

Milton High School

Trimester: Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: October 16, 2019

1. When will these changes take place?

Milton High School will be moving to the trimester system in the fall of 2020. When students sign up for classes in February of this school year, they will be signing up for courses in trimesters.

2. How is the Trimester System Different than the Semester System?

The school year will be divided into three "trimesters" instead of two "semesters". Each trimester will be about 58 days of instruction where each semester was about 87.

3. How many periods will there be in a day? How long will the passing periods be?

We will have a five period day. Each class will be 67 minutes long with 6 minute passing periods.

4. What will the bell schedule look like?

This is an example of what our schedule could look like. The specific time slot of the Study Flex period within the day could change, but this gives you an idea of our schedule.

7:30	Warning Bell
7:35 - 8:42	Period 1
8:48 - 9:55	Period 2
10:01 - 10:46	Study Flex
10:52 - 11:59	Period 3A
10:52 - 11:16	1st Lunch
11:22 - 12:29	Period 3B
12:05 - 12:29	2nd Lunch
12:35 - 1:42	Period 4
1:48 - 2:55	Period 5

5. How many classes does a student take during a tri?

Students must take five classes each trimester.

6. Can I take a study hall?

Students will not be allowed to take a study hall during periods 1-5, however there is a built in 45 minute period Study Flex. During this time, students will be able to use this as a study hall.

7. How do the credits work?

Each trimester course will be awarded .5 credits. As each student will take 5 courses per trimester, they will take 2.5 credits per grading period (7.5 per year). One way to think of it is what was a "semester" course is now done in a "trimester" course.

8. So a full credit course now only meets 2/3rds of the year?

In short, yes. For example, English 9 is a 1.0 credit class, so it will meet during 2 trimesters. This could be Fall Trimester and Winter Trimester or Winter Trimester and Spring Trimester. We could even have some 1.0 credit classes meet Fall and Spring Trimester.

9. Doesn't that shorten every class?

With each class running longer periods, 67 minutes vs. our current 48/43 minute classes, the actual difference in time of instruction over the course of each term is just a few hours. When snow days, assemblies, and other anomalies are factored in, the difference is even less.

10. How many credits do you need to graduate?

Students will still need 24 credits to graduate.

11. Does how I sign up for classes change?

Students will still sign up for classes in February. We are currently updating the "Program of Studies", or the book with all of the courses offered at MHS. The changes will reflect how the courses will fit into the trimester system. Once the program is completed, we will get copies to students and families so they can start to prepare for course selection. Students will still sign up for their own classes via Skyward (like in past years) during the appropriate window.

12. What is the Study Flex period?

During this 45 minute period - which is separate from the five 67 minute class periods, students will be able to get help from teachers in courses they need assistance or use as a study time. We will be able to deliver formal learning interventions during this time as well. The hope is that this time will be flexible and allow for students to use it as a time to get done what they need to get done outside of the regular class time.

13. What about AP classes?

One of the strengths of the MHS curriculum has always been the Advanced Placement courses. We will still run these courses, although they will need to run Fall and Winter Trimesters to be completed before the May AP exams. Students will have the opportunity to take AP study Sessions during Spring Trimester to prepare for the exam.

14. I am a junior (class of 2021), how does this affect me?

You will be taking trimester classes your senior year. We fully realize that this will impact some of the plans that juniors had for their senior year. If there are conflicts with plans that you had for your senior year that impact your college plans - please connect with your school counselor.

15. Will there be other Milton Schools moving to the Trimester?

No, only Milton High School will be moving to the Trimester. The start and end of the school year will still be the same in all grades, 4K-12.

16. Why are we making these changes?

There are a number of reasons. A large team of High School staff members worked throughout the 2018-2019 school year to review our present schedule and evaluate a number of alternatives. At the end of the process, in the spring of 2019, the group decided to make the recommendation to move to the trimester. However, in brief, we wanted a model that created longer learning periods for lab based classes, better positioned staff to meet the social and emotional needs of our students, and better positioned teachers to creating programming for their students.

