate Bill 813 in 1983 provided twenty-five dollars to a district for each student in a year-round school. These payments were not start-up assistance funds; they were annual increases to the general fund allotment (EdSource, Spring 1992). In addition to these
incentive offerings, schools that required air conditioning prior to transitioning to YRE were provided additional monies to complete that process.

As of January 1, 1990, any school district applying for state construction funds or for lease of portable classrooms, must first conduct a YRE feasibility study prior to receiving state funds. The State Allocation Board has also put all school districts that are at least thirty percent YRE into priority one status for receiving state grants for construction. Although some critics of this legislation claim YRE districts are receiving special treatment, the message is clear - the State Department of Education is an Advocate for Year-Round Schooling.

The incentive money provided to YRE school districts allows a district to overcome some of the initial costs in starting up a YRE program. Although all start-up costs are recouped eventually, it can get extremely expensive if not properly planned. Schools districts making the transition must examine many factors not evident in a traditional program. Storage facilities for off-track teachers, transportation increases, increased personnel hours, air conditioning needs, and realigning business and accounting procedures to reflect a twelve month schedule are just a few of the obstacles to overcome when transitioning to a YRE program.

Restructuring schools was the theme of the 1980's. However, the most critical restructuring required in the state of California is that of the traditional calendar. It appears that the end of the population explosion in California is nowhere in sight. Students will need to be accommodated in schools without overstressing the facilities available. School districts,
with the support from their communities must encourage change that is beneficial to all students. The traditional school calendar is archaic and must be changed. The evidence is overwhelmingly clear that a better solution exists. It is time that school districts accept the challenge of change and provide what is best for students.

During the 1970's we were introduced to a boy named "Johnny" who could not read. Many an educational researcher and philosopher examined the "truths" that allowed a boy like Johnny to slip through the cracks in our educational system. They examined Johnny's home, neighborhood, and dreams and concluded he was a victim of his environment. Not once did they examine the fact that Johnny was a boy in the twentieth century attending school governed by a calendar developed over one hundred years earlier. Neither Johnny, nor his father were required to bring in the harvest. Yet the system designed to educate both was created with the harvest in mind. It is time to change. It's time for YRE.
CHAPTER 3
ATTRIBUTES OF YRE

This chapter will examine the relative strengths and weaknesses of a YRE program. There are several lists that have been generated that illustrate the positive and negative attributes of a YRE program. Examples of an attributes list can be found in Appendix A.

Many of the positive and negative attributes surrounding YRE are perceptions and are thereby extremely difficult to support with evidence. Nonetheless, numerous claims for and against YRE can be substantiated. In the following section, a selection of positive and negative attributes will be identified and discussed.

Positive Attributes of YRE

1. **Enhances Learning** - According to some studies, students on a YRE schedule show greater gains in learning than those on a traditional schedule. This is especially true for disadvantaged students. Shorter breaks and more frequent vacations eliminate learning loss and burn-out (Alcorn, 1992).

2. **Eases Overcrowding** - A YRE program can increase the capacity of a school up to 50%. A multi-track program provides schools the ability to comfortably house 1,500 students in a facility designed to hold 1,000.

3. **Cost Effective** - A YRE program provides the opportunity to save thousands of dollars annually at a given site. Building costs and
instructional materials expenditures can be greatly reduced by implementing a multi-track YRE program. Oxnard School District saves approximately $100,000 annually on building costs and capital outlay for every school operating a multi-track YRE program.

4. **Attendance** - Both student and teacher absenteeism is dramatically decreased on a YRE schedule. This directly relates to improved learning and cost effectiveness. If students are in school more and being taught by their regular teacher they will probably learn more. In addition, if schools are not paying for substitutes and receiving a greater allotment for ADA for student attendance, the cost savings of a YRE program will also benefit.

5. **Parents** - There are several advantages that parents have when their children are on a YRE schedule. Children's medical and dental appointments can be scheduled during off-track times to avoid missing school. Families can take vacations at different times during the year to avoid taking expensive summer vacations.

