

NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING**

INFORMATION SHEET

DATE: May 5, 2021
TO: Education Committee
FROM: Superintendent, Scott Saywell
SUBJECT: Secondary Quarter System for 2021/2022

Background

During the 2019-2020 school year, our secondary schools were organized in a Semester System. Students would take 4 courses from September through January, then another 4 courses from February through June.

In March of 2020 the Ministry of Education moved all students to remote learning. With the exception of children of essential services workers, students in NLPS worked remotely through April and May. In June, students returned part time to school, with the remaining learning continuing remotely. The Ministry of Education developed a 5-Stage Restart Plan. We finished the school year in Stage 2, with students attending school for part time in-class instruction and part time remote learning.

In late July of 2020, the MOE updated their 5-Stage Restart Plan, with changes to Stage 2, including the requirement to restrict the number of students within the newly termed "Learning Group." At the secondary level, the maximum Learning Group size was set at 120. This was a significant challenge for schools on a Semester or Linear system throughout the province. To reduce Learning Group size to 120 or fewer, most schools across the province moved to a Quarter System. In NLPS, this required a completely new build of secondary timetables in late August. Building timetables within a very short timeline, for a system that students and staff were not familiar with, along with the restrictions the come with Learning Groups, was challenging. In best efforts to work within the intent of the newly formed Learning Groups, secondary schools in NLPS organized students within Learning Groups of small numbers wherever possible. Many Learning Group sizes in grades 8, 9, or 10 were limited to 30 or less students. Although this organization aligns with the health and safety guidelines for contact-tracing purposes in the event of a COVID-19 exposure at school, the smaller Learning Groups sizes limited the ability for students to be placed in all of the courses they had requested.

Quarter System 2021-2022

Planning for the 2021-2022 school year typically occurs from February to May of each year. As the planning phase proceeds, the ability to change course becomes more and more difficult. Schools have to make decisions based on the current Ministry of Education Guidelines as they cannot predict what Stage of the Restart Plan will be in effect, or if the Ministry will make changes to the plan over the summer. For these reasons, schools are presently organizing classes in a Quarter System for 2021-2022. This does not mean that schools will be unable to change course if more information concerning the threat of COVID-19 becomes available. Schools will continue to engage their staff, students, and broader community this school year as the province continues to address the challenges of COVID-19.

Timeline

February 2021	Survey students and parents on Quarter system (see results below)
Spring 2021	Staff feedback on Quarter System
February 2021	Students complete course selections for 2021-2022
March/April 2021	Schools build timetables for 2021-2022
Late April 2021	School are provided staffing for 2021-2022
Early May 2021	Teachers are provided draft teaching assignments for 2021-2022
May 11, 2021	First round (of 4) teaching postings for 2021-2022
May/June 2021	Focus group of staff to explore challenges/opportunities and future professional learning needs to make Quarter System better for 2021-2022

NLPS Quarter system survey results

Parents, students and NLPS staff were invited to respond the following statement in an online survey:

Given the possibility of a Quarter system continuing next school year, we want to know what worked well and where there needs to be improvement.

The results of that survey are below:

Overall top thoughts: <https://my.thoughtexchange.com/report/4afc6f54cc9cca86e3cfb06d73458bd8>

Student top thoughts: <https://my.thoughtexchange.com/report/59ac3d9cd95b8a4ab3c7015dfb887b71>

Parent top thoughts: <https://my.thoughtexchange.com/report/69fba1c2c11400c66919a86e09609f5b>

Employee top thoughts: <https://my.thoughtexchange.com/report/8431cafae2b5c2ce1e4c7ca8ea62928>

Future Considerations

Conversations concerning how best to provide timetable structures that maximize student choice and optimize learning experiences will continue at each secondary school and make determinations based on their individual school context.

For Reference: [BCSTA Secondary School Timetable Design Options](#)