

## A Brief Overview of Flexible Scheduling Options

Adapted from MENC & the Educational Alliance at Brown University

**4 x 4 Block Schedule:** Four classes, approximately ninety minutes in length, every day for the first semester. Four completely different classes, again ninety minutes in length, every day for the second semester. Typically, teachers are responsible for teaching 3 classes each semester and use the fourth block for planning. Each class equals one credit.

**A/B Block Schedule: (also known as the alternate plan)** Four classes, approximately ninety minutes in length, meeting every other day ("A" days) for an entire school year. Four completely different classes, again ninety minutes in length, meet on alternate days ("B" days) for an entire year. Each class equals one credit.

**Combination Block Schedule:** A combination of 4 x 4 and A/B block schedules.

**Trimester:** The instructional year is divided into three cycles. Students take two or three courses each trimester (each lasting 60 days). This allows for completion of 6-9 courses per year, and creates opportunities for students to retake failed courses.

**75-75-30 Plan:** students take three classes each for two 75-day terms, followed by a 30-day intensive course or enrichment program. Variations include placing the 30 days between the two 75-day terms, having three long classes and one short class, or changing the configuration to 75-15-75-15.

**Flexible Schedule:** A combination of 4 x 4 and A/B block schedules, but class length varies from day to day. One example: On three out of every five days throughout the school year, each class could be 90 minutes in length. On the other two days, designated as Advisement/Resource Days, each class is 75 minutes in length. An Advisement/Resource Hour is 60 minutes in length.

**Intensive Block:** In this format, students attend two core classes at a time. These core classes can be coupled with up to three other year-long elective classes. Students complete the core classes in 60 days and then move on to another two. School years are organized into trimesters (Jones, 1995; Canady & Rettig, 1995). Read more at [www.nwrel.org](http://www.nwrel.org)

**Modular:** the modular schedule system is similar to the traditional block schedule, but differs in that it allows for each day of the week to have classes (sometimes referred to as "mods") scheduled in a different order.

**Modified block:** "build your own" block schedule; e.g. schools may have students attend school based on a 4 x 4 block on Monday through Thursday, and a regular 8 period schedule on Friday. Or, they may have two blocked classes in a day, combined with three regular periods (Rettig and Canady, 1996). Read more at [www.nwrel.org](http://www.nwrel.org)

**Parallel block:** The parallel block is used primarily in elementary schools, whereas the modified block, alternating A/B, the 4 x 4 block, and the intensive block are used primarily in secondary schools. Parallel block takes a class of students and divides them into two groups. One group of children stay with their classroom teachers for instruction in a subject such as math or language arts, while the other group attends physical education or music, or visits the computer lab; after a prescribed length of time the two groups swap. This schedule provides all students with a more individual learning experience (Canady, 1990). Read more at [www.nwrel.org](http://www.nwrel.org)

***Pullout:*** elective classes that take some students, but not all students, out of the regular classroom to participate in group practices or individual lessons. [\*MENC's Position Statement\*](#)

***Year-round:*** Schools that follow a year-around schedule do not literally meet for the entire year. The instructional year is divided into four cycles, which generally run from late July-September, October-December, January-March, and April-early June. Each nine-week instructional cycle is followed by an approximate two-week break, and other seasonal breaks (i.e., Winter, Spring) are included.