

# Toronto District School Board

Operational Procedure PR542

Title: **CHANGING A TIMETABLE**

Adopted: May 27, 1999

Revised:

Reviewed: June 2013

Authorization:

## 1.0 OBJECTIVE

To provide details about the steps necessary to change a school timetable.

## 2.0 RESPONSIBILITY

Director of Education

## 3.0 DEFINITIONS

Changing a school timetable, for example from semestering to a full-year program, is a major decision which impacts on everyone in the building and community. Careful thought and planning is critical.

## 4.0 PROCEDURES

To assist your school, the following checklist outlines some of the critical steps that must be taken as well as suggested timelines.

### 4.1. Dialogue at the School

The process usually begins with dialogue at the school level. Make sure that the school Supervisory Officer, School Council, Student Council and Trustee are kept informed.

### 4.2 Recommendation by the School

Once school staff and administration have decided to pursue a change in timetable format, an application form (Form 542A) including rationale must be forwarded to the appropriate Supervisory Officer at least 18 months prior to your target date.

### 4.3 When Approval is Granted

If approval is granted, the school process begins. Suggested activities include:

- Consider the timetable structure of schools in your immediate area and possible impact.
- Establish an in-school committee to guide the process.
- The Committee's prime functions include:
  - investigating possible models;
  - locating and visiting schools that have the type of timetable that your school is interested in adopting;
  - arranging for information sessions with stakeholders;
  - considering financial implications of the proposed change such as the need for additional textbooks
  - considering the impact on Special Education and other special needs programs.
- Invite staff from schools that have the type of timetable you are investigating to come and speak to your teachers about advantages and disadvantages as they see it. You may decide to have more than one of these panel discussions. To assist with the organization, see page 3. Appendix A, for Advantages and Disadvantages of Configurations.
- Surveys can be helpful in assessing the level of support for your initiatives. Target groups include:
  - department heads/leaders of organizational units;
  - staff;
  - students; and
  - parents/community.
- The investigating committee needs to share information about various models with staff on a regular basis to allow for ongoing feedback.
- Your School Council, Supervisory Officer and Trustee must be kept abreast of proceedings throughout.
- Using a process appropriate for your school and community, arrive at a recommended schedule/timetable.

## **5.0 APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Advantages and Disadvantages of Configurations

## **6.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

Form 542A: Application to Investigate a Change to School Structure/Timetable

APPENDIX A

**ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF CONFIGURATIONS**

There are many factors that determine the best choice of schedule for a secondary school. Both a semestered format, and a non-semestered, full-year format have advantages and disadvantages. A full-year format requires further decisions with respect to length of period and number of days per cycle. The chart below suggests some of the factors that should be considered when determining the schedule for a secondary school, or if considering a change in scheduling format.

<b>OPPORTUNITIES of FULL-YEAR SCHEDULE</b>	<b>CONSIDERATIONS of FULL-YEAR SCHEDULE</b>
<p><b>PROGRAM:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If 40 minute periods: shorter time frame appropriate to student attention span, especially for junior students</li> <li>• If 75 minute periods: every other day format allows reasonable time for homework assignments and reading</li> <li>• More time over full year to develop learning skills of students, and to encourage and track improvement</li> <li>• No gaps longer than summer between courses, so greater continuity in program</li> <li>• Concurrent study of complementary courses more likely in an 8 subject schedule (i.e. math and physics, tech courses, etc.)</li> <li>• Students missing consecutive days for illness or co-curricular involvement don't miss the same courses every day</li> <li>• Students involved in co-curricular activities (sports, band, etc.) maintain tie to curriculum through the year/season; easier to recruit and monitor students and maintain contact when they are in the course as well as the team/group</li> <li>• Students involved in after-school activities do not miss the same class every day if early dismissal is necessary</li> <li>• Morning assemblies do not shorten and/or pre-empt the same class every time</li> <li>• Slower pace of courses allows students more time to absorb materials and seek extra help as required</li> </ul>	<p><b>PROGRAM:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students carry a full load of 8 courses at once</li> <li>• No opportunity for "fresh start" during the year for students unsuccessful in a course</li> <li>• Double sets of resources required, as all students are studying every course at once, not half the students each semester</li> <li>• Students unsuccessful in a subject have greater challenge "catching up" without waiting a full year</li> <li>• More difficult to schedule Co-op placements on an every-other-day format, or for mornings or afternoons only</li> <li>• Co-op Ed students may miss significant events in the workplace if they fall on an "in school" day</li> <li>• students wishing to graduate early and work to raise money for college/university cannot do so</li> <li>• no mid-year admissions to university/college possible</li> </ul>

OPPORTUNITIES of FULL-YEAR SCHEDULE	CONSIDERATIONS of FULL-YEAR SCHEDULE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testing in each subject occurs less often</li> <li>• Resource/Communication classes scheduled all year</li> <li>• Co-op Ed students see a whole year picture of work in their placement, gain a better overall perspective, better familiarity</li> <li>• Some employers prefer every other day; not enough work for a student who has to be there all day, every day</li> </ul>	
<p><b>STAFF:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• workload distributed evenly over full year</li> <li>• preparation and assigned time can be equitably balanced more easily</li> <li>• slower pace of program deliver</li> <li>• every other day schedule also allows teachers greater time for marking and lesson planning between class contacts</li> <li>• greater chance to access resources, activities, and/or events available on a seasonal basis</li> <li>• every other day part-time assignment possible</li> <li>• coaches, conductors, and advisors do not miss the same class always if early dismissals are required or morning assemblies scheduled</li> <li>• teachers may be part time Co-op Ed and part time regular schedule, and stay in touch with daily operations of school</li> <li>• longer time to get to know students, develop mentoring relationships, monitor students' personal growth</li> <li>• less disruption to instruction due to absenteeism over consecutive days, since same classes not missed every day</li> </ul>	<p><b>STAFF:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eight sets of students to get to know and for whom to maintain records; more names to learn and remember</li> <li>• limited part-time assignment schedules possible depending on schedule</li> <li>• possibility of more lesson preps at any one time</li> <li>• larger number of students means more parents with whom to maintain contact</li> <li>• twice as many parents to see on Parents' Nights</li> <li>• twice as many report cards requiring preparation of comments, attendance, and mark data</li> </ul>

