



Dear Parents/Guardians of secondary students,

I am writing to provide you with another update on our continued planning for the upcoming school year. I appreciate your patience as we continue to plan for a safe return to school.

Please note that this update relates to secondary students only (Grades 9-12) with the ALCDSB community.

I want to emphasize that all updates, changes and information shared is done in support of our top priority, which is the health and safety of all students, staff and community members.

Our return to school plan for secondary students has been adjusted in support of student and staff safety. This recent adjustment has been made in consultation with our local public health units and has been directed by the Ministry of Education.

As we worked through the implementation of our plan for quadmastering, it was brought to our attention that the school day should be changed to reduce the number of student direct and indirect contacts.

The key adjustment is that students will now participate in one subject at a time, rather than two. This is called an “octomester.”

Our previous plan, quadmastering, allowed for students to participate in two subjects per day; however, our newest adjustment will include secondary students participating in one subject per day. This direction has come from the Ministry of Education and is similar to many boards in Ontario.

Here are some key points about an “octomester:”

- Students will participate in an “octomester” which is one subject per day for 22 days
- All school hours will remain the same. [Please confirm your school start and end times here](#)
- Students will remain in one classroom at the same desk for a period of time, without travelling to another classroom (similar to elementary model). This allows for less contact and will avoid the use of two different desks in the same day
- This further limits the number of contacts and touch points for students and staff throughout the day
- Students will have staggered breaks from the classroom and eat lunch in this classroom as well (same as the previous plan). Body breaks and lunch breaks will be provided and will be outlined by each classroom teacher
- Students will still be attending school all day, everyday
- This schedule allows students to be part of a classroom environment with educator support and maintains the same amount of credits in one semester.

We recognize that this schedule is different than a traditional day at a secondary school and this update comes with little time before the start of the school year. However, I cannot reiterate enough, the health and safety of our students and staff is a top priority.

Important dates for the octomester schedule:

Period 1: September 8, 2020 – October 8, 2020

Period 1 Exam: October 9, 2020

Period 2: October 13, 2020 – November 11, 2020

Period 2 Exam: November 12, 2020

Period 3: November 13, 2020 – December 14, 2020

Period 3 Exam: December 15, 2020

Period 4: December 16, 2020 – January 27, 2021

Period 4 Exam: January 28, 2021

Our intent with quadmastering was to limit movement within the school while maintaining a similar school schedule. ALCDSB feels that limiting movement even more to one classroom and one subject per day is a safer, better alternative.

This is the octomester schedule; however, we are inviting Grade 9 and Grade 10 students to enter a few days earlier to become familiarized with their new school. [Please read through staggered entry details here.](#)

Please note that this schedule is for the first semester only. The Board will provide more details for second semester at a later date. This schedule follows the semester schedule, similar to previous years.

If you feel that this recent update may change your decision with regards to In-Person Learning or Remote Learning, please contact your school. Please only contact the school at this time if you already completed the survey and wish to change your entry.

We recognize that parents/guardians may still have many questions but we appreciate your patience. More information on this update will be shared. We continue to receive updates from the Ministry of Education and our local public health units. We want to ensure that this new information is being shared with families and reflected in our planning process.

All up to date information can be found on the board website. [Please click here for ALCDSB's Return to School Plan.](#)

Sincerely,



David DeSantis, Director of Education

