



TRIMESTER SCHEDULE for CENTRAL & WESTERN HIGH SCHOOLS

Central and Western High Schools are switching to a trimester schedule beginning with the 2009-10 school year. In an effort to familiarize you with the trimester schedule, listed below are answers to commonly asked questions.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why are we switching to a trimester schedule?

The trimester schedule will help students meet the new state mandates of increased graduation requirements for all high schools in Michigan. Additionally, we want to create a schedule that provides the flexibility to meet individualized needs of every student.

2. Are there other schools that have implemented trimesters from which we can learn?

Yes, many schools on the west side of the state have been using a trimester schedule for some time. Schools such as Lake Fenton and Holly implemented a trimester schedule in 2007-08. According to the website www.trimesters.org over 33% of Michigan High Schools have been using trimester scheduling since the beginning of the 2008-09 school year.

3. How long have the alternative scheduling options been studied?

Alternative schedules have been discussed in depth for the past 2 years, with trimesters being the focus. Included in the study process were visits to trimester schools in Michigan and teachers/administrators from trimester schools coming to our district and meeting with teachers and staff as to how to implement a trimester schedule. We also had guest speaker presentations, staff and professional meetings, and Board sessions.

4. What is the difference between a trimester schedule and the current semester schedule?

Students will take 5 classes each for 3 terms (72 minute classes for approximately 12 weeks in length), rather than 6 classes each for 2 semesters. Classes will meet daily instead of 4 times a week.

5. Will the longer class periods (72 minutes) go beyond a students' attention span?

Learning from school districts that have previously implemented the trimester schedule, it will continue to be important for us to stress to our staff the importance of instructional design strategies; such as, every 7-12 minutes there should be a classroom transition. This type of teaching will give students an opportunity to learn at a pace which allows for retention.

6. Is it true that there will be less minutes of instruction for each course in the trimester format?

Yes, when comparing a single trimester course to a semester course, there are less minutes of instruction. However, when considering the total minutes of instruction available within a content area/department over the course of 4 years, there are actually more minutes of instruction.

7. What courses will meet for 1, 2 or 3 terms?

The general rule is: current 1 semester courses will meet 1 term, current year long (2 semesters) classes will meet 2 terms. Band, choir, Basic (Special Ed) courses, and Advanced Placement courses will meet 3 terms.

8. Will students be able to attend the Career Center with the trimester schedule?

Yes, the Career Center schedule will accommodate students coming from a trimester schedule next year. Students will attend either an A.M. or P.M. session in place of 2 class periods for the entire year (3 terms). The Career Center marking periods will align with our trimester schedule. The trimester schedule will enable students the flexibility to pursue their career pathway in a Career/Technology program.

9. Why do Advanced Placement courses meet 3 terms? Why not other classes, specifically honors classes?

AP courses require more time to cover the rigorous AP College Board curriculum in preparation of the AP exam taken at the end of April.

10. Is the trimester schedule going to improve learning or is this strictly a response to the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC-increased graduation requirements)?

We believe it is an effective response to the MMC and at the same time has the potential to improve the educational experience of all students.

11. What impact will trimester schedules have for students that struggle?

Students will be allowed to re-take courses during the school year. Also, they will only have 5 classes to prepare for on a daily basis. They should never have more than 3 core courses (English, math, science, or social studies) in a given term. This is one of the benefits of a trimester schedule.

12. What impact will there be if the middle school remains on a semester schedule and the high school switches to a trimester schedule?

This should not be an issue. The middle school is studying the trimester schedule. This could actually be a benefit for all students moving from the middle school to the high school.

13. How will credits be determined?

A half credit (.5) will be earned for each trimester course. The total numbers of credits needed to graduate are:

Class of:	2010 – 24.5 credits	2011 – 26 credits
	2012 – 26.5 credits	2013 – 27 credits

14. Will trimesters have a negative impact on college/universities admissions?

No, this is not an issue with admissions at universities and colleges

15. What are the advantages of a trimester schedule?

There are many advantages including:

- Students will have increased elective opportunities
- Students will have fewer classes to prepare for on a daily basis
- Students will have the flexibility to develop an educational development plan that meets their needs for the future
- Students will be able to meet the requirements of the MMC

16. What evaluation process will be used to determine the effectiveness of the trimester schedule?

The following criteria will be used:

- a. Graduation rate
- b. Grade point average
- c. Number of course failures
- d. Number of discipline referrals
- e. Standardized test scores including MME/ACT
- f. Advanced Placement results
- g. College admission rates
- h. Freshman year of college grade point average
- i. Parents, students, and staff surveys

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact your principal at Central High School 891-0601 or Western High School 662-4481.