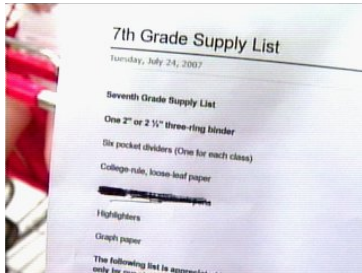


Back from the beach and hitting the books

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Many children across the Heart of the Valley are getting ready to head back to school.

In fact, some have already started class, so is the early August date too early for some?

Many of us remember starting school after Labor Day.

Those days are over. Now its back to class at the start of August.

School leaders saying the early start-up date actually impacts academic performance.

Back to school. Back to learning. Time for summer break to be over.

Samantha Allan says she's excited to start sixth grade.

"Kinda sorta. Its boring at home. There's something to do at school."

Ready or not, Samantha and her sisters start back next Thursday.

"If you go later its just waiting for you."

Today, though, the Allan family is pushing their buggy through the isles at Target, picking up necessary supplies.

"I have to have a lot of paper, notebooks, pens highlighters. Lot of stuff."

Mom Jennifer carries the list through the back-to-school section of Target, checking off pens, scissors, glue, backpacks, crayons and other supplies for her 5 children, all ready to start another school year.

Even if it comes in early August.

"It's not a real big deal for us to get out before Memorial Day. So when they start to school is no big deal to us."

No big deal, but to some, a hassle.

Allan says the early August start up date interferes with summer plans, but it's something you have to work around.

"You just learn to take your vacation early because a lot of our kids play sports that goes on in to the early summer you are limited when you can take your vacation."

Faith Kennedy, a soon-to-be 7th grader at Discovery Middle School is also shopping for school supplies for her first day back.

Says she wants to start school later to give her more time for vacation in the summer

"Because I didn't get to go where I wanted and stay very long."

A recent public opinion poll shows 67 percent of Alabama voters support a school start date no earlier than the third week of August.

69 percent favor the school year starting no earlier than August 21.

52 percent of voters favored a longer summer vacation with fewer breaks between the first and last day of school.