**Negative Attributes of YRE**

1. **Siblings at Other Schools** - Most high schools have maintained a traditional calendar. Parents who have children on YRE and traditional schedule have a difficult time finding vacation times when all siblings are out of session. Choice of a track with a summer month off is crucial in overcoming this problem.
2. **Child Care** - Finding child care for one month at a time is extremely difficult for many families. It is important to encourage families to communicate with each other on their track to help one another. An on site day care facility not only solves this problem but builds a greater unity between the community and the school.

3. **Storage** - Teachers need to be provided access to storage facilities so that materials do not have to be taken home each time they go off track. This can be a difficult situation if not provided. Tracking on and off becomes an extremely tedious event. An unused classroom or basement is used by many schools. Some school that have been built with YRE in mind have storage unit built in the facility.

4. **Missed School Events** - In a multi-track program it is inevitable that some students will miss school events because they are off-track. Students may miss the Christmas Program, Valentines Day, and other theme related events. However, if properly scheduled, student programs (science fairs, jog-a-thons, awards assemblies) can be held twice to provide for those students off-track. High school students who are involved in after-school activities are welcome to continue to participate when they are off-track.

5. **Teacher Professional Growth** - Teachers who utilize the long summer break of a traditional calendar to work on advanced degrees will find it more difficult to pursue these interests. However, they do have the luxury
of attending conference while they are off-track without worrying about substitute lesson plans. Furthermore, teachers can choose a track with months off that coincide with final exams at the local universities.
CHAPTER 4
YRE CALENDARS

This chapter examines the variety of year-round calendars that have been designed and implemented by school districts across the nation. Most of the year-round calendars divide the year into sessions of instruction followed by a vacation or intersession. Dividing the instructional schedule can be likened to slicing a pie. The fact that most people slice an eight inch pie into six equal pieces does not necessarily conclude that such is the only division. It means that it is the "traditional" method. If one can forget about the fixation on tradition and agree there are other methods to slice a pie, or calendar a school year for that matter, then anything is possible.

On a multi track program students and teachers are divided equally into "tracks". The school opens for 240 days as opposed to the 180 days of a traditional calendar. One track of students and teacher is always off. On the single track program all students are on site at the same time; however, the vacations are divided into shorter units and spread out through the school year.

When choosing the calendar that is best for a school several factors must be considered. The current enrollment, instructional benefits, community support, student demographics and facilities available are just a few factors to consider. If these issues are not addressed the chance of a successful transition to YRE is not likely.

Most districts utilize a task force made up of administrators, teachers, parents, students, and community members to examine the various calendars and recommend one that meets the needs of all parties
involved. The five most common multi-track year-round programs include: the 60-20 plan, the 90-30 plan, the 45-15 plan Concept 6, and the Orchard plan.
The 60-20 Plan

This plan has been found to be the most popular plan in the state of California. The numerical title indicates the pattern that is followed: a sixty (60) day instruction period followed by a twenty (20) day vacation. This calendar allows a school to increase its' capacity by as much as 33%. Advocates cite that the more frequent but shorter vacations make the plan more instructionally sound than its counterparts, yet still maintaining an adequate number of continuous instructional days.
The 90-30 Plan

A 90-30 plan is similar to the 60-20 with longer instructional and vacation periods. Schools on this schedule are able to increase their capacity by 33%. The 90-30 plan is popular with secondary schools because it closely resembles the traditional calendar. It provides two distinct instructional semesters for course selection and program development.

90/30
INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS

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<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
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</tbody>
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26
The 45-15 Plan

The 45-15 plan is another variation of the 60-20. On the 45-15 plan students attend school for forty-five (45) days and have fifteen (15) days off for vacation. This plan divides the year into four quarters and advocates cite tremendous advantages for teaching thematic curricular units. However, opponents argue that the numerous vacations serve more as an interruption than a break. Many California school districts have adopted this format nonetheless.
Concept 6

This plan is a three track plan that provides sixteen (16) weeks of instruction followed by eight (8) weeks of vacation. This is a relatively new calendar plan having only been approved by the California Legislature in 1981. The greatest advantage of this plan is that it can increase the capacity of a school by 50%. However the long vacation times fail to address the instructional shortfalls of the traditional calendar. In addition, the length of the school day must be extended.
The Orchard Plan

The Orchard Plan was named after the school in Utah that originally implemented the program. This plan divides the students into five tracks. Teacher are not on a given track, instead they receive students from all five tracks during the year. School is open eleven months instead of twelve. Students attend classes for twelve (12) weeks then have three (3) weeks vacation. Class size is lower as twenty percent of students in the class are off track at any given time.