17. When does each Trimester end?

The Fall Trimester will typically end just before Thanksgiving in November and the Winter Trimester will end in early March. The Spring Trimester will end on the same day as the rest of the district.

18. Will there still be Work Study/ Coop?

Yes - we will still have work study/ coop for those students who qualify.

19. Are other High Schools doing this?

Yes, during our study, we found that many high schools who have a traditional 7 or 8 period day are exploring other options. We looked at Block and Rotating schedules, but settled on the Trimester. High schools such as Monroe, Watertown, Sauk Prairie and Elkhorn have all had successful transitions to the Trimester in recent years.

20. Will teachers be changing how they teach with the new longer class periods?

Yes - having the longer period will require our staff to look at their instruction differently. Staff are looking at various instructional methods and practices that will continue to engage students throughout the extended period.

The extended period will be a great benefit to lab courses and physical education classes where students will have extended time for learning.

21. Will the new schedule changes affect class sizes?

The new schedule should not really have an impact on class sizes. Student enrollment has the largest impact on class size.

22. Will a move to the trimester schedule have a negative effect on students' college admissions prospects?

No - the trimester is becoming more and more common and fully understood by colleges and universities. Students will still have the ability to earn much more than the minimum requirements.

Schools studied saw a positive impact on student academic performance. Schools saw a general increase in grades (GPAs), dramatic decrease in athletic ineligibility, and overall improvement of the student experience. Data from schools studied show improvement in social and emotional measures as well.

23. My student has an IEP - what impact does the trimester have on that plan?

Individualized Education Plans for our students in special education will be adjusted to show how the specialized services and instruction will be provided in the new timeframe. We are currently reviewing IEPs and will be adjusting accordingly.

24. Is there a concern for the potential gap in instruction that will occur if a student has a first and second trimester course, and then does not have the next sequential course until the next trimester of the following year?

Studies show that "gapping" did not result in loss of retention with the students at the schools who have implemented the trimester schedule. Furthermore, comparing the GPA's of the students that had year-long courses for two trimesters in any combination (1-2, 2-3, 1-3) were substantially identical.

25. How will the “last 10 minutes of class” hall pass policy be impacted by longer class periods?

The rule will stay in effect, however, now there will be six minutes of passing time between classes. As always, students are allowed to leave class for an emergency.

26. Will teachers just be giving more homework to make up for the difference in instructional time?

No, but there will still be homework. The amount of homework will still be determined by the teacher and the course taken.

27. If we are all in study hall at the same time, won't the Testing Center get crowded? Or will there be a different procedure for retakes/test make-up?

The procedure for retaking tests will remain the same where students go to the Testing Center. WIN period will be the main period for test retakes. If the Testing Center becomes too crowded, we will adjust.

Music Questions

28. I heard that I will only be able to take Band OR Choir - is that true?

No. That is not true. Students will still be able to take choir AND band. The music block allows for this to happen in a single (extended) period during the day.

29. Will Band and Choir only be able to run 2/3rds of the year?

No, the music block will allow the two bands and up to four choirs to meet during the full year.

30. Can you please explain this, “Music Block”?

The music block takes 20 minutes from the Study Flex/WIN period and adds it to the 3rd period. We will run two 45 minute “sets” within that period. For each “set” we will run 1 band and 2 choirs. Students could then take band and one choir OR two choirs. Which choirs run during which set have not yet been determined. Students who choose to take only a single music course will have study time in the opposite “set”.

The music staff have been given a great deal of latitude on how to use this time and can flex the time periods during different times of the year. (for example, during marching season or show choir season). When our new Music Wing is completed in the high school renovation, this schedule will give the maximum amount of ability to utilize the new space.

Music Block (Flex + Period 3A)	
10:01 - 10:26	Study Flex/WIN
10:29 - 11:14	Period 3A (1st Set)
11:14 - 11:59	Period 3A (2nd Set)
12:05 - 12:29	2nd Lunch

31. Will there be music electives run outside of the Music Block?

Yes, there will be different music half credit courses run on single trimesters or potential 1.0 credit courses run on two trimesters. For example Music Theory, Drumline, or other vocal musical educational opportunities. These are still in development.