

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Extended Day

February 22, 2024

1. What does "extended day" mean?

Extended day involves lengthening the school day by one block (or class period). This change will help to increase school capacity by approximately 10-15%.

By staggering student attendance times, we can optimize the use of available space and accommodate more students within our existing school space.

2. Which schools in the district are considering implementation of an extended day schedule for the 2024-2025 school year?

The district is moving forward with implementing an extended day schedule in September at five secondary schools: Grandview Heights Secondary, Fleetwood Park Secondary, Lord Tweedsmuir Secondary, Kwantlen Park Secondary, and Tamanawis Secondary.

Additionally, Fraser Heights Secondary and Salish Secondary are both currently under consideration for an extended day. Decisions regarding these two schools is expected by May 2024. These decisions will be based on many factors, including student course selections and enrolment.

3. Why is the district implementing an extended day at some secondary schools?

Our student population is growing very rapidly, presenting challenges in effectively managing both current enrolment and anticipated growth within our existing school space. While our district continues to advocate for funding to construct new schools and expand existing sites, there is an urgent need for immediate solutions.

Extended day is a solution that's been implemented in our district previously, allowing us to act quickly while maintaining the quality of education for our students. We recognize this change may pose challenges and will impact staff, students, and families, and we are committed to mitigating any inconvenience to the best of our ability.

4. Why is my school implementing an extended day?

The extended day aims to increase the capacity of the most crowded secondary schools in our district by utilizing existing space and equipment at the school more efficiently. By extending the school day by one block and rearranging schedules, we can increase capacity and accommodate courses for students, while continuing to provide a quality learning environment.

5. What will the schedule look like for a secondary school that will implement an extended day?

Beginning in September, the school day will be extended to five blocks. Students will continue attending four blocks per day, but each student's schedule will depend on their classes. For example, some students may attend the first four blocks, others the last four, and some may attend the first two and last two blocks of the day.

Right now, students are actively engaged in the course selection process. The information collected during this phase will play a critical role in shaping the course offerings distributed throughout the five blocks. This data-driven approach will be instrumental in creating timetables that prioritize our student's education and wellbeing.

Preliminary schedules outlining specific class times and arrangements will be communicated to students and their families by late Spring.

6. Will participation in the extended day be mandatory for students?

Yes. For those schools that will be implementing an extended day, the whole school will be moving to five periods starting this September. Individual student schedules will depend on the specific classes that your child is enrolled in.

7. Will students have a say in their schedules?

As always, students will have the opportunity to select courses based on their course requirements and preferences, ensuring they can fulfill graduation requirements while enjoying a well-rounded and fulfilling learning journey. Schools will work hard to ensure these courses are available and work within each student's timetable.

8. How will an extended day benefit students?

By implementing an extended day schedule, the school will be able to increase capacity by an estimated 10-15%. By staggering student attendance times, we can optimize the use of available space and accommodate our current student population and anticipated growth, without compromising the quality of education or the integrity of our learning environment.

Furthermore, an extended day will optimize access to shared resources such as classrooms, technology labs, libraries, and metal/wood shops. This ensures that all students, regardless of their attendance schedule, have equal and fair access to these facilities.

9. Who will be supervising the extended day program?

The school will be staffed for all five blocks, including administration, librarians, teachers, counsellors, and support staff. We will continue to provide a safe and engaging environment for all our students.

10. How will the extended day impact my child's extracurricular activities?

We will aim to minimize conflicts with extracurricular activities to the best extent possible.

11. What measures will be in place to ensure the safety and well-being of participating students?

The safety and well-being of students is always our priority. We will continue to have comprehensive safety protocols in place during all operational hours, including access to necessary supports such as first aid.

12. How will an extended day address capacity issues at the school?

The extended day program will help alleviate capacity issues by spreading the use of space and resources throughout the day, allowing for a more efficient use of school infrastructure while still ensuring a quality education for all students.

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13. Will facility rentals be affected?

We will continue allowing community members to rent school space outside of instructional hours. As always, priority will be given to school and district programs, services, and activities.

14. Why can't we just add more portables?

Portables present a financial challenge for our district. The expenses associated with these structures are drawn directly from district operating funds, diverting resources from other critical areas. Additionally, the limited space available for additional portables on school grounds underscores the urgency of finding sustainable long-term solutions to address school capacity issues.

15. Why can't the district just build more schools?

The Ministry of Education and Childcare is responsible for approving and funding all new schools and additions in the Province of British Columbia. While our Board of Education continues to advocate for the construction of new schools, the ultimate decision to approve any new buildings rests with the provincial Ministry of Education and Child Care.