This plan allows a school to increase its' capacity by 25%. Advantages include teachers being paid for eleven months, fewer teachers required, no rotation of students or teachers, and one month off in the summer for major cleaning and maintenance.

Orchard Plan: Five tracks, 25% increased capacity

![Diagram showing the Orchard Plan tracks from July to June with periods of on and off for different tracks.](image-url)
CHAPTER 5
MAKING THE TRANSITION AT HERITAGE OAK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

This final chapter will examine the steps taken at Heritage Oak Elementary School in the Dry Creek Joint Elementary School District to transition from a traditional to YRE program.

In 1987, in the Northwest Roseville area, housing developments rapidly began covering what was once open fields and farm lands. Dry Creek Elementary, once a three room school house, was bursting at the seams with a population of over 800 students. The need for additional schools was obvious. Unfortunately, the funding source was not so crystal clear (Lee, 1991)

During the late 1980's and early 1990's the district examined several funding sources. In several portions of the district a Mello Roos Facilities District was agreed upon to help alleviate the cost of building new schools. In addition, developer fees at the rate of $.96 per square foot are charged to new residential developments that were not covered by a Mello Roos District. It was hoped that the collection of these fees would provide the necessary funds to build the schools planned in the northern and southern areas of the school district. Rising construction costs and building fees created a shortfall and the district was forced to look at other avenues to fund their schools. One possibility that surfaced was to look toward Year-Round Education.

It was believed that a year-round program could not only offer a better way to utilize the current buildings to their fullest capacity, but as a
result of AB 1650, and in 1991 the passing of AB 87, the district would put itself in a better position to receive state funds to assist in this process. On October 19, 1989, the Dry Creek Board of Trustees requested that a Year-Round Feasibility Study be completed. This report was presented to the Board on January 18, 1990. The Board then concluded that YRE was feasible in the Dry Creek district (Lee, 1991).

The next step taken by the Board and Superintendent was to update the District Master Plan to include YRE and growth projections based on housing permits and the City of Roseville's long range plans for the Northwest Roseville area. Once this process was completed it became obvious to the Board that YRE was the district's best alternative. On December 13, 1990, Board Resolution No. 1990-42 was approved and stated the intent to implement Year-Round Education.

To help facilitate the change in the district the Board appointed a Task Force that was charged with examining the various elements related to YRE and providing input and suggestions for making a smooth transition from a traditional to YRE calendar. The Task Force was comprised of two consultants, the superintendent, parents, teachers, district office staff, classified employees, a representative from transportation, and members from the Roseville Parks and Recreation Department.

The Task Force met on a regular basis, listened to reports on district demographics, examined YRE programs, visited YRE schools, attended the National YRE conference, regularly reported to the Board and held community meetings at the school and in the homes of community members. On June 20, 1991, the Dry Creek Board of Trustees approved
the recommendation of the Task Force that Heritage Oak School begin a YRE program effective July, 1992.

The remainder of this chapter will examine the specific steps taken at Heritage Oak to make the transition from a traditional to YRE program. In the investigation conducted by the Heritage Oak YRE Task Force, a number of issues were addressed. Each issue and the way it was resolved will be examined.

**TASK FORCE**

The Heritage Oak YRE Task Force mirrored the District Task Force with the exception of additional staff members and parents representing the school. The Task Force met twice monthly beginning in June of 1991. The Task Force's main responsibility was to act as a decision making body and execute the plan of YRE at Heritage Oak School. The Task Force examined current information, and visited many schools before each of its recommendations. Task Force members were strongly encouraged to attend meetings and provide input into the discussions that were held.

The successful implementation of YRE at Heritage Oak is the result of working in harmony with the community to make this change. The opportunity for involvement and input in the decision was made available to all who chose to be a part of the process. By involving community members, the most difficult part of the process, educating the community, was accomplished rather easily. Some of the staunch proponents of YRE became its biggest advocates when provided with the current information and studies.
The collaborative method used by the Task Force "Team" allowed the transition to be viewed as a positive change made in the best interest of all involved and affected by it. As a result, little or no adverse reactions to the implementation of YRE occurred. In the event that an issue was not immediately resolved, a sub-committee comprised of interested Task Force members met separately to examine additional information and make a final recommendation.

