

# Semester/Linear/Quarter Comparison

The following table serves to highlight the potential impact on students and staff when making decisions regarding timetable options. This is a subjective overview and opinions may vary.

TOPIC	SEMESTER	LINEAR	QUARTERMESTER
<b>Overall Academic Performance</b>	Significant negative impact on courses that benefit from learning over time (e.g. languages, music, reading). Can more easily accommodate longer classes (e.g. 2.5 hours) which may benefit practical arts and lab based courses the most.	Positive impact on student learning in courses that are best done over time (e.g. music, languages). Limitations on the length of classes so does not accommodate practical arts and lab based courses well (especially at the sr. level).	Greatest negative impact on courses that benefit from learning over time (e.g. languages, music, reading). Can more easily accommodate longer classes (e.g. 2.5 hours) which may benefit practical arts and lab based courses the most.
<b>Entry/Exit Points</b>	September / February	September only	September / November / February / April
<b>Course Acceleration</b>	Allows for students to advance in specific discipline areas (example: taking Ma 11 and Ma 12 in Gr. 11).	Little opportunity for advancement within the school year. Acceleration in schools with linear timetables is usually accomplished through external programming (e.g. virtual).	Students would have a greater opportunity to take advanced courses (examples: Calculus or AP courses) by taking multiple progressive courses in the same year (math 11 > 12 > calculus).

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<b>Course Selection / Change Opportunities</b>	Initial course selection and timetabling done before September, but can accommodate mid-year changes in January (assuming staffing availability and flexibility).	Initial course selection and timetabling done before September, with little or no opportunity for change during the school year.	Initial course selection and timetabling done before September, but can accommodate quarterly changes in November, January and April (assuming staffing availability and flexibility).
<b>Accessing District Dual Credit programs (college / BCIT); Secondary School Apprenticeship and other Career/Life Program options</b>	The majority of external Dual Credit programs start February 1 so can be accommodated.	Very limited or no opportunity for participation.	The majority of external Dual Credit programs start February 1 so can be accommodated. This may, however, vary from district to district.
<b>Students scheduling Work Experience or volunteering in community</b>	Semester timetables can provide longer blocks of time to schedule community-based activities.	Linear timetable classes are traditionally of shorter duration and thus cannot accommodate community-based activities.	Quartermester timetables traditionally provide the longest blocks of time to schedule community-based activities.
<b>Specialty Programs and Distance Learning</b>	Schools with specialty programs may be able to benefit financially by including students from other districts or the independent schools through their two entry times (September / February).	Schools with specialty programs only have one entry point with no opportunity to attract outside clientele mid-year.	Schools with specialty programs may be able to benefit financially by including students from other districts or the independent schools through their potentially four entry times each year.

TOPIC	SEMESTER	LINEAR	QUARTERMESTER
<b>Accessing programs at other schools during the year</b>	There is no advantage of one timetable over another for students who transfer schools during the year IF both schools are on the same form of timetable. For this reason, many districts often standardize timetable formats across all of their schools.	There is no advantage of one timetable over another for students who transfer schools during the year IF both schools are on the same form of timetable. For this reason, many districts often standardize timetable formats across all of their schools.	There is no advantage of one timetable over another for students who transfer schools during the year IF both schools are on the same form of timetable. For this reason, many districts often standardize timetable formats across all of their schools.
<b>Extra-Curricular Activities</b>	During extended absences (provincials' championships, tours, etc.), students miss more time per course than on a linear system, but course selection and scheduling can sometimes be adjusted to match absences.	During extended absences (provincials championships, tours, etc.), students miss the least amount of time per course.	During extended absences (provincials championships, tours, etc.), students miss the most time per course, but course selection and scheduling can sometimes be adjusted to match absences.
<b>Co-curricular Courses and School Culture</b>	Specific programs such as Performing Arts, Recreational Leadership and Physical Education courses may be limited to a single semester (especially in smaller schools).	Curricular Performing Arts, Recreational Leadership, Physical Education and other courses are held throughout the year.	Specific programs such as Performing Arts, Recreational Leadership and Physical Education courses may be limited to a single quarter (especially in smaller schools).

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<b>Teacher to Student contacts</b>	Teachers will have 3 or 4 classes during each semester (75 – 100 students usually).	Teachers will have 7 classes for the full year (approximately 175 students usually).	Teachers will only have 1 or 2 classes per quarter (25-50 students usually).
<b>Weekly contact with teachers</b>	Daily (4 classes each day) or alternating day (2 classes each alternating day).	Alternating days (usually 4 classes per alternating day).	Daily (2 classes per day every day for the quarter).
<b>Number of Course Preps (per teacher at one time)</b>	Four block rotation limits the number of teacher course preps to 3 or 4 per semester.	Eight block full year rotation can mean teachers to have up to 7 course preps at one time.	Teachers have only 1 or 2 course preps per quarter.
<b>Teacher Preparation Time</b>	Teachers usually receive prep in only one semester (unless there is teacher course sharing).	Teachers usually have a prep every other day for the full year.	Teachers usually receive a prep block for only one quarter or one semester if there is teacher course sharing.
<b>Collegial Collaboration</b>	Semestered prep provides some opportunities for collegial collaboration within school and between schools.	Full year time spans may limit opportunities for staff collaboration.	Shorter time spans may limit opportunities for staff collaboration.
<b>Teacher Mobility</b>	Teachers enabled to potentially provide instruction in more than one school per year by moving at semester change.	Teachers less able to provide instruction in more than one facility.	May provide an opportunity for teachers with specialty programs to offer these courses to students in various facilities by moving at the quarter.

