

Five-Block Scheduling Options

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What does the shift to five-block scheduling options mean?

Students will continue to attend four blocks of classes in a day. What will be new next September at the schools implementing it is an additional block available for scheduling. This fifth block will optimize school space, as it enables the ability to stagger when students are in the building – creating additional capacity so that more students can be accommodated within existing school space. Grade 8, 9, and 10 classes will be scheduled consecutively in blocks 2 to 5. Grade 11 and 12 classes, which involve more electives, will be scheduled throughout the day in blocks 1 to 5. Class selection in February will be crucial in determining how Grade 11 and 12 course offerings are distributed throughout the blocks.

2. What will the bell schedule look like?

Below is a draft schedule to give you a sense of what this may look like at your child’s school; however, it’s important to note that **some changes may still be made**. Additionally, each school moving to five blocks has flexibility to make small timing adjustments that work well for their own school community. The schedules across all four schools moving to this model will be very close in order to keep access to District programs, such as trades training, academies and other [Programs of Choice](#).

Draft Schedule: 2025-2026 School Year		
Block	Time	Duration
1	8:00 – 9:20am	80 Minutes
	9:20 – 9:25am	Transition
2	9:25 – 10:45am	80 Minutes
	10:45 – 10:55am	Transition
3	10:55 – 12:15pm	80 Minutes
	Lunch	12:15 – 12:55pm
4	12:55 – 2:15pm	80 Minutes
	2:15 – 2:20pm	Transition
5	2:20 – 3:40pm	80 Minutes

3. Which high schools are doing this for the 2025-26 school year?

The four schools moving forward in September with five-block scheduling options are: **Alpha Secondary, Burnaby Central Secondary, Burnaby Mountain Secondary** and **Moscrop Secondary**. Principals at potentially impacted schools – five of our eight high schools – sent a letter on October 17 to families that this change was being considered for the next school year. The letter also let families know that a space analysis was underway. It has been completed at all five schools and examined how future growth projections might fit within existing space. Upon analysis of that data, the District made the decision to move forward with five-block scheduling options at four of the five schools. At this time, no changes are planned for the 2025-26 school year at the fifth school that was under consideration: **Burnaby North Secondary**. Further measures are able to be taken there for the next school year to manage existing space in a way that accommodates anticipated growth without having to move to a 5-block day.

4. Why are you making this change?

Like many districts, we've been experiencing significant increased enrolment and continued growth is forecast. This shift to five-block scheduling options at half of our high schools is being made to address the immediate need for space for both current students and the additional ones expected in the next school year. It remains a priority to ensure a quality learning environment for all students.

5. Does this mean those four schools are the only ones moving to five-block days?

Yes, based on the data we have at this time, four schools need to move forward with adding a fifth block for scheduling in the 2025-26 year: Alpha Secondary, Burnaby Central Secondary, Burnaby Mountain Secondary and Moscrop Secondary.

6. Why are you choosing to move to five-block scheduling options instead of just adding portables or building more schools to solve the space issue?

A new approach to class scheduling can be stressful and we are mindful of the impact this shift will have on students, families and school staff. We are looking to keep change to a minimum by adjusting the start and end time of the school schedule to create space for one more block. While we continue to work with the Ministry of Education and Child Care on approval for building expansions and new schools, the pace of growth at many of our high schools is such that we can't wait to build ourselves out of the capacity issues we are immediately facing. Portables are expensive structures that must be financed out of the District's existing operating funds, which means the cost of portables diverts resources from other critical front-line education areas. Additionally, not all school sites have land space to accommodate portables.

7. Does this shift to five-block scheduling options mean my child will have a longer day?

Students will continue to take the same number of blocks: four classes in a day. What's different is that not all students will start and end school at the same time. The intention is that the vast majority will attend consecutive blocks and be at school for the same number of hours that they are now. Grade 8, 9, and 10 classes will be scheduled consecutively in blocks 2 to 5. Grade 11 and 12 classes, which involve more electives, will be scheduled throughout the day in blocks 1 to 5. Class selection in February will be crucial in determining how Grade 11 and 12 course offerings are distributed throughout the blocks. In all cases, instructional time remains the same as it is now. Students' educational quality and class choice will continue to be prioritized as timetables are built.

8. Does this mean that my child will now have to take five classes per day rather than four?

A full-time schedule for students remains at four classes per day.

9. Will there still be "flex time" before the start of the school day?

A decision around flex time will be made this coming spring.

10. How will this affect class choice and what kind of say will my child have in their schedule? Can they opt out of this and have the same start and end time to the school day they have had in previous years?

The breadth of course choice available is unchanged. We are proud to offer a wide variety of options that support students' interests and help to prepare them for their futures outside of public education, while fulfilling graduation requirements. Students will continue to select courses based on both preferences and required classes. The new five-block scheduling options will apply to the whole school. A student's individual schedule will depend on the classes in which they are enrolled, and they will not be able to select times, which is the same as the current practice.

11. Does this shift to five-block scheduling options have any benefit for my child?

This change allows us to accommodate increased enrolment without having to reduce course options and student choice. Our collective priority remains the quality of education for each student.

12. How will the staggered start and end to the school day impact staff supervision at school?

There will be supervision throughout the school day with continued access to teachers, administration, counsellors and other support staff.

13. What impact will this have on extracurricular activities such as school sports?

It is critical for students to have balance in their lives with room for other activities and pursuits – whether that’s sports or clubs that play a key role in school culture, volunteering, or working in the community. Schools will continue to offer a range of extracurricular activities and sports.

14. What effect will this have on current “X” or “Y” blocks where students might be taking off-timetable classes such as drama or band?

Those are details that each school will be looking at in order to best meet the needs of their school community. Information about next year’s course selection from students will be gathered this February and will be critical in determining how best to build the timetable.

15. What are you doing to address concerns about students’ sleep with the earlier start time for some?

Unfortunately it is not possible to avoid an earlier start for some when 5 blocks must now fit in the day. There is no question that sleep is important to growth and development for youth. Keeping in mind that some will have to start school earlier and all students can benefit from reminders on how to plan sleep schedules, the District is looking at ways to support students with information refreshers.

16. What if my child’s schedule now affects their ability to drop off their younger sibling at elementary school or pick them up after school?

We recognize that parents and caregivers have fixed commitments during the day, such as work, and we will always do our best to support families.

17. Will this have an impact on whether a school has a linear or semester schedule?

A 5-block day will not impact whether a school is linear or semester.

18. For schools that are moving forward with the changes, will this be the new normal indefinitely?

Current multi-year enrolment forecasts show a continued increase. If circumstances change and adjustments can be made, the approach to the number of blocks in a school day will be re-evaluated.

19. When will I learn more about my child’s schedule for the next school year?

Schools will communicate preliminary schedules in late spring to give families a sense of what to expect. As always, adjustments will sometimes need to be made and final schedules will be sent to students at the end of the summer when your school would typically do so. Nothing will change in how class change requests are made.