**TIME LINE**

The first responsibility of the Task Force was to create a time line that would be consistent with a July, 1992, implementation start date. Beginning with the July 6 start date and working backwards a time line was developed to provide direction to the transition. With approximately one year to prepare the Task Force created a timeline that allowed for a variety of circumstances should they arise. The timeline sub-committee consisted of a parent, two teachers, a classified employee, a district office person and the principal.

The sub-committee brought their timeline to the Task Force in July of 1991. The timeline was presented to the Board of Trustees on July 18 as a report. A copy of the timeline can be found in Appendix C. Although some adjustments to the original timeline were made, for the most part, the timeline was followed closely.
CALENDAR

Members of the YRE Task Force reviewed several calendar options available and visited schools where each was implemented. As a result the Task Force recommended the 60/20 plan. A description of this plan can be found on page 22.

The advantages found with this schedule are only three breaks each year, the length of break allows for reasonable rest and recovery for students and teachers, the breaks are adequate to provide for intersession and a break. Most school in the Sacramento area have adopted a 60/20 calendar for these same apparent reasons. On November 7, 1991 the Board of Trustees adopted the 60/20 calendar and another issue surrounding YRE had been resolved with full community and staff support.

NOTIFICATION

On August 1, September 1, and October 1, 1991 the Task Force put a legal notice in the local newspapers informing the community of the districts' intent to make Heritage Oak School a YRE program. This notification is a necessary action for any school transitioning to a YRE program. Ed Code 37611 states that any school district that will cause a student to attend a YRE program must notify the public three times prior to November 1 of the year prior to implementation.

Notifications were put into three local newspapers. This was the final legal action that had to occur before the district could adopt the YRE program. The notification served as an additional information tool for the
parents of Heritage Oak and the surrounding community. Heritage Oak became the first school in Placer County to make a commitment to implement a YRE program. Until the time of the notification, only individuals within the Dry Creek School District boundaries were aware that the district was considering adopting a YRE program.

**PARENT/COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETINGS**

In an effort to educate the community about the YRE process, several meetings were held to provide individuals and groups with an opportunity to hear information and ask questions. Meetings were generally facilitated by Task Force members and focused on one or two aspects of year-round education. Primarily, the meetings were held at the Heritage Oak Starter School or in the homes of community members. These meetings allowed parents the opportunity to ask specific questions related to YRE and provided a forum for the Task Force to disseminate valuable information.

In addition to the community meetings, the P.T.A. set aside two of its general meetings to discuss YRE issues and determine necessary changes that would need to take place once the school became YRE. Several of the P.T.A. members were members of the Task Force and were therefore able to address several issues that were discussed. The open lines of communication between the school and the community were largely responsible for the smooth transition from traditional to YRE. By actively involving parents and community members in the process, community support of the transition was high. Communication between the school and
community is never more important than when you are planning to implement a YRE program. By establishing the lines of communication in the planning portion of the process the foundation for successful home-school communications was laid.

FACILITY REQUIREMENTS

YRE requires that certain accommodations occur in facility design to deal with characteristics imposed by multi-track programs (Lee, 1991). The State Department of Education requires that all schools in South Placer County have air conditioning prior to implementation of a YRE program.

In addition to this state mandate, there were two additional concerns that were raised through Task Force discussions. These concerns were: 1) adequate storage for teacher materials and supplies and 2) planning space for teachers. In the design of Heritage Oak School both issues were addressed to some degree. Grade level storage rooms and workrooms are located adjacent to classrooms to allow for ample storage and planning. However, it was the recommendation of the Task Force that teachers be provided movable storage carts and book cases to make tracking on and off less burdensome. Fortunately the cost of the movable storage items was charged to the State as a result of AB-87 which provided start-up money to a district implementing a YRE program.

The design of the permanent school site also provided for the regular curricular needs of the school. A school library, multi-purpose room, computer laboratory, special education classrooms, and additional teacher work areas were included to meet the needs of a quality instructional
program. A park site adjacent to the school and developed through a joint use agreement with the City of Roseville provides excellent outdoor facilities.

In conclusion, most of the issues surrounding facility needs were either addressed in the design of Heritage Oak School or have been addressed through a cooperative effort with the City of Roseville Parks and Recreation Department.

DAY CARE
A day care program for off-track children and before and after school care is provided on site. This program is the result of another cooperative venture between the City of Roseville and the Dry Creek School District. This "Adventure Club" helped eliminate a major concern of parents - adequate supervision. In addition, a sub-committee of the Task Force worked with local agencies to create a list of child care providers in the area. Parents were encouraged to utilize the on site day care program or to use one of the several child care providers on the list. All of the providers had to be a state approved program before they could be included on the list.

After school recreation programs are provided utilizing the multi-purpose room and park facilities. Students can stay after school until five o'clock and participate in arts and crafts, sports or homework clubs under the supervision of Parks and Recreation employees.
With the Adventure Club, after school Parks and Recreation program and a concerted effort to identify local day care providers, the Task Force did its' best to address the issue of child care.

TRANSPORTATION

The implementation of YRE had little effect on the transportation department in the Dry Creek District. This is because Heritage Oak School is made up of a large pedestrian population (Lee, 1991). More than eighty-five percent of the student population live inside the 2.5 mile radius from which the district buses. The vast majority of students who attend Heritage Oak either walk or ride their bicycles to school.

Some parents wanted the option of attending one of the traditional schools within the district. The Task Force recommended that the district refrain from providing transportation to those families. The Board of Trustees accepted the recommendation. However, students requiring special education services not provided at Heritage Oak School will have their transportation provided.

TEACHER ASSIGNMENT

The assignment of teachers to grade levels and tracks is the responsibility of the school site administration. The initial assignment of tracks for the 1992-93 school year was a learning process for all involved. The Task Force recommended that teachers at the Heritage Oak Starter School choose their track assignments by February 1. During grade level meetings teachers were asked to discuss the initial assignment among
themselves and if a decision could not be agreed upon to include the administration.

This process worked rather well for the most part. However, track selections were completed before the district opened up the additional positions at the school. As a result, teachers who were required to transfer were not given a choice of track and in some instances, a choice of grade. This created quite a bit of animosity between teachers transferred from another school and those who were from the Starter School. In the future, track assignments will not be decided until all transfers and new hires are complete. This will also eliminate the opportunity for parents to teacher shop and choose a track based upon a teacher assigned to a specific grade.

TEACHER CONTRACT

The district teacher agreement required changes as a result of implementing a YRE program. The first issue that had to be addressed was the change in number of teaching days. On a 60/20 YRE calendar students are in school 176 days as opposed to the 180 days of the traditional calendar. To recapture these instructional minutes, the regular school day had to be lengthened. In addition, more teacher work days had to be added to provide for tracking on after being off-track. The district, in an effort to make the transition to YRE successful, provided teachers on YRE an additional personal day for the first year. It was hoped that teachers could use the day to help overcome the anxiety of tracking on and off the first year.
Teachers on the YRE schedule were also provided with five exchange days annually. On this program, teachers could exchange work days with members of another track. This allows teacher A on a track with no time off in the summer at least five days of vacation during that time. In return, teacher B who covered for teacher A would be able to take five days vacation during a time that teacher A was off track and would cover his/her classroom.

The teacher contract also includes a room sharing and rotational agreement clause in it. This clause mandates that teachers in a rotational group must develop and have approved by the site administrator, a room sharing and rotation agreement. The agreement addresses issues of textbook usage, storage facilities, instructional materials, art supplies, bulletin boards, and responsibilities for tracking on and off.

Teachers who are off track often want to utilize their free time to substitute and make additional money. The district and teacher representatives negotiated an agreement that allows teachers to substitute while off-track. Furthermore, teachers who choose to substitute will be called prior to regular substitutes being called and will be paid 150% of the regular substitute pay. Teachers and the district are extremely satisfied with this agreement. During the 1992-93 school year negotiations none of the YRE amendments to the contract are being revised. Both the district and the teachers are pleased with the agreement thus far.
REGISTRATION

Initial registration of students is perhaps the most stressful time for both school staff and parents. For one reason or another parents become convinced that one track is far superior to another. As a result, the method used to register students must take that fact into consideration. The process used at Heritage Oak eliminated most of the difficulties other schools have experienced. Most schools send registration packets home on a Friday and begin registration the following Monday in the school office. Parents camp-out over the weekend in front of the school office and often tempers fly as parent jockey for position on a specific track. One neighboring district had two parents arrested for swinging tire irons over an argument about a YRE issue the same week that Heritage Oak began registration.

The process used for initial track registration at Heritage Oak was a mail-in registration. On January 17, 1992, students took home the track selection form. Parents were advised to complete the form as quickly as possible and return it to the school through the mail. Students would be placed on tracks on a first come, first served basis as the school received their selection forms. As a class or track filled parents who registered late would be contacted and informed that they would be given their second choice. As a result 92% of the parents returned the track selection form by February 7. After that time parents could bring the registration to the office and their child(ren) would be placed on a track with available space.

This method was not without error however. Some students did not deliver the track selection form to their parents and consequently did not get the form in early enough for their first choice. This method also relied
a great deal on an outside agency, the U.S. Postal Service. A few forms were received several days after they were post marked. In these cases the school made every effort to work with the families and provide a solution. Some parents displayed their lack of faith in the postal service by having their registrations sent via UPS. Though not without its moments the initial track selection process was extremely successful when compared to the process used by many others in our neighboring districts.

After track selections were received parents were mailed a confirmation of their track assignment and start dates for their track. This provided an opportunity for additional YRE correspondence and avoided a stampede in the office as parents raced to see their child's track assignment.

PRESENT CONDITION

Currently Heritage Oak Elementary School is preparing for its second year of YRE. The population of the school has grown from 632 students when the school opened the doors to year-round on July 6, 1992, to an expected enrollment of 955 students when the second of YRE begins on July 12, 1993. This growth has confirmed the fact that had the school district not implemented YRE housing students would be a serious problem.

The other K-5 school in the Dry Creek District will begin its first year of YRE on July 12, 1993. In July of 1994 the middle school will become YRE and make the district entirely YRE. In addition two other elementary schools are being built and a second middle school is in the planning stages. These new schools will open their doors as YRE schools
and not have to endure making the laborious change from traditional to YRE.

The future of the Dry Creek School District looks very promising. More promising is the future of YRE. Several schools in Placer County have visited Heritage Oak and plan to transition to YRE in the near future. The efforts of the teachers, parents, and community have made transitioning from traditional to YRE a memorable and rewarding process.
CHAPTER 6
SUMMARY

The enrollment boom in California is not expected to level off until the
turn of the century. School districts will have no choice but to
implement a YRE program to allow for adequate housing of students and
position themselves for state building assistance.

Furthermore, economic situations in many states across the nation
have caused school districts to examine all methods of cost efficient
management. A multi-track YRE program not only provides housing for
all students, but it does so more economically.

School districts which are concerned about the quality of education
provided to their students must be prepared to put on the armor and fight
the battle for YRE. With the turn of the century fast approaching and as
schools prepare to step into the twenty-first century, it seems ridiculous
that "tradition" is the only reason we are taking with us an archaic school
calendar. The school calendar was designed in the 1800's with one specific
purpose in mind - the harvest. How many school aged children in the State
of California helped out with the harvest last summer? Can we continue to
support a calendar with a three-month interruption of instruction?
Research has provided the evidence that continuous instruction with short
breaks or vacations can be better for students, especially those who are
disadvantaged.

Year-round education has met the challenge of its' opponents. Achievemen
tscores for YRE schools are equal or better than their
traditional counterparts; operational and capital outlay expense are
reduced; student and teacher attendance improves; and vandalism of school property diminishes. With all this evidence one final question is raised, "Why is YRE not adopted across the entire nation?" The answer is clear - tradition.

If the year-round calendar were the traditional school calendar and had been so for over one hundred years, how would the American public react to someone if they were to suggest a new calendar that proposed a three month lapse in the instructional process (Brekke, 1990). Why then do we allow this calendar to stand in the way of the quality education that American children deserve. It is time to toss tradition aside. It is time to do what is best for children. It is time for YRE.
APPENDIX A

YRE ATTRIBUTES LIST
YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION
ATTRIBUTES

ADVANTAGES

1. Less learning loss with shorter periodic vacations.
2. Can increase the capacity of a school from 25-50 percent.
3. Avoids major costs in building additional schools.
4. Places the district in a higher priority for state building funds.
5. Optimum use of schools all year round.
6. Fewer students on site at any time.
7. Less chance for student/teacher burnout as a result of more frequent breaks.
8. Provides a variety of vacation times so parents are not forced to vacation in summer months only.
9. Allows districts to attain a lower annual per pupil cost.
10. Provides the opportunity for intersession each month for remediation and enrichment.
11. Attendance of students and teachers is dramatically improved.
12. Teachers spend less time on review caused by long summer breaks.
14. Reduces the incidence of vandalism.
15. Provides an opportunity for teachers to supplement their income by substitute teaching during off-track time.
YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION
ATTRIBUTES

DISADVANTAGES

1. Change is difficult for many "traditionalists".
2. Students with siblings in another school may be on different schedules.
3. Communication is difficult with students, parents, and teachers that are off-track.
4. Storage space for off-track teachers must be provided.
5. Scheduling of students, activities, assemblies, and other events are more difficult.
6. Administrative year and complexities increase.
7. Students in school during the summer may miss some opportunities for organized camps.
8. School would have to have adequate air conditioning.
9. Parents must arrange day care during off-track periods.
10. Inservice days for teachers are harder to schedule.
11. Working on advanced degrees for teachers may be more difficult.
APPENDIX B

YRE TASK FORCE MEETING AGENDA
YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION MEETING AGENDA
February 20, 1992
3 p.m., Room 15, Heritage Oak School

- Busing for YRE
- Timeline
- Selpa, Program Specialist Services - Kay
- Special Education Services - Lila
- Health Services - Ann
- Psychiatric Services - Ron
- Classified Report - Linda
- Day Care Plan
- Visitation Report
- Budget Report
- YRE Conference Report
- Carts - Primary/Intermediate
- Student Session Update
- Student Council
- Student Study Team - Tina
- Concerns/Comments
- Next Meeting
APPENDIX C

HERITAGE OAK TASK FORCE TIMELINE
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<td>LEGAL NOTICE IN NEWSPAPER</td>
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<td>SEPTEMBER 15</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>TRANSITION BUDGET PREPARATION</td>
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<td>OCTOBER 9</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>PARENT INFORMATION MEETING - P.T.A. MEETING, TOPIC - YEAR-ROUND ED.</td>
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<td>OCTOBER 15</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>CITY RECREATION OFFICIALS, LIBRARIANS, AND CHURCH OFFICIALS MEET WITH TASK FORCE</td>
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<td>OCTOBER</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>ESTABLISH PROCESS FOR TEACHER PLACEMENT</td>
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<td>JANUARY</td>
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<td>INFORMATION ASSEMBLY FOR STUDENTS</td>
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<td>1992</td>
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<td>YRE CONFERENCE - SAN DIEGO</td>
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MARCH 1992  ORDER MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT NO LATER THAN APRIL 1

MARCH 1992  DEVELOP TRANSPORTATION SCHEDULE

MARCH 1992  SUB EXCHANGE/TRACK CHANGE CRITERIA

MARCH 1992  REPORT FROM CLASSIFIED SUB COMMITTEE AND VARIOUS GROUPS ON PROGRAM

MARCH 1992  MODIFICATIONS TO ACCOMMODATE YRE

APRIL 1992  RE-EVALUATE STORAGE PARAMETERS CLEAN-UP PROCEDURES

MAY 19 1992  KINDERGARTEN ROUND-UP

MAY 1992  COMPLETE HIRING FOR YRE

JUNE 1992  FINALIZE TRANSPORTATION BASED ON TRACK ASSIGNMENTS

JULY 6 1992  YEAR-ROUND SCHOOL BEGINS
APPENDIX D

DRY CREEK BOARD OF TRUSTEES' YRE ACTIONS
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<td>DECEMBER 19, 1991</td>
<td>REPORT ON TIMELINE OF YRE IMPLEMENTATION</td>
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REFERENCES


Brekke, N. (1990, February) "It's About Time." San Diego: Presentation to the National Association for Year-Round Education.


EdSource (1992, Spring) "Breaking Tradition: Year-Round Schools"


San Diego County Office of Education (1986) "Year-Round Education Resource Guidebook"


