



February 10, 2023,

Dear Families,

For the past two years, the superintendent has directed secondary schools to run semester timetables so that schools can better adjust to pandemic-related capacity limits and a potential shift to hybrid or remote programming. Before the pandemic, all secondary schools in our district ran on a linear calendar. This week, Superintendent Dhillon advised secondary principals that he will not be directing schools to run semester timetables again for the 2023/24 school year and we will be reverting to the linear schedule that has been our norm.

As you may know, two secondary schools in the district (Garibaldi Secondary and Thomas Haney Secondary) have program models specifically designed to run on a linear schedule. For these schools, a return to the linear model is a necessity. This means that 30% of the secondary schools in our district must run on a linear system. A common timetable across the school district will continue to allow students to cross-enrol at other secondary schools in the district (e.g. for trades, hockey academy, fine arts, etc.).

As most of our secondary students will only have had experience with the quarter system and the semester structure, I have included a table originally created by BCSTA that outlines some of the key differences between the semester and linear models.

Although both systems have advantages and disadvantages, in the linear system, students have the entire school year to complete the learning outcomes for each subject. This means the curriculum is delivered more slowly than in the semester system. Because classes run all year, there is also less learning loss. As an example, a student taking a math course in the first semester may not have math again until the following school year, which disrupts continuity of learning.

The concern some students have voiced about the linear model involves workload, particularly as it relates to the scheduling of assignment due dates and course assessments. We are committed to working collaboratively with school staff to develop systems and schedules that maximize the even distribution of workload for students.

Where it makes sense for the overall school timetable and subject to district approval, we will also be able to run select classes in semester format. This year, as an example, we were able to run some classes in linear format. I am confident that we can support student success in the linear system.

If, in the future, the district determines there is a need to revisit the timetable schedules, any potential changes will be considered on the basis of school community feedback and within the greater context of collective agreement provisions, staffing shortages, provincial assessment schedules, district infrastructure, and other key considerations.

Sincerely,

Mr. Frend
Principal