

Syracuse Academy of Science considers expanding school year

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Syracuse (WSYR-TV) – While schools throughout Central New York have been forced to call more than their share of snow days, they won't cost any area schools time from their mid-winter break, which starts Monday.

One school, though, is already looking forward to next year and considering keeping students in class for that week.

The Syracuse Academy of Science charter school is planning to add 15 more days of school next year.

The school already conducts classes a little different than public schools. For example, students at SAS are expected to wear uniforms.

Now they're considering extending the school year from 180 days to 195 days.

As far back as 2010, their plans have included a longer school year.

Now, the superintendent says they have the [infrastructure](#) – like air conditioning.

School officials say research shows the value of more school and that they have a real need to do it now.

"Since the Common Core is in place, higher expectations and college readiness and everything else and if you want to reach those extraordinary goals you can't go with the ordinary ways. You have to think of other solutions to get there," said SAS Superintendent Tolga Havali.

The school day at SAS is already 8:15 a.m. to 4 p.m. – so they say expanding that day is not an option.

"Quite a few parents asked me why we can't use the winter break, that's four days right there, utilize this, absolutely we're open to all those suggestions. The bottom line is very important, it needs to benefit our students, that's it," Havali said.

The district is still working with the school community on its calendar – spreading the days out is an option or just beginning the school year on Aug. 11.

"The kids need to recharge, the teachers need to recharge. Having kids 195 days a year for 8 hours or more a day, that's tiring for both parties. I can see maybe for the high school kids," said Jamie Wheatley, a parent concerned with the proposal.

"Everything within the charter school, I love the idea and like I said, the extra 15 days, if it's going to help my girls get into college, I'm all for it," said PTO [President](#) Todd Doss.

It's no guarantee, but the superintendent says it will help.

The PTO will be holding a meeting Tuesday night at the 6 p.m. at the elementary school on South Salina Street where the school calendar will be discussed with the superintendent.



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