<b>OPPORTUNITIES of FULL-YEAR SCHEDULE</b>	<b>CONSIDERATIONS of FULL-YEAR SCHEDULE</b>
<p><b>ORGANIZATION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one school opening and registration period</li> <li>• one intake period, so student body develops better rapport</li> <li>• one set of promotion and scholarship meetings</li> <li>• one school closing, one “year end” report</li> <li>• fewer reporting periods for most formats</li> <li>• more slots for classes that are “time of day sensitive”</li> <li>• only one homeform throughout the full year</li> <li>• students stay in the same class groupings all year, which is useful for in-service sessions by Guidance and other departments</li> </ul>	<p><b>ORGANIZATION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• timetable sometimes confusing for students and staff, especially with multi-day tumbling formats</li> <li>• homeform organization more difficult if tied to a specific class, which tumbles with the schedule</li> <li>• students stay in same class groupings all year, so “problem” combinations of students more difficult to resolve</li> <li>• timetable “loading” of students in multi-section courses (Co-op, tech, etc.) more difficult</li> </ul>

<b>OPPORTUNITIES of SEMESTERED SCHEDULE</b>	<b>CONSIDERATIONS of SEMESTERED SCHEDULE</b>
<p><b>PROGRAM:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only 4 courses are studied at a time, allowing for greater concentration in each subject for students and staff</li> <li>• students unsuccessful in a course can repeat, or select an alternative in the second semester</li> <li>• half year time frame allows students to recognize success in shorter periods of time</li> <li>• students can re-enter school mid-year after a gap in schooling</li> <li>• students deal with only four teachers at a time, and respond to only four styles of teaching; greater opportunity to develop rapport</li> <li>• common lunch allows for co-curricular activities, remediation, peer mentoring, and special events to be scheduled inside the school day</li> <li>• easier to schedule Co-op Ed placements for students “out” for one semester at a time; less confusing for student and employer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only long periods, making a greater challenge for teachers to find ways to motivate students and maintain focus</li> <li>• students studying a subject semester one may have a gap of one or two semesters before studying that subject again. Students require greater review time at the start of each new semester. Especially problematic in languages, music, and other practiced skills based courses</li> <li>• concentrated amount of time with only a few teachers; potential personality conflicts can be a problem</li> <li>• students missing consecutive days due to illness can miss a great deal of work</li> <li>• weak students may find the pace too rapid; very little time for remediation or extra help available</li> <li>• Resource/Communication periods may be available only in one semester</li> <li>• students may have inequitable workload depending on how courses are distributed across the semesters scheduled</li> </ul>

<b>OPPORTUNITIES of SEMESTERED SCHEDULE</b>	<b>CONSIDERATIONS of SEMESTERED SCHEDULE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• full semester placements allow for a more realistic work experience for Co-op Ed students; students become part of the “culture”</li> <li>• some Co-op Ed placements are seasonal, and will only take semestered students</li> <li>• Co-op Ed students don’t have to juggle work expectations and course expectations</li> <li>• easier for students to “fast track”, and gain early admission for post-secondary study, or work to earn money during final months before fall admission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students “out” on Co-op Ed placements are almost completely removed from daily school life (clubs, teams, bands, etc.)</li> <li>• students more likely to drop and retake courses</li> </ul>
<p><b>STAFF:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fewer students at a time with whom to develop rapport</li> <li>• only four classes of students to maintain records for each semester, and only four sets of students to maintain parent contacts with each semester</li> <li>• fewer parents to see Parents’ Nights</li> <li>• revisions to courses possible in shorter time frame based on experience during the semester</li> <li>• one semester only part time assignment possible</li> <li>• enrollment of students transferring from non-semestered to semestered programs semester 2 helps maintain enrollment, and therefore staffing</li> </ul>	<p><b>STAFF:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• workload may not be balanced, depending on 6/8 or 7/8, or some fraction in between</li> <li>• placement of prep/on-call may not be balanced</li> <li>• marking load heavier for “next day” returns</li> <li>• long lesson requirement means greater creativity needed to manage time effectively, maintaining student interest and attention</li> <li>• student numbers sometimes drop more dramatically in semestered schools, leading to possible loss of staff</li> <li>• usually more Parents’ Nights over the year, and more reporting periods for formal report card preparation</li> </ul>
<p><b>ORGANIZATION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• timetable very simple for students and staff to learn and follow</li> <li>• standard timeslot for classes facilitates guest speakers over several days, or access to electronic connections (TV Ontario virtual classroom, Artist in Residence, e-mail with distant classes, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p><b>ORGANIZATION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• two sets of midterm examinations; two sets of final examinations</li> <li>• four full reporting periods</li> <li>• two sets of promotion meetings and scholarship meetings</li> <li>• two school openings and closings</li> <li>• timetable “loading” of classes needs to be checked for weighting of subjects (difficulty)</li> </ul>