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<b>Use of Teaching Resources</b>	Textbooks, etc. can be utilized twice per school year (i.e. by two students).	Textbooks, etc. can only be utilized once per year.	Textbooks and other learning resources can be used up to four times per school year.
<b>Quality vs Quantity of student learning</b>	Anecdotally seen as the reasonable compromise to meet the needs of all students and programs.	Anecdotally seen as best meeting the needs of students and programs with an academic focus. Seen as providing the best overall quality of learning.	Anecdotally seen as best meeting the needs of students and programs with a practical arts focus. Seen as providing the best overall quantity of learning options.
<b>Time span of individual classes</b>	Usually approximately 75 minutes per class (4 classes per day) or 150 minutes (2 classes per day alternating).	Usually approximately 75 minutes per class (4 classes per day on alternating days). Historically there were examples of 5 or 6 short blocks per day.	Usually approximately 150 minutes per class twice daily.
<b>Effectiveness of Class Time for Intense Learning Opportunities</b>	The effectiveness of learning opportunities will depend on chosen length of class. Longer class times (e.g. 2.5 hrs.) may be difficult (i.e. less effective) for classes such as band, PE and math.	Shorter class times may not be effective for project work but may be more effective for intense learning opportunities.	Longer class times may be effective for project work but may be sustainable for effective for intense learning opportunities.
<b>Time to get to know each other</b>	Teachers and students have a 5 month time span to get to know each other.	Teachers and students have a 10 month time span to get to know each other.	Teachers and students have a 2.5 month time span to get to know each other.

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<b>Learning Assistance / Remedial Help for students</b>	Only available for one semester unless double-blocked or outside of the school day.	Available throughout the school year within a single block. Offers the most time to 'catch-up.'	Only available for one quarter unless double-blocked or outside of the school day. Little time to 'catch up' if behind.
<b>Reporting for Students</b>	Students traditionally receive two formal report cards per course (mid and end points).	Students traditionally receive three or four formal report cards per course (sequential and end points).	Students traditionally receive only one formal report per course (end point) with an informal update at the mid-point.
<b>AP and IB considerations</b>	While articulation with AP (easier) and IB (more difficult) programs is possible, it still provides some challenges especially in the second semester.	Articulates best with AP and IB programs as the majority of class time is completed before exams.	Articulation with AP and IB programs is possible, but with significant challenges and required changes to the timetable.
<b>Student and Teacher Absences</b>	Provides students and teachers a balance of flexibility (time wise and current courses) to deal with after unforeseen absences.	Provides students and teachers the greatest flexibility (time wise) to deal with unforeseen absences, although they must deal with the greatest number of courses in doing so.	Provides students and teachers the least flexibility (time wise) to deal with unforeseen absences, although they only have to deal with the fewest number of courses in doing so.
<b>Student Grade Completion and Graduation</b>	Students may complete course, grades and graduation requirements at either of two times through the school year.	All students generally complete course, grades and graduation requirements at the same time.	Students may complete course, grades and graduation requirements at any one of four times through the school year.

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<b>Parent preference</b>	Most often parents prefer the timetable they were in as a student, or the timetable traditionally provided by their children's school.	Anecdotally - More often preferred by parents who believe their children are going to university / academic program.	Anecdotally - More often preferred by parents who believe their children are struggling in school or going on to a practical arts / hands-on program.
<b>Teacher preference</b>	Very often teachers prefer the timetable they are most familiar with (i.e. the one they have the most experience with).	Anecdotally - More often preferred by teachers who are teaching university bound / academic classes.	Anecdotally - More often preferred by teachers who are teaching practical arts classes or those classes with activities or field trips.
<b>Potential School District Cost Savings</b>	Some opportunity for districts to reduce school staffing (costs) over the school year (mid-year) as student numbers decline. There may also be a cost saving as lower numbers of textbooks and other learning resources are required.	Little or no opportunity for districts to reduce school staffing (costs) over the school year. Less opportunity to reduce the overall number of textbooks required.	Greatest opportunity for districts to reduce school staffing (costs) over the school year (3 times) as student numbers decline. There may also be a cost saving as lower numbers of textbooks and other learning resources are required.
<b>Collective Agreement considerations</b>	Local clauses in the teacher (and support staff) collective agreement may limit flexibility (on staffing, assignment and/or prep time) during the school year.	There are usually no conflicts with the collective agreement as changes during the school year are generally not possible.	Local clauses in the teacher (and support staff) collective agreement may limit flexibility (on staffing, assignment and/or prep time) during the school year.

TOPIC	SEMESTER	LINEAR	QUARTERMESTER
<b>Accommodating Student Teachers</b>	Greater opportunity to accommodate student teachers especially for shorter and/or part-time experiences.	Greatest opportunity to accommodate student teachers especially for shorter and/or part-time experiences.	May limit opportunities to accommodate student teachers, especially for shorter and/or part-time experiences.
<b>Turnaround time preferences</b>	Moderate need for 'turn around' time between reporting periods or class changes (which can take away from overall student learning time).	Minimizes the need for 'turnaround' time between reporting periods or class changes.	Maximizes the need for 'turnaround' time between reporting periods or class changes, which may take away from overall learning time.
<b>School Size, Grade Span and Mobility Considerations</b>	May more easily accommodate larger homogeneous but more transient school populations.	May better accommodate smaller, more diverse and stable school populations.	May more easily accommodate larger homogeneous but fluctuating school populations.