

News Debate: Snowed Out!



Should schools ban snow days?

Students at Mississinawa Valley School in western Ohio have to say "so long" to snow days. The white powder may fall, but students won't be able to spend the day sledding. Classes will be in session-online. Officials say that holding electronic workdays (e-days) will help students keep up with their studies and familiarize them with virtual learning. It will also prevent requiring students to make up days later in the year.

Some students argue that it's not fair to ditch snow days, however. They say that snow days give them a much-needed break. They also note that missing a day here and there is not enough to put them behind. In addition, some educators point out that not everyone has access to home computers and that sometimes siblings have to share computers. Should students be required to work on snow days? *Current Events* student reporters Jordan Dewar and Logan Gegg shoveled it out.

E-day Now, Play Later

Which would you prefer: spending a cold day on a computer, or sitting in school in June when you should be on vacation? Having online work on a snow day is the better choice. You would be working on a day that you already planned on having schoolwork. As Patrick Long, 13, from Silver Spring, MD., says, "A couple hours of online work beats going in for additional days in June."

Having extra days of school in summer can interfere with families' vacation plans. Besides, what if your school does not have air-conditioning? Imagine sweating through seven hours of school on a hot June day when you could have been relaxing by a pool. Doesn't an e-day sound better than that?

Finally, for some students, it would be easier to concentrate on e-days than on makeup days. "You can do a little work online, go play, and then come back later," says Rachel Meyers, 12, from Silver Spring. "But on June days you would just have to sit there for seven hours, thinking about how you could be outside, so you lose focus."

Save Snow Days

Snow days are days of well-deserved fun. However, a school in Ohio wants to replace them with e-days. Four out of five Altamont, Kan., students disagree with that arrangement. One problem with the plan is that it punishes students who don't have computers at home; those kids would have to make up e-day work within two weeks. So when school resumes after an e-day, the students without Internet access at home will be behind and have to work double-time to catch up.

In addition, some school districts may not have the money to fund e-days. According to the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), many districts are making budget cuts. "School budget cuts across the country ... are expected to continue into the 2012-13 school year," the AASA Web site states. Adding e-days could burden districts in fragile financial situations. Austin Krewson, an Altamont eighth grader, agrees. "The school wouldn't be able to afford both the Web site and taking care of the school," he says.

Furthermore, electrical outages are common during snowstorms. If kids don't have power at home, the money and time involved in implementing the new program would